

Learning Dimension Report
Stony Brook University

Foundations Institutions deliver intentional curricular and co-curricular learning experiences that engage students in order to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors consistent with the desired outcomes of higher education and the institution's philosophy and mission. Whether in or out of the classroom, learning also promotes increased competence in critical thinking, ethical development, and the lifelong pursuit of knowledge.

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3.1 Learning Goals

Current Situation

Stony Brook University has developed a wide range of learning opportunities for the first-year (freshman) experience. Although many of the essential pieces are in place to improve learning as described below, we, as a committee, felt as though several important aspects could be improved, which is the rationale for the "medium" rating this performance indicator received. In particular, the committee felt as though the university is missing an overall master academic plan for its first year education. This plan would help bring together many of the efforts described below in a more organized way, so it is clear to the students, staff, and faculty the purpose and objectives of the first year learning approaches at Stony Brook.

The motivation for a master academic plan is supported by the fact that 45% of faculty/staff responded that the university has not communicated its first year goals and practices (Q.011 of faculty/staff survey). Also, about 32% of faculty/staff do not understand the institution's intended goals for the first year of college (Q.049 of faculty/staff survey). In addition, 29% of freshmen do not understand the university's learning goals for the first year of college (Q.042 of student survey).

The centerpiece of the Stony Brook first year learning experience is the academic Colleges, which were implemented in September 2004. About 87% of the ~2100 incoming first-year students chose to be a member of one of the six thematic colleges. By participating in a college, this reduces the effective size of the university, which promotes a more effective learning environment. As part of the college, all first-year students take a UGC 101 in the fall, which is a one-credit introduction to the university taught by the college advisor or another staff member. This is followed by UGC102, which exposes first-year students to thought-provoking topics taught by faculty in a small class (< 20) setting. Evidence suggests that a majority of freshmen are satisfied with their Undergraduate College experience, with 91% satisfied with their placement in the appropriate college. Overall, it appears that the implementation of the colleges has been successful component of the first year learning experience.

The remainder of first year students either participate in the Honors College (about 1% of students), Women In Science and Engineering (WISE; 1% of students), or the Learning Communities (~10%). The Honors College and WISE programs have been successful given their special curriculum, small class sizes, and faculty mentoring. In lieu of UGC 101 and 102, students in the freshman Learning Communities enroll in a 4-credit seminar that helps them transition to Stony Brook, utilize university resources, and understand the opportunities for the various majors and careers. Currently, there is limited interaction between the Learning Communities and the Undergraduate Colleges in terms of classes, activities, faculty participation, and resources; therefore, this is a likely area of improvement. The university also maintains Living and Learning Centers (LLCs), which also do not interact much with the Undergraduate Colleges. The LLCs require students to minor in a particular subject, and therefore many first year students do not commit to a LCC their first year.

Basic writing and math skills are critical goals for the first year learning goals at Stony Brook. Personal surveys suggest that many faculty are concerned whether the students are learning these important skills. Currently, freshmen take a pretest (placement) and the writing/math course, but there is no exit test or formal evaluation to determine whether students are in fact learning these core skills.

Overall, the current university five-year plan (2008-2013) has no mention of goals to improve the first year learning experience. It is clear that a master academic plan is needed to inform everyone of the university learning goals.

Incorporate more generic learning goals (i.e., discovery of academic interests, etc.).

Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities:

With the recent success of the Undergraduate Colleges, the university has an opportunity to summarize their strengths and weaknesses in a master academic plan. The master plan should be more than a philosophical statement, but it needs to be a practical document. It should contain information sources, such as 101/102 curriculums, academic integrity statement, and D.E.C. philosophy statement. New ideas need to be incorporated, such as new first-year students need to personally meet two faculty members their first year, attend class regularly, and have at least 3 skills completed after their first year. Overall, the master academic plan should integrate the various types of learning, such as academic learning, social learning, and life skills (who am I?). Once this information is more widely shared among the faculty and students, it will likely result in more faculty involvement and students will likely feel more connected to the faculty.

Stony Brook offers many unique opportunities for first year learning from the Undergraduate Colleges, Learning Communities, and Living and Learning Centers. It is apparent that these programs are run somewhat independently with separate resources. There is an opportunity to better integrate these programs within the first year academic master plan. In particular, there needs to be more faculty involvement within the Undergraduate Colleges (seminars, mentoring, etc...) rather than just in the 102 classes (and a single faculty director per college). The Living and Learning Centers should be promoted within the Colleges and integrated more within the first year experience.

Implementation of new technology is another opportunity to improve learning within large lecture classrooms for first year students. For example, some departments (e.g., chemistry) are using clickers for students to buzz in answers in these large classes. More faculty need to be aware of this technology, and more of this technology needs to be implemented at the university.

Some instructors may need help making their first year classes better learning environments, especially in the large lecture classes. This may require putting an experienced lecturer or teaching experts in the class to offer advice. This would be an "off the record" evaluation of the teaching.

Challenges:

It can be intimidating for first year students to seek help and learning opportunities with faculty outside the classroom. Nearly half of the students in the fall 2007 had slight or no connection with faculty outside of the classroom (Q.007 of student survey). This may improve after these students take the UGC 102 this spring 2008, but it suggests that more faculty interaction may be needed in the fall within the Undergraduate Colleges and Learning Communities.

The Living and Learning Centers could be expanded to include more first year students, with the Undergraduate Colleges serving as an important stepping stone into the LCCs. However, a challenge is whether the university will have the resources to expand the Living and Learning Centers and Communities to include more first year students if these programs are advertised more within the Colleges.

The university proposes to continue increasing the enrollment (23,500 to 27,000 by 2013), which will put additional pressure on the availability of large lecture classrooms, especially those with the appropriate technology for first year learning. The university needs to evaluate whether there will be enough lecture space to properly teach first year courses as enrollment increases.

Sources of Evidence.

Overview of Stony Brook Colleges:

<https://foetec.fyfoundations.org/foetec/DocView.aspx?plandocid=1919>

Description of the UGC 101/102 Curriculum:

<https://foetec.fyfoundations.org/foetec/DocView.aspx?plandocid=1919>

Stony Brook Five-Year Plan:

<http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/5yrplan08>

Freshman student survey (Fall 2007):

<https://foetec.fyfoundations.org/foetec/Dimensions.aspx>

Faculty/staff survey (Fall 2007):

<https://foetec.fyfoundations.org/foetec/Dimensions.aspx> (Where is this in the evidence library? Needs to be included below.)

Evidence Documentation

1	CPI.Programs.101 Textbook
31	CPI.Programs.UGC.College Descriptions
74	FY student Retention, 2007
86	Five Year Plan 2008-2013

3.2 Engaging Students

Current Situation

A differentiation must be made between courses with a high enrollment but relatively small class size (UGC101, UGC102, WRT101 and WRT202) and classes which have a high enrollment and a large class size such as Introduction to Psychology (PSY 103), Introduction to Chemistry, and other introductory classes. First year students are exposed to both experiences, and techniques that encourage student engagement in class will necessarily differ.

Professors teaching both large and small classes are clear about the importance of student participation in class, as judged by teacher responses to the Foundations of Excellence First Year Survey, student responses to the survey, and interviews with instructors teaching both types of courses. For example, over 95% of all responding faculty marked either very high or high when asked about the extent to which they encourage students to ask questions in class, while 88.8% of the responding faculty noted that making oneself available to students outside class was a priority. Students agree to a large extent. Sixty percent say that their instructors either often or always encourage them to ask questions in class, and 57.2% say that their instructors often or always use effective teaching methods. Close to two thirds of students responding to the survey state that the instructor either often or always effectively communicates concepts to them, and 60% say professors often or always make themselves available outside of class.

Interviews with faculty demonstrated a concern for student engagement. Methods of engaging students differ widely depending upon the course and instructor. Discussions of such effective methods are generally informal, but are extensive in some departments. For example, some departments, such as Chemistry, have developed some enhanced technology for engaging students, in which students can choose the answer in lecture using a clicker. A common way to engage students outside the classroom is through Blackboard. The UGC 102 sections are relatively small (< 20 students), which encourages student engagement with faculty. Faculty engage students in UGC102 by stimulating discussion and allowing students to give short presentations. Surveys of a few of WRT 101/102 instructors also suggest that discussion is encouraged when discussing the writing assignments.

Many professors do not seek statistical evaluations of the effectiveness of their techniques, but judge on the basis of their own standards of desirable student levels of participation and questioning. Besides the awareness of the level of student participation, faculty gain some understanding of the effectiveness of their teaching techniques through student feedback on mandated course and teacher evaluations conducted each term. Effectiveness is also judged by the extent of student success in the course, although, of course, level of student engagement and course success may not be the same.

Add separate section for large lecture classes, math and chemistry, and breakout discussions of small vs. large.

Opportunities and Challenges

Challenges:

There are several challenges for engaging students in the classroom. About 1/3 of SBU students are non-native speaking, and this is a much higher percentage than most other institutions. Therefore, it is can be difficult to engage them verbally in class. Some students of particular cultures are inherently quieter in class, which also make it difficult for instructors to get them to participate in class discussion exercises.

There are many different approaches to engage students in the classroom, but none of this information is written down or shared for new (or even experienced) instructors. Many instructors learn student engagement through trial and error.

Opportunities:

There are many opportunities open for faculty to share their techniques for engaging students with other faculty informally, and this can be encouraged. The Teaching, Learning & Technology Center will provide additional opportunities within the university for professors to share effective techniques. The Reinvention Center may also be useful in helping to inform professors about effective techniques used in other universities.

There are new technologies to engage students in large lectures, such as the clickers used in the large lecture chemistry. There is an opportunity to use more of this technology in the future.

For the large lecture courses like chemistry and psychology, is there an opportunity to use Blackboard for further engagement? Students could be broken up into smaller groups and use the discussion forum in Blackboard to share their thoughts on information that they are learning in class. Participation in this discussion could make up a small portion of their grade for the class. Instructors or TAs could also hold smaller get-togethers for students via Adobe Connect where students were encouraged to ask questions related to course material.

Sources of Evidence.

58	2006 CIRP Institutional Summary
	Faculty Interviews (Psychology Department)
	Foundations of Excellence First Year: Student Survey (2008)
	Foundations of Excellence: Faculty/Staff Survey (2008)

3.3 Course Outcomes

Current Situation

There are many ways in which the outcome of a course can be determined. Examination and, final course grades are by definition the evaluation of the student learning. In many of the large courses common mid terms and final examinations are giving, this means that all sections of those courses must cover the same material. For the WRT courses, the students have to complete a writing portfolio of their work, which has to be at a satisfactory level.

There is often consistency in the stated objectives and desired learning goals for courses that employ more than one instructor for a course, such as UGC 101 / 102, WRT 101 / 102 and often PSY 103. Instructors in PSY enumerate on their syllabi what the mastery and learning goals are.

UGC 101 has a common syllabus with some room for variation in each section, the objectives of the course are provided to the instructors and should be communicated to the students in writing for all of the sections. The UGC 102 course is very individualized but the course objective is for students to have an opportunity to interact in an intellectual setting with a senior faculty member.

Currently there exists on the course evaluations completed by students, questions that specifically asks about the course in comparison to others. Some courses, such as UGC 101/102 have specialized evaluations completed by the student at the end of the semester.

Another measure of the course outcome is whether the students felt they learned useful information. According to the student survey, only slightly more than half (55%) felt as though the course material was often or always valuable to them (for the course they had just before taking the survey). Also, 56% of first year students believed that the instructor helped them learn the course material always or often. Overall, these results suggests that a large fraction (~40%) of students come leave a course either not feeling as though the course was that valuable and/or the instructor could have done better in teaching the material.

Opportunities and Challenges

Challenges:

The most common way for instructors to obtain student feedback on their course is through the teaching evaluations. The questions on these evaluations do not always match up with the content of the course. Sometimes the best feedback is on the written evaluation sheets, but these are difficult to summarize. Other statistical measures of course outcomes are needed, such as the dropout rate for large lecture courses, such as PSY 103.

Many faculty believe that students need more practice in writing, particularly in terms of grammar and sentence structure. A challenge will be to implement ways to quantify whether students have learned important writing skills in WRT101/102. This may involve some sort of exit exam or equivalent. It should be noted that writing instruction is not solely a function of the Writing Program.

It is also a challenge to quantify the benefits of the UGC101/102 courses. For example, it may be interesting to quantify the first year student grades before (Fall) and after 102 (Spring) to see if the UGC courses helped students perform better in the classroom.

A new course evaluation form is needed for first year student courses to target their learning and course outcomes. For

example, there is currently a question on the teaching evaluation forms asking a student whether he/she learned more in this course than others they have taken. However, for first year students, with only a few courses taken thus far, this question is not too meaningful.

Opportunities:

More substantive open-ended questions should be added to the course evaluation form that asks something like - What is the most important thing you learned in this course.

There is likely a lot of useful information in the UGC 101/102 evaluations, and this information needs to be shared among the faculty and instructors.

The academic outcomes (grades and dropouts) of the courses can be shared between faculty, since this data exists, but it is not widely disseminated.

If each course had a description that included intended objectives which was distributed to students at the beginning of the semester, the students should be evaluated on how well they thought those objectives were met.

If a large percentage of students think that the information they are learning is not useful, the information may need to be reframed in a way that explicitly states how the information will be useful to students in their careers and/or everyday life.

Sources of Evidence.

Freshman student survey (Fall 2007):

<https://foetec.fyfoundations.org/foetec/Dimensions.aspx>

Stony Brook teaching Evaluation Form

31	CPI.Programs.UGC.College Descriptions
34	CPI.Programs.UGC.Curriculum

3.4 Courses with High D/Failure/Withdrawal/Incomplete (DFWI) Rates

Current Situation

The university has identified certain courses with "high" DFWI rates for first year students (FYS). Some courses that many first year students enroll that have surprisingly high DFWI rates. For example, 35-50% of first year students received a DFWI in PHYS 125 (Classical Physics A), CHE 129 (General Chemistry 1A), MAP 103 (Proficiency Algebra), and LIN 101 (Linguistics 101). Although an acceptable rate of DFWI is debatable, >35% seems like an alarmingly high percentage for these important first year courses.

As far as we are aware, the university and individual departments do not regularly attempt to systematically gather information on students (in particular, FYS) who earn a D/F for a course; therefore it is no surprise why some of the high DFWI numbers may be surprising to many faculty. The university does require students to submit a written request to withdraw (W) from a course after the add-drop deadline, and some departments require students to petition in writing for an Incomplete (I) for a course. Some other possible resources for information on poorly performing students include: Academic Advising, the Writing Center, the Chemistry Learning Center, the Math Learning Center, the residential tutoring centers, the various UG colleges, the center for Teaching, Learning and Technology, the Library's Instruction Program, etc. In addition, there is an academic success workshop during the winter intersession period for students encountering academic difficulties.

Opportunities and Challenges

Challenges:

More effort is need to better understand why FYS do so poorly in certain courses, and what the university can do to help them do better. Some preliminary thoughts include:

• A closer investigation of DFWI rates in one department (Linguistics) has revealed that FYS do not receive significantly

more DFWI grades than non-FYS. The faculty in this particular department believe that the relatively high DFWI rate for all students is due to the fact that students enroll in this course expecting a type of course that is quite different from the actual course. Are the statistics the same for other departments? If so, perhaps the problem is not one that can be addressed for FYS only.

â€¢ Perhaps FYS earn DFWI because they do not realize they have other options for courses that they are not doing well in or they are not happy with. For example, in the case study of LIN 101 we discovered that more upper-classmen than freshmen dropped the course during the add-drop period, and more FYS "disappeared" after the first few weeks while remaining enrolled in the course (thereby earning a D/F). Perhaps FYS do not realize, or need to be reminded that they can 'drop' a course during the add-drop period, or opt for P/NC.

â€¢ Furthermore, the investigation into LIN 101 revealed that the freshmen who received DFWI had extremely low overall GPAs (most had lower than 1.5!). These students are in need of general academic assistance; the fact that they earned DFWI for a specific course might have nothing to do with that particular course.

â€¢ It seems that there are different reasons that students earn a D/F vs W vs I. These should be investigated separately. For example, students who request an I for a course usually do so for personal reasons (illness, family problems, etc.) that have nothing to do with their status as freshmen or their academic ability.

â€¢ On the faculty survey, one question addressed to what degree faculty initiate communication early in the term with students who are performing poorly. The results suggest that faculty members do so at a relatively high rate:

- (1) Not at all 2.1%
- (2) Slight 8.8%
- (3) Moderate 24.3%
- (4) High 30.8%
- (5) Very High 34.0%

Another challenge is determining what criteria should be used to identify a "high" DFWI rate. This may depend on the type and expected difficulty of the course. What is an acceptable rate of DFWI is unclear. In order to make these sort of decisions is going to require the individual percentages from each grade separately.

Opportunities:

By letting faculty know of high DFWI rates, action can be taken to reduce this number. This will likely improve first year retention rates.

Understanding the reasons for the DFWI rates and ultimately reducing the high rates for some courses will promote more discussion within departments in areas not typically discussed. This will result in a better education experience for the students.

Sources of Evidence

(see above)

Evidence Documentation

59	FY High Enrollment Courses
60	DFWI - All FY Courses
61	High Enrollment & DFWI Data Notes
62	DFWI: Moderate and low enrollment courses

3.5 Placement

Current Situation

Every entering first year students must take (A) a Math Placement Examination (MPE) and (B) a Writing Test. These tests used to be administered on the first day of a 2-day orientation period, with the students given results on the second day, before

course selection. During the last 10 years SBU has been constantly adjusting the way these tests are administered, trying to balance the need for accurate and honest evaluation with the desire to make the orientation experience as welcoming, painless and inexpensive as possible. These changes are ongoing. See Doc #85 for data supporting the decision to require proctored administration of the MPE.

(A) The MPE. Currently, students living in the NYC/LI area make an appointment to take a proctored MPE at a date before their orientation. Those for whom travel to one of the campuses is a hardship take the exam as part of their orientation, or in some cases take an online version.

The Math Placement Examination (MPE) yields a score between 1 and 9, with placement determined as follows:

score course (source Doc#90) number FY in Fall 2006 (from Doc# 59)

1 MAP 101 (advised) or MAP 103 9

2 MAP 103 193

2.5 MAT 118, AMS 101, etc. 36

3 MAT 122 or 123 606

4 MAT 125 596

5 MAT 131 330

6 MAT 126 103

7 MAT 132 226

8 MAT 127 72

9 place out of Freshman Calculus.

For students in one of the Calculus sequence courses (MAT 123, 125, 131, 126, 132, 127) there is an extensive drop down/move up period ending in week 6 -after the first midterm- when they can change without penalty from one course to the other. In particular MAT 123, 125, 131 are scheduled in "silos" so students can move without altering their schedules. Only 50-100 students each Fall take advantage of this option (data: Scott Sutherland, Mathematics Undergraduate Program Director).

Old but still valid evidence for the effectiveness of the MPE in predicting success in first-year quantitative courses is presented in Doc#92, which charts the correlation between MPE scores and results of the first and second midterm examinations in CHE 131, the "mainline" introductory Chemistry course. David Hanson, who contributed the chart, says: "In my view, the reason math placement exams correlate so well is not because of the math involved in doing chemistry but because the math placement exams measure the ability to think in terms of abstract concepts and apply them in analyzing statements and solving word problems."

(B) The writing test has been administered online, through an MIT-based consortium, but scored on campus. Scores range from 1 to 5, with (in fall 2006) 92.5% of the freshman class graded as either a 3 (44.3%) or a 4 (48.2%). (source: Doc#66). Studies are under way to see if the recently introduced SAT writing test could be usefully substituted for Stony Brook's Writing Placement Examination.

Opportunities And Challenges

Challenges:

(A) Math Placement. Despite the elaborate triage, and the opportunities for moving down, instructors in first-year Math courses encounter a substantial percentage of students (10%?) who have heavy deficits in preparation (from faculty personal experience). Some of these deficits cannot be caught by a fairly easy multiple choice test, which tests skills rather than the ability to apply them.

The question of how the minimum mathematics entrance requirement (see Doc #93) can be satisfied is not strictly speaking a matter of placement, even though achievement of MPE level 3 is one of the ways it can be met. Doc #93 describes the various criteria, which include a passing grade any DEC C course.

(B) Writing Placement. The data in Doc#66 strongly suggest that the split between level 3 (leads to 2 semesters of WRT) and 4 (one semester) (as per Doc #91) is somewhat arbitrary, although it has heavy consequences for the students involved. A major challenge are the resources needed to teach the WRT courses. The placement rules for the university should not be dictated, as they have been, by the limited resources available (e.g., only so many WRT 101 sections available), but rather the need to make sure students have the opportunity to learn the fundamental math and writing skills.

Opportunities:

(A) Math Placement:

1. A more proactive advising system could redirect some of the underprepared students who persistently turn up in MAT 123, 125 and 131; but since each step down means an extra semester of Calculus, there may be resistance.
2. Another opportunity would be the introduction of a one-credit course, say MAT 105, designed to "enhance" MAT 123, similarly in spirit to the way CHE 129 runs as a 4-credit parallel to CHE 131. Here the one contact hour per week could inject more elementary material on an "as needed" basis. This 123+105 combination would be appropriate for the 2+ level students, who currently are barred from MAT 123, and would expedite by one semester their access to calculus courses. The extra hour could be taught (in tight synchrony with the ongoing MAT 123 curriculum) by UTAs redeployed from MAT 103; the additional required resources should not be significant.

(B) Writing Placement.

An opportunity here is a complete rethinking of the writing program. This goes beyond placement considerations. Writing skills, both grammatical and rhetorical, are essential to students' college success. The first year is where those skills, if deficient, need to be built up. This is a perennially difficult issue for Stony Brook in particular since many of our incoming students (both Freshmen and transfers) need help, since effective writing instruction requires a large investment in faculty resources, and since writing is not one of the "hot" fields that build up university prestige.

Sources Of Evidence

Placement is not just a matter of guaranteeing success in first year courses, but also of starting first year students on the path to a satisfactory graduation. The Medium rating reflects the arbitrariness of writing program placement and the uneven level of writing competence shown by upper-division students. Traditionally, well-prepared and talented students do very well at Stony Brook, and our placement programs are geared to speed them along; hence the Very High rating in that category. As is remarked in Doc #66, "Many factors affect grade performance;" it is not possible to guarantee success. We believe that the SBU placement program is successful overall in preventing predictable failure in the first year.

Math placement and writing placement policies are described in the SBU Bulletin (see Docs #90, 91). The distribution of Fall 2006 scores is given for the WPE in Doc #66, and can be inferred for the MPE from Doc #59 (course enrollments for Freshmen) and Doc #90, which gives score-course correspondence.

Evidence Documentation

59	FY High Enrollment Courses
66	SAT Writing and SBU Writing Placement
85	Math Placement Exam 03-06 online-proctored
90	Mathematics entry from SBU online bulletin
91	Writing Program entry from SBU Bulletin
92	Correlation MPE scores with CHE 131 midterms
93	SBU degree requirements

3.6 Out-of-class learning

Current Situation

The university offers a dazzling array of out-of-class learning opportunities, from lecture series to concerts, plays and films to clubs and campus organizations. There are student media outlets, fraternal groups that perform valuable volunteer services, ethnic-identity groups that put on performances and sponsor panels -- there is something going on every day for the student who seeks out new experiences. Our committee addressed the question of whether the learning outcomes of such events need to be formally assessed, something that the university does not currently do. Our consensus was that formal assessment was unnecessary and perhaps counterproductive. For a student to be confronted with a survey after an activity she sought out for personal reasons -- enjoyment, curiosity, socializing, or whatever -- could kill the joy of the experience. Some things can simply be experienced without being measured. We felt assessments of out-of-class learning, beyond what we suggest below, should not be pursued.

Course evaluations do not ask about co-curricular activities.

For the most part, the UGC 101 courses require students to participate in several out-of-class activities that relate to the theme of the student's Undergraduate College. For example, during the fall semester, the students in the Arts, Culture & Humanities Undergraduate College are enrolled in ACH 101. They receive a monthly list of events, either activities planned by the ACH team or campus events related to the arts, culture and humanities. Students must attend several events by the end of the semester and provide their instructor with a reflection about their experiences in the events.

Members of the Undergraduate College teams plan UGC-related events throughout the year. Each Undergraduate College team includes a Faculty Director, a Quad Director, 1 or 2 Academic Advisors, several Residence Hall Directors, a Living Learning Center Faculty Director, a Commuter Student Liaison, a Career Center Liaison, Resident Assistants, and 101 & 102 instructors.

The Residence Hall staff members are also required to provide social and educational programs along several pillars or guidelines. The department is developing learning outcomes, but there are no data yet to measure the effectiveness of these programs.

Semester Quality of Life Surveys (QLS) are conducted in the residence halls to measure student satisfaction with their overall residential experience.

The ACUHO-I/EBI Resident Study is a benchmarking survey administered electronically to resident students at random. It has several questions on satisfaction, but it does not address specific learning goals.

Add info on specific activities happening now (department clubs, fraternities, etc.).

Opportunities and Challenges

Challenges:

The university provides many opportunities for co-curricular enrichment, and people on all sides--residential, student affairs, academics--encourage FYS to participate. Nevertheless, there is little documentation on students' learning outcomes. The committee agrees, however, that such documentation, which would most likely take the form of students' filling out yet another questionnaire, is not essential.

Across the board, the documents in the evidence library provide little insight into how student learning in co-curricular activities could or should be assessed.

Opportunities:

There may be an opportunity to provide more Service Learning opportunities for students. Students involved in Service Learning are required to document their experiences, but it is not clear whether any statistics available? These opportunities are generally only for junior/senior (U3/U4) students, but it could be expanded to U2-level students.

Discussion Notes on Sources of Evidence. Please provide the rationale for the task force's judgment and summarize the evidence used.

The best source of evidence in the library on learning outcomes for out-of-class experiences was found in the freshmen retention survey, fall 2006, and the first year student survey, spring 2006. These surveys addressed student satisfaction with such experiences in a fairly substantive way. There was some additional evidence in the ACUHO-I/EBI Resident Study, which assessed student satisfaction with the co-curricular activities provided in the residence halls.

The CAS Standards for Student Activities lists general outcomes for co-curricular activities, but there is no guidance for assessment.

Otherwise, the documents in the evidence library described the policies behind co-curricular activities or listed activities, but they did not provide any data on student participation or satisfaction.

Evidence Documentation

1	CPI.Programs.101 Textbook
3	CPI.Programs.Honors College
4	CPI.Programs.Orientation.Opening Week Schedule
18	CPI.Programs.ResPrograms.RA Program Model
19	CPI.Programs.ResPrograms.Program Pillars
20	CPI.Programs.ResPrograms.Frosh Meeting
21	CPI.Programs.UGC.ACH.OpeningWeekend
22	CPI.Programs.UGC.GLS.OpeningWeekend
23	CPI.Programs.UGC.HDV.OpeningWeekend
24	CPI.Programs.UGC.ITS.OpeningWeekend
25	CPI.Programs.UGC.LDS.OpeningWeekend

26	CPI.Programs.UGC.SSO.OpeningWeekend
31	CPI.Programs.UGC.College Descriptions
33	CPI.Programs.UGC.Team Roles
34	CPI.Programs.UGC.Curriculum
47	CPI.Programs.CampusActivitiesPolicy
57	CPI.Programs.UScholars.Events
78	EBI Spring 2007 Crosstab FY
80	Community Service Programming
81	Freshmen Retention Survey, Fall 2006
82	Incoming Freshmen Survey, Fall 2005
83	Freshmen Survey, Spring 2006
84	CPI.Programs.ebisummary

Recommended Grade: B

Recommended Action Items:

- Develop a freshman academic master plan for the university *(High priority)*

- Develop a plan to better integrate the UGCs, Learning Communities, and Living & Learning Centers. *(High priority)*
 Develop a plan to better integrate the Undergraduate Colleges, Learning Communities, and Living and Learning Centers.
- Get more faculty involved in the Undergraduate Colleges during the Fall semester. *(High priority)*
 Get more faculty involved in the Undergraduate Colleges during the Fall semester, so freshman interact with faculty before the Spring UGC 102 course
- Focus learning goals on improving students basic writing & info literacy skills. *(High priority)*
 The university should focus its learning goals towards improving students basic writing and information literacy skills.
- Add a question to the standard student evaluation to measure student engagement. *(High priority)*
 Although professors have their own standards for measuring the effectiveness of the techniques they use to engage students in their classes, the addition of a question concerning student engagement in the course on the standard student evaluation conducted each semester would offer more feedback to the professor. This is particularly needed for the UGC 101/102 classes, since many instructors are not familiar with how to engage freshman in this small classroom environment.
- Provide training for faculty on new methods for increasing student engagement. *(High priority)*
 The Teaching, Learning & Technology Center may increase communication among professors at the university through effective short presentations. At the same time, it should be noted that while some techniques (for example, questioning techniques) may be effective across disciplines, other techniques (for example, certain demonstrations, short case studies etc.) may be much more relevant to one discipline than another. Any university-wide discussions or presentations aimed at improving effective methods of student engagement must keep this in mind. The same may be said for classes with low and high class size. Programs should be constructed with the aim of specifically discussing instructional methods used when hundreds of students are enrolled in one section and in sections with far fewer students.
- Encourage faculty to share teaching tips, techniques & lessons learned across disciplines/departments. *(High priority)*
 Specific conferences are held which offer insights into teaching specific courses or teaching in specific disciplines. Professors may be encouraged to attend such a conference and share the information learned within the department, or if relevant, to a wider audience.
- Develop an instructional technology department & make sure high tech teaching sites are available. *(High priority)*
 A Javits-like place for teaching where there is the support and technical abilities - support being in the form of people who can assist with the use of the technology and the facility at large. The technology would assist in engaging students in the large classroom setting and would afford instructors the opportunity to work more effectively with students and share a consistent set of learning expectations.

- Implement an attendance policy. *(High priority)*
Implement an attendance policy and stress its importance.
- Develop course evaluations designed to measure the learning objectives of each specific course. *(High priority)*
Develop a new set of course evaluation for each type of freshman course (WRT 101/102, UGC 101/102, or PSY 103), since each course has its own objectives, class engagement approaches, and teaching practices.
- Implement an attendance policy. *(High priority)*
Implement an attendance policy and stress its importance.
- Communicate outcomes to instructors and faculty. *(High priority)*
Determine ways to better communicate the course outcomes to the instructors and faculty, such that they can improve their courses.
- The WRT 101/102 course outcome needs to be more focused on grammar and sentence structure. *(High priority)*
The WRT 101/102 course outcome needs to be more focused on grammar and sentence structure.
- Eliminate any arbitrary placement thresholds in the writing program. *(High priority)*
The university should realistically examine the level of writing competence of current local high school graduates, and set goals for enabling these students to function in a world which depends on written communication. Comparison with national best practices is recommended.
- More resources are needed especially in the writing program. *(High priority)*
More resources are needed, especially in the writing program, to provide a number of sections adequate to match the more objective placement results.
- Provide additional ways for students to meet the minimum quantitative "entrance" requirement. *(High priority)*
The university should explore ways to expand opportunities for students to meet the minimum quantitative "entrance" requirements (e.g., quantitative literacy courses tailored to discipline).
- Include questions on out-of-class experiences on course evaluations. *(High priority)*
Activities linked to academic programs: Course evaluations could include questions on their involvement with out of class experiences as it relates to their course.
- Continue developing learning outcomes for co-curricular activities (RL) and assess for outcomes. *(High priority)*
Residence Life: The Campus Residences staff should continue developing specific learning outcomes for co-curricular activities. Once this has been done, the benchmarking survey could be modified so that the students could self-assess for specific outcomes, not just general satisfaction.
- Develop specific learning goals for student affairs activities and provide means of assessment. *(High priority)*
Student Affairs: Similarly, Student Affairs could develop specific learning goals for its activities and include questions on those goals in its freshman surveys.
- The DFWI rates should be made available to departments on a regular basis. *(High priority)*
- Contact departments with high DFWI rate for follow up. *(High priority)*
The university should contact departments with high DFWI rates (i) so that they can address the issue directly, and (ii) so they they can provide the university with more information about enrollment in those DFWI coursesâ€”perhaps the problem is not particular to FYS.
- Study data on withdrawal requests for trends amongst FYS. *(High priority)*
The university gathers information on why students petition to withdrawal (W) from a course. This information should be studied to see if there are any issues that can be addressed for the FYS.
- Departments should collect and study data on why students request incompletes. *(High priority)*
Individual departments should gather information on why students petition for an incomplete (I) for a course. This information should be studied to see if there are any issues that can be addressed for FYS.
- Withdrawal cutoff reminder emails should include an explanation of options available to students. *(High priority)*

The university should send email alerts reminding students of withdrawal cutoff date and reiterate the different options available to the student with an explanation of each.

- UGC 101 should be taught by faculty. (*Medium priority*)

This would improve the low faculty interaction scores for first semester students.

- Extend the withdrawal deadline until midterms results are available. (*Medium priority*)

In order to lower the DWF rate, it is recommended that the withdrawal deadline be delayed until midterms results are available or ensure that instructors have provided feedback by the cutoff date.