

Skyline College

Summary of First Year Experience Self-Study Recommendations

(DRAFT—Fall 2007)

Introduction

Much of the Skyline College community was engaged during the 2006-07 academic year in a reflective evaluation on the student experience during the first year of attendance. The evaluation was in conjunction with the Policy Center on the First Year of College and their Foundations of Excellence initiative. After an extensive self-evaluation, a number of recommendations were submitted by the individual committees to create an experience and organization that worked to ensure the success of students as they entered Skyline College. The recommendations are grouped into five general categories. Within each category are specific suggestions from the various committees. In addition, whenever possible suggestions are also identified if they link to or are already a part of other college-wide strategies.

These recommendations have not been vetted through the entire steering committee for the First Year Experience. It is expected after that occurs, these recommendations will be gleaned for duplications and a prioritization of recommendations would occur.

The General Areas of Recommendation are:

- I. I. Adopt a philosophy to guide our work with first year students.**
- II. II. Establish policies, procedures, and institutional structures that promote first year student success**
- III. III. Develop a research agenda that identifies FY students, monitors their progress, and reports their challenges and successes to inform institutional work with FY students**
- IV. IV. Diversify faculty/staff, curriculum, faculty/staff/student orientation and extra-curricular activities**
- V. V. Develop programs/services that improve the quality and quantity of our communication to first year students, foster connections, facilitate their transition to college, and promote their personal development during college**

Specific recommendations within each of the areas of General recommendations

I. I. Adopt a philosophy to guide our work with first year students.

Recommendation	Strategy
<p>A. A. <u>Establish an explicit philosophy statement that provides an overarching framework for working holistically and intentionally with first year students.</u> The statement must be clearly written and articulate a comprehensive, cohesive, seamless, interconnected and coordinated program of instruction and student services for first year students.</p>	
<p>B. B. <u>Include the development, adoption, and regular review/evaluation of the First Year Philosophy statement in the institutional governance processes,</u> such as the Institutional Planning Committee (IPC), Budgeting, Full-Time Equivalent Faculty (FTEF) Allocation Committee, Student Equity, College Council, Program Review, Curriculum, Professional Development, and others.</p>	
<p>C. C. <u>Develop and implement a plan for effective communication and dissemination to faculty, staff, students and administration.</u> Examples of possible communication mechanisms may include the following: College web site, student handbook, class schedules and catalogue, orientation for students, staff, and faculty; incorporate in instructions for development of unit work-plans, in overall educational master plan, in budget instructions and criteria, in Curriculum Committee goals and objectives, and in program review criteria.</p>	

II. II. Establish policies, procedures, and institutional structures that promote first year student success

Recommendation	Strategy
<p>A. A. <u>Establish effective Communication Structures/Systems:</u> (a) internally-- among faculty and staff and (b) externally--with and among first year students; focusing on “personalized communication/invitation” to students</p> <p>1. 1. Internal: e. g., increased communication and collaboration between student services and instructional faculty/staff; e-newsletter; identification first year students via notation on rosters and other materials for faculty/staff</p> <p>2. 2. External: <i>Passive</i>---improve/increase advertising of</p>	<p><i>College-wide Strategy 1.3, Outreach/Responsiveness to Community Needs</i></p>

<p>support services; include GE requirements in class schedules and catalogs; use of technology for early alert; enhance the college website; <i>Personalized Invitations</i>—classroom visits, calls.</p>	
<p>B. B. <u>Establish a coordinated organizational structure</u> for the delivering first year programs, services, and activities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1. Create a First Year Coordinating Council, comprised of faculty, staff, administrators from instruction, student and academic support services, administrative services; and students. 	
<p>C. C. <u>Establish and support Professional Development structures</u> that promote engaged pedagogies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1. Develop “teaching” communities to provide a mechanism for faculty exchange and mentoring regarding best/effective practices in working with first year students. 2. 2. Consider the establishment of a faculty development center, facilitated by a faculty professional development coordinator 3. 3. Support faculty/staff participation in conferences 4. 4. Provide resources related to effective practices in working with First Year students, e. g., scholarly journals, books, resource guides/handbooks 	<p><i>(College wide Strategy 5.1, Comprehensive staff development).</i></p> <p><i>(College wide Strategy 4.1, Integrated & Evidence-Based Resource Planning System)</i></p>
<p>D. D. <u>Provide adequate physical structures/facilities</u> that facilitate faculty/student as well faculty/faculty connection and dialogue</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1. Create a centralized office space for adjunct faculty, many of whom teach first year students. 	<p><i>(College wide Strategy 1.2, Student Access and Success).</i></p>
<p>E. E. <u>Develop programs, policies and procedures</u> that “make the success path clearer to students (i.e. promote the retention, progress, success of first year students, both first-term and continuing)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1. Prescriptive approaches/programs, e. g., mandatory placement and orientation, required intervention programs for students undergoing academic difficulties 2. 2. A case management approach to counseling (which includes multiple contacts), 3. 3. Multiple formats for orientation (e. g., in person and on 	<p><i>(College wide Strategy 1.3, Outreach and Responsiveness to the Community).</i></p>

<p>line orientation).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. 4. Holistic and developmental approaches to programs and services (e. g., team taught, multidisciplinary courses) 5. 5. First year learning communities 6. 6. Formalized institutional retention strategies 	
<p>F. F. <u>Enhance partnership structures</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1. Enhance collaboration with the high schools 2. 2. Increase team teaching, multidisciplinary approaches in offering programs/courses; 3. 3. Provide common experiences for FY students 	<p><i>(College wide Strategy 1.3, Outreach & Responsiveness to the Community).</i></p>
<p>G. G. <u>Develop faculty/staff hiring structures</u> that clarify expectations regarding institutional outcomes for FY students</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1. Improve the way we communicate expectations for working with new and continuing FY year students to faculty and staff (e. g., new employee orientation). 2. 2. Clarify expectations regarding “engaging pedagogies” 	

III. III. Develop a research agenda that identifies FY students, monitors progress, and reports their challenges and successes to inform institutional work with FY students.

Recommendation	Strategy
<p>A. A. <u>Establish institutional learning goals to guide institutional planning at the course, program, degree, and extracurricular levels</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1. Clarify the role of out of class learning. 	<p><i>(College wide Strategy 2.1, Integrated Planning & Institutional Performance Measurement).</i></p>
<p>B. B. <u>Conduct ongoing assessment on the following programs/services</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1. Implement SLOAC for campus events and classes 2. 2. Expand Balanced Scorecard 3. 3. Evaluate availability of services, and gaps between attendance 	<p><i>(College wide Strategy 2.1, Integrated Planning & Institutional Performance Measurement).</i></p>

and service availability 4. 4. Conduct validation studies for math course 5. 5. Conduct focus groups on the needs of students	
C. C. <u>Collect, analyze, and communicate data regarding FY students (both first-term and continuing)</u> 1. 1. Identify first term and continuing students 2. 2. Monitor their progress 3. 3. Explore student perceptions D. D. Increase timely communication of data	<i>(College wide Strategy 2.1, Integrated Planning & Institutional Performance Measurement).</i>
E. E. <u>Establish FY benchmarks (internal and external)</u>	

IV. IV. Diversify faculty/staff, curriculum, faculty/staff/student orientation and extra-curricular activities

Recommendation	Strategy
A. A. <u>Hire and retain diverse faculty and staff</u>	
B. B. <u>Develop curricula that includes diverse perspectives</u> 1. 1. Review course outlines and program review reports	
C. C. <u>Hire a full-time outreach coordinator to improve outreach to community</u>	
D. D. <u>Include/Explore tolerance and diversity in Orientation for faculty/staff/students</u>	
E. E. <u>Enhance diversity training</u> 1. 1. Encourage ASSC to explore possibilities for MOT training	
F. F. <u>Incorporate the Campus mission and Values statement into the campus environment</u>	
G. G. <u>Unify various clubs, committees communities that celebrate diversity</u>	

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V. V. Develop programs/services that improve the quality and quantity of our communication to first year students, foster connections, facilitate their transition to college, and promote their personal development during college (College wide Strategy 1.1, Innovative Programs & Modes of Delivery)

Recommendation	Strategy
<p>A. <u>A. Improve communication to first year students, focusing on “personal” (as opposed to passive) communication</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1. Hire an Outreach Counselor 2. 2. Review materials for jargony language 3. 3. Increase pre/during/post enrollment communication to students 4. 4. Develop “personal invitations” to FY students 	<p><i>(Strategy 1.2, Student Access and Success)</i></p>
<p>B. <u>B. Design and implement programs that promote faculty/student, student/student, student/community connections</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1. Regularly conduct all college student and parent orientations 2. 2. Implement personalized approaches for inviting students to access services 3. 3. Provide parent orientation for the families of FY students 4. 4. Hire a full-time outreach counselor 	<p><i>(Strategy 1.2, Student Access and Success)</i></p>
<p>C. <u>C. Implement programs/services that facilitate the transition of FY students (first-term and continuing), for example:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1. Develop a First Year Seminar 2. 2. Recommend/require Counseling 100 3. 3. Conduct Financial aid workshops 4. 4. Develop application podcasts 5. 5. Conduct campus tours 6. 6. Develop a resource guide for FY students 7. 7. Conduct personalized calls to admits only 8. 8. Require/mandate orientation 9. 9. Develop First Year Learning Communities 	<p><i>(Strategy 1.2, Student Access and Success)</i></p>
<p>D. <u>D. Provide services that promote the FY students personal development</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1. Develop on-line assessment of long-term goals 2. 2. Encourage exploration of roles and purposes of higher 	<p><i>(Strategy 1.2, Student Access and Success)</i></p>

educations - “what does it mean to be an engaged citizen?”	
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