Models of Comprehensive First-Year Experience Initiatives at Large, Public Universities

Custom Research Brief – April 10, 2008

Sections Included:

I. Methodology & Research Parameters
II. Executive Overview
III. University Profiles
I. Methodology & Research Parameters

Sources Used:

- OCLC First Search
- The Chronicle of Higher Education
- Internet, via search engines and professional journal databases
- University Web sites

Additional Resources:

- The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition (University of South Carolina) http://sc.edu/fye
- The Reinvention Center (University of Miami) http://www.reinventioncenter.miami.edu
  - Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities. The Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University. (1998)
- Policy Center on the First Year of College (Brevard, North Carolina) http://www.firstyear.org
- The Institute for Transforming Undergraduate Education (University of Delaware) http://www.udel.edu/inst
  - Resources for Problem-Based Learning

Research Parameters:

- The Council focused our research on initiatives at large, public universities that originated out of the provost’s or president’s office and targeted all, or the majority of, students in the freshman class.
- The member expressed an interest in universities that provide the same first-year experience to students on multiple campuses. Although some multi-campus institutions offer a first-year experience on all campuses, extensive research yielded no comprehensive, mandatory first-year experience initiative spanning multiple campus locations. In an effort to provide the greatest value to our member, our research focused on the strongest initiatives that may serve as models for first-year experiences.
- The models profiled in depth are designed to encompass all freshmen on one campus. Many of the institutions with the strongest and most comprehensive programs do not have multiple campuses, or the initiatives are new and have not yet expanded past the main campus. While residential-based initiatives may present difficulties to commuter campuses, elements such as a common summer reading assignment or freshman seminar may be applied to multiple campuses simultaneously.
- As requested, the Council did not reveal the name of the member university when conducting this research.
I. Methodology & Research Parameters

Below is a brief guide to the institutions profiled in the study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Enrollment total/ undergrad</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>First-year Persistence Rate</th>
<th>Overall Graduation Rate</th>
<th>Endowment</th>
<th>U.S. News Ranking</th>
<th>First Year Initiative</th>
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<tr>
<td>University A</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>25,000 / 15,000</td>
<td>Public Very High Research</td>
<td>90% 60%</td>
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<td>Undergraduate Colleges</td>
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Notes:
All information from the National Center for Education Statistics (http://nces.ed.gov) and U.S. News and World Report (http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com)
*Program name changed to ensure blinding.
II. Executive Overview

Introduction & Project Challenge:

The associate provost at a large public university presented the Council with the following question:

What are some models of comprehensive, curriculum-based first-year experience initiatives at large, public universities across the country?

Like many universities around the world, the member university requesting this research is in the process of reexamining its undergraduate curriculum, with a special focus on the first-year experience. As a large, public university where students have diverse interests and take radically different academic paths over their undergraduate careers, the university seeks to provide a cohesive, unifying experience for all undergraduates that will transcend major and extracurricular activities. The goals of this initiative are to:

- increase student persistence and retention by engaging them both in and outside of the classroom
- build a sense of community among undergraduates
- strengthen students’ affiliation with the university beyond graduation

The initiatives profiled in this brief began with similar goals in mind, and have resulted in increased student persistence, as well as national recognition for the university. While all universities approach the first-year experience (FYE) differently, depending on their student population and institutional mission, we have highlighted several common elements that recur in many first-year experience programs.
II. Executive Overview

Key Findings:

Many large, public universities are reexamining their undergraduate curriculum in general and the first-year experience specifically. This change is motivated by recent reports on student learning such as AAC&U’s *Liberal Education Outcomes* (2005), as well as a desire to prepare students for the demands of 21st century employers.

Contacts emphasize that the success of comprehensive curriculum change depends on strong leadership from the president and provost, as well as buy-in from faculty and (where applicable) the student affairs staff. Without continued institutional commitment, as well as the support of the faculty senate, which must approve changes to general education requirements and agree to teach new courses, ambitious initiatives like the ones profiled in this brief would be difficult to implement successfully.

First-year experience initiatives generally incorporate one or more of several common components:

- **General education courses** with a small class size
- **Freshman transition seminars**, usually one credit and taught by academic advisors, student affairs staff, or peer facilitators
- **Living learning communities**, in which students live on the same hall with other students in their classes
- **Mentoring** or team-teaching with upperclassmen who serve as peer facilitators
- **A summer reading assignment** for the entire freshman class
- **Interaction with faculty** outside of the classroom setting (e.g., small group dinners, attending a performance or lecture, etc.)

First-year experience programs often seek to enhance student engagement and learning by integrating the classroom experience and the co-curricular experience. Strategies include living learning communities, faculty office hours or dinners in residence halls, or co-curricular programming around a common text.

Many first-year experience programs have a strong faculty development mission. Faculty who teach in the initiative receive extensive training in Problem-Based Learning or other student-centered approaches to teaching. The expectation is that faculty who teach in the first-year program will carry new teaching methods to other courses in their department, thereby enhancing instruction at all levels.
II. Executive Overview

Table of Contents:

Full Profiles:

• Model A – Undergraduate Colleges
• Model B – “University B” Experience
• Model C – Freshman Connections

Models in Brief:

• Model D – First-Year Experience (FYE)
• Model E – University Studies
• Model F – University 101
• Model G – First-Year Seminar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Model A</th>
<th>Model B</th>
<th>Model C</th>
<th>Model D</th>
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III. Model A

Model Highlights: Undergraduate Colleges

Goals:
✓ Reduce the “psychological size” of the large research university for first-year students
✓ Improve the success and retention rates of freshmen
✓ Connect first-year students with the courses, faculty, and opportunities that already exist at the university

Key Components:
✓ All freshmen are placed in one of six themed residential colleges, based on their interests (as opposed to their major)
✓ Each college is led by a team consisting of:
  – Faculty director
  – Academic advisor
  – Residential quad director
✓ All freshman are required to take two seminar courses during their first year:
  – Fall semester – Freshmen Seminar 101: One credit first-year success course taught by academic advisor, quad director, or staff volunteer
  – Spring semester – Freshmen Seminar 102: One credit seminar taught by senior tenured faculty members, on a topic of their choice
✓ Faculty/staff leadership teams plan co-curricular activities for the College that relate to the College’s theme (e.g., faculty dinners in residence hall, film screenings, service projects)

Success:
✓ Freshman to sophomore persistence rates have increased from an average of 83% to nearly 90% over the four years since full implementation of the Undergraduate Colleges.
✓ Parents of prospective and admitted students are extremely enthusiastic about the idea of a small college experience within a large research university; this opportunity is cited as a key influence when choosing between schools.
✓ The faculty senate supports the initiative and passed a resolution to require all freshman to take two seminars in their first year, largely because the new seminars would not require the university to hire new instructors. While faculty and staff who teach the courses receive small stipends, the total cost per year of the two seminars (which have become the highest-enrollment courses in the university and require over 120 sections each semester) is about $150,000—less than the cost of hiring one new professor in a research-intensive field.
✓ Professional staff at the university report many benefits to interacting with first-year students; for example, a senior staff member in the Registrar’s office states that teaching the seminar has informed his daily work more than any other experience in 20 years at the university. His office used to assume that they communicated academic policies well, but when he began teaching students, he realized that the message does not always get through.
III. Model A

Model Specifics: Undergraduate Colleges

**Philosophy:**

The original impetus for the Undergraduate Colleges came out of the president’s work as the chair of the Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University, which authored the report *Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America’s Research Universities* (1998). The report emphasized the importance of small community experiences and interacting with faculty early a student’s academic career.

**Implementation:**

The hallmark of the Undergraduate Colleges initiative is the way it brings together academic affairs and student affairs to create a comprehensive experience for first-year students. The director of the Colleges attributes the initiative’s success to collaboration between the president, provost’s office, and student affairs leadership, who committed to support the Colleges through joint funding and reorganized staffing responsibilities (e.g., changing the job description of residential quad directors to include the requirement to teach a section of Freshman Seminar 101).

To avoid upsetting the faculty, who often protest against investment in initiatives that do not contribute directly to their research endeavors, the administration framed the Colleges as tool to connect freshmen to existing university resources in a more coherent way, rather than a replication of courses and staff.

**Key Components:**

*College Themes* – Freshman are placed in a themed residential college before they enter the university. They are encouraged to explore a theme that interests them, as their college choice will not limit their major or shape their first year course schedule, outside of two freshman seminars. Freshman attend summer orientation with other students from their theme.

- Arts, Culture, & Humanities
- Global Studies
- Human Development
- Information & Technology Studies
- Leadership & Service
- Science & Society
III. Model A

Model Specifics: Undergraduate Colleges (Cont’d)

Key Components (Cont’d):

Leadership Team – Each residential college is led by a team of professionals who work together to shape the content of the Freshman Seminar 101 course and create co-curricular programming that relates to the College theme.

- Faculty director – Faculty directors must have expertise in the College’s theme and are primarily responsible for recruiting fellow senior faculty to teach Freshman Seminar 102 courses in the spring. Faculty directors receive some course relief and a small research stipend for their participation, but remain full research and teaching faculty in their academic department.

- Academic advisor – A professional advisor who reports to the Director of the Undergraduate Colleges (not the central academic advising center). These advisors work full-time with the freshmen in their College. Advisors teach four sections of Freshmen Seminar 101 and oversee training for all volunteer instructors teaching FS 101 sections of within their College.

- Residential quad director – A student affairs professional who oversees the residence life staff in the quadrangle where freshmen in their Undergraduate College live. Quad directors also teach one section of Freshman Seminar 101.

Curriculum – Every first-year undergraduate is required to take two seminars offered through their College. There are 120-135 sections of both seminars, with fewer than 20 students in each section.

- Fall semester – Freshmen Seminar 101: One credit course designed to help freshmen make a successful transition to university life. Each Leadership Team shapes the content of the seminar around the College theme, but all seminars must cover several specific topics, including:
  - study skills
  - test taking and test anxiety
  - health/well-being and success in college
  - academic citizenship
  - time management
  - academic and career planning
  - introduction to campus resources
  - how to get involved on campus

Half of the sections are taught by academic advisors and residence hall directors dedicated to the College, and half are taught by volunteers from among the university staff (e.g., Dean of Student’s area, Registrar, etc). Instructors receive a $500 professional development stipend.

- Spring semester – Freshmen Seminar 102: Small, interactive courses designed to introduce first-year students to senior faculty. Faculty may choose any topic for this one-credit course (e.g., a Distinguished Professor in the Marine Science department teaches a course on Bob Dylan). Spring seminars relate to the basic theme of the College. Faculty teaching FS 102 sections receive a $1,000 professional development/research stipend.
Key Components (Cont’d):

Residential Life/Co-curricular Programming – Each Undergraduate College is assigned to one of the six residential quadrangles on campus, and freshmen are interspersed with upperclassmen within each building. New construction at the university has been shaped by the Undergraduate Colleges initiative: three separate facilities have been built for programming and classroom space dedicated to three of the Undergraduate Colleges, and the university plans to build more space for the remaining three Colleges in the coming five to six years. These facilities are built in or around the residential quad that houses the students in the College. For example, the university recently remodeled an old cafeteria to become the Center for Arts, Culture & Humanities, which contains a 250-seat performance space for theater, dance, and music; an art gallery devoted exclusively to undergraduate works; practice rooms and artist's studios; a digital arts laboratory with the latest arts software; a conference hall; a classroom; a café serving food; and a private dining room for use by classes and student organizations. When the university builds new residence halls, they plan for space for the Undergraduate Colleges to conduct classes and meetings.

Peer Mentoring – Undergraduate College Fellows – Motivated freshman are nominated to become peer mentors in their sophomore year, following the completion of an additional one credit course in their spring semester. The course focuses on student development theory, scholarship on mentoring and leadership development, concepts of teaching and learning, and programming/event planning. In their sophomore year, Undergraduate College Fellows serve as teaching assistants for Freshman Seminar 101 sections and assist the College during the opening weekend and other group activities.

Commuter Students – While 89% of the entering freshman class at University A lives on campus, the Colleges are designed to accommodate commuter students as well. Commuters are assigned to all six colleges and participate in the same curriculum, advising, and programming.

University Liaisons – Many university offices, including Career Services, Commuter Student Services, an the Center for Prevention Outreach, provide a dedicated liaison to each Undergraduate College. In this way, students are directed to other university offices and resources through their residential college.
III. Model B

Model Highlights: “University B” Experience (“UBeX”)*

Goals:
- Integrate critical thinking, character development, and civic responsibility into the student experience
- Educate students to be principled citizens by exploring the concept of “values” both inside and outside of the classroom
- Aid in the successful transition from high school to college through an enriched academic/social opportunity
- Challenge faculty to teach in a way that emphasizes the connections and similarities across academic disciplines, preparing students for a workforce that demands flexible, cross-disciplinary thinking

Key Components:
- All freshmen are required to enroll in a UBeX course, a general education or introductory course with fewer than 25 students, during their fall semester
- All freshmen participate in a 1.5 day introduction to UBeX the weekend before classes begin, led by their UBeX course professor and a peer facilitator
- Faculty who teach UBeX courses undergo extensive training in the program goals and tailor their course content to meet UBeX learning objectives
- Each faculty member is paired with a peer facilitator, who team teaches the course and mentors the first-year students

Success:
- The proportion of tenured or tenure track faculty volunteering to teach UBeX courses has risen from 62% to 80% over the two years that the program has been mandatory for all freshmen.
- The program is currently being extended to offer courses for upperclassmen and second semester freshmen.
- The School of Communication is revamping its undergraduate curriculum based on the success of the UBeX approach to teaching.

*Name changed to ensure blinding.
III. Model B

Model Specifics: “University B” Experience*

Philosophy:

“University B” Experience (“UBeX”) was the vision of the current president, who was responding to recent research on student learning, including AAC&U’s Liberal Education Outcomes (2005). The initiative is part of a larger rethinking of undergraduate teaching at the university; whereas traditional academic disciplines tend to lock students into artificial “bunkers” of thought, employers today demand a workforce that can think critically across disciplinary boundaries and work with people from diverse backgrounds. UBeX courses strive to look beyond academic disciplinary divides and to encourage students to examine the common values, assumptions, and intellectual skills that are ubiquitous across all fields.

Implementation:

The program was piloted initially with 135 students who resided in a living learning community, and was extended to all freshmen in the fall of 2005. Next fall, the university will offer 146 UBeX courses for freshmen, as well as 40 courses with a similar format open to upperclassmen. Leaders envision the UBeX initiative as a comprehensive four year experience that will continue to develop over the coming years.

Key Components

Curriculum - All freshmen are required to choose one UBeX course for their fall semester. Incoming students choose a UBeX course during summer orientation, in consultation with their advisor. UBeX courses fulfill general education requirements or fulfill requirements within a specific major. Most UBeX courses are sections of existing introductory courses (Intro. to Biology, World Civilizations, Intro. to Film, etc.) and cover the same content, but are adapted to the smaller class size, with a greater emphasis on active learning, critical thinking skills, and examining value conflicts within the discipline.

Introduction Weekend - All freshmen attend the UBeX introduction weekend before fall classes begin. The goals of the introduction weekend include welcoming students to campus, initiating a sense of community through small group discussions and activities, and conveying university and course expectations. Students move into residence halls on Saturday, then attend an evening picnic with their UBeX class, peer facilitator, and a residential advisor. On Sunday, freshmen attend five hours of programming with their UBeX professor and peer facilitator. Sessions cover:

- Basic introduction to the university and course expectations
- Learning the vocabulary around values
- Transitioning to college, navigating resources, and skills for academic success
- Engaging participants in basic values decision-making, through small group exercises and a common reading

*Name changed to ensure blinding.
III. Model B – Bowling Green State University

Model Specifics: “University B” Experience* (Cont’d)

Key Components (Cont’d):

Faculty - Faculty members who teach UBeX courses receive extensive training to assure that their courses will address the learning objectives of the program. In addition to summer training, faculty are required to attend monthly meetings during the fall semester, during which colleagues share their approaches to teaching. Faculty use the sessions to share honest feedback about what works and what does not work in the classroom. Faculty do not receive additional compensation for the time they spend with students during the UBex introduction weekend.

Peer Facilitators – Students in their sophomore year or beyond can apply to become peer facilitators for a UBeX course. Peer facilitators receive training in university resources and group facilitation skills, and receive a stipend for their work. Peer facilitators work with their UBeX class during the introductory weekend to build a sense of community and convey information about university resources and skills for college success. In the classroom, peer facilitators attend every session and act as teaching assistants, facilitating break out discussions and, depending on the style of the professor, sometimes serving as a co-instructor.

"Having that peer to respond to emails and Facebook messages at two in the morning, that is a really empowering experience for the students. Working with the peer facilitator in the classroom also taught me new ways of engaging students—sometimes the message (whether it’s ‘write multiple drafts’ or ‘ask questions in class’) means more coming from a fellow student.”

-Council Interview

*Name changed to ensure blinding.
III. Model C

Model Highlights: Freshman Connections

Goals:
- Deepen the contact new students have with faculty, staff, and fellow students in order to improve learning and encourage retention
- Contribute to the goals of University C’s Core Curriculum, which include helping students to:
  - engage in lifelong education by learning to acquire knowledge and to use it for intelligent ends
  - communicate at a level appropriate for college graduates
  - clarify their personal values and be sensitive to those held by others
  - recognize and seek solutions to practical problems by drawing on a knowledge of historical and contemporary events and elements of the cultural heritage surrounding those events
  - assess their unique interests, talents, and goals and choose specialized learning experiences that will foster their fulfillment

Key Components:
- First year students are assigned to one of nine residence halls (called a "Learning Community")
- During their fall semester, freshmen take at least one large introductory general education course with other students in their residence hall
- "Learning Teams" of faculty, academic advisors, and residence life staff plan programming for each Learning Community
- The entire freshmen class reads the same book (called the “Common Reader”) over the summer and participates in large and small group activities related to the book

Success:
- First year persistence rates have improved significantly—from approximately 65% to approximately 80%—since implementation of the program 10 years ago (Note: some of the effect is due to a change in admissions requirements around the same time)
- First-year advising has become more targeted; Freshman Connections has made it easier for administrators and advisors to identify students in academic peril earlier, when they can still benefit from intervention
- Enhanced contact and communication between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs
- Through the Common Reader initiative, which brings community members on to campus to discuss the book, town-gown relations have improved
- Freshman Connections has received national recognition among comprehensive first-year programs, based on its success in creating smaller communities within a large university
III. Model C

Model Specifics: Freshman Connections

Philosophy:
The Freshman Connections initiative began approximately 10 years ago, with the idea of adapting the learning community model to a form that would work at an institution like University C, which has strong Core Curriculum requirements for undergraduate students and a large commuter population.

Implementation:
Rather than piloting the program with a smaller group of students, the president decided to encompass the entire freshman class. Because the university already required students to take several introductory courses through their Core Curriculum (including English, Math, and History), it was relatively simple to arrange the freshman class into residential communities and link clusters of introductory courses to each one.

Key Components

Common Reader - On the last day of summer orientation, all freshmen receive a copy of the book chosen to be that year's Common Reader. To encourage participation, program leaders frame the Common Reader experience as the students' first real college assignment. Participation rates went up after the book was framed as a challenge and a test of their maturity and initiative.

After the convocation ceremony, which takes place on Sunday before classes begin, students are broken out into groups of 25 for discussions led by community members, faculty, honors students, graduate students, and administrators. The Common Reader sets the theme for the semester, including a major event in which the author speaks to the entire freshman class (open to the campus and the outside community as well). Many Freshman Connections courses use the book in classroom activities, and teams of faculty and staff create programming around the book in residence halls. This year's selection was Field Notes from a Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change by Elizabeth Kolbert.

Residential Life - During the summer before they matriculate, entering freshmen fill out a housing form to determine their residence hall assignment. Most students are randomly assigned to one of ten groups of residence halls, each of which will become a separate Learning Community. There are four exceptions to random assignment:

- Commuter students are all assigned to the same Learning Community, because administrators found that commuter students have different needs than residential students.
- Some majors are assigned to specific Learning Communities. This includes honors students, pre-business majors, nursing majors, and telecommunications majors. The university found that these groups benefit from targeted advising in their first year, due to complicated prerequisite policies. There were high rates of failing grades, incompletes, and withdrawals in introductory courses in these majors, and therefore students were leaving school. The goal was to focus advising and support resources to help students be successful in the early “weeder” courses, or to assist them in identifying a more appropriate major.
- Students may request to live with a friend, which may change their Learning Community. For example, a pre-business and a nursing major may wish to live together; one of them would not be able to live in the Learning Community reserved for their major.
- There is one Learning Community with a sustainability theme, which students may request to join if they have a strong interest in “green” issues.
III. Model C

Model Specifics: Freshman Connections (Cont’d)

Key Components (Cont’d)

Curriculum - During summer orientation, freshman have already received their residence hall assignment, and choose at least one course from the cluster of Core Curriculum courses (and professors) connected to their Learning Community. Because all students at University C are required to take introductory Math, English, and History, as well as a science and social science course, students can generally find a course in their Learning Community cluster that fits in with their academic plan. Below is an example of a cluster of courses offered for one Learning Community:

- Professor A (one section of PSYSC 100)
- Professor B (two sections of HIST 150)
- Professor C (two sections of MATHS 125)
- Professor D (two sections of BIO 102)
- Professor E (three sections of ENG 103)
- Professor F (two sections of ENG 103)
- Professor G (one section of ENG 103)
- Professor H (one section of ENG 103)

Learning Team - Dedicated teams of faculty, academic advisors, and residence life staff plan programming for each Learning Community. One member of the Learning Team is designated the Captain, and all ten captains meet weekly to coordinate efforts across the Learning Communities and create overall programming for the entire freshman class (to ensure equal representation from each division, at least three captains are advisors, three are faculty, and three are residence directors). Learning teams are composed of:

- **3-12 Faculty members**, depending on the number of students in the Learning Community
- **1-2 Academic advisors**, who work only with freshmen in their Learning Community
- **1-5 Residence directors**, depending on the size of the residence hall
- **1 Freshman Connections assistant**, an older student who lives in the residence hall and assists with programming

The Learning Team meets over the summer to plan activities, and all team members receive a small stipend for their work. During planning sessions, teams agree on ways to integrate the Common Reader into Learning Community programming, and how they will meet four key objectives for the fall semester (through both academic courses and co-curricular activities). Objectives include:

- **Sustainability Connections** (e.g., a “Greening the Campus” initiative)
- **Service Learning Connections** (e.g., group community service project, such as tutoring at a local elementary school)
- **Arts Connections** (e.g., students attend a play on campus together)
- **Academic Connections** (e.g., a sociology professor may choose to show a film in the residence hall and serve pizza, and then discuss the film in class)
III. Models in Brief

Model D – LIFE Program

✓ 50% of freshmen participate in LIFE – Learning Integrated Freshman Experience.
✓ In the fall semester, freshmen are assigned to clusters of 22 students that share a residence hall floor, freshman seminar, and cluster of courses based on their major (or area of interest).
✓ Freshman success seminars are taught by a life mentor (junior or senior student); in addition to learning about university resources and study strategies, students must plan and complete a group community service project.
✓ Students in each cluster take one or two academic courses together (such as the same section of a large introductory science lecture), and because they live on the same floor, can easily form study groups.
✓ The program figures prominently in the university’s recruitment strategy, as parents appreciate the opportunity for students to receive a small college experience within a large research university.
✓ All freshman at the university complete some type of first-year experience, either the LIFE program, the honors program, or a first-year seminar mandatory for their major. All three options have a residential component (either through the honors program dormitory, or residence halls grouped by major).

Model E – University Studies

✓ University Studies is a comprehensive, four year general education initiative. University Studies courses must address four goals: Inquiry & Critical Thinking, Communication, the Diversity of Human Experience, and Ethics & Social Responsibility.
✓ Faculty who participate attend yearly retreats focused on student-centered teaching, and then team teach the interdisciplinary first-year courses with several colleagues.
✓ Freshman Inquiry courses are team-taught and interdisciplinary, with approximately 36 students in each section, which meets 5 hours per week for an entire year. Course themes rotate based on faculty interest (example course topic: “Einstein’s Universe: Language, Culture, and Relativity”). Three to four faculty from different disciplines teach different sections of one course with a common syllabus. Each faculty member works with an undergraduate student mentor who meets with the class two hours per week.
✓ Sophomore Inquiry courses are a gateway to introduce students to the content and questions explored in upper division clusters. Sophomore students must choose three Sophomore Inquiry courses, which meet twice weekly with faculty, and once with a graduate student mentor. Sophomores choose an Upper Division Cluster that matches with one of their Sophomore Inquiry courses.
✓ Departments apply to have their courses count as Upper Division Clusters. The courses cannot have departmental prerequisites, and must demonstrate how they teach the goals of University Studies and how they relate to the theme of the cluster. Students must take three courses from one cluster, and cannot take cluster courses in their major. (Example clusters: Natural Science Inquiry, Leadership for Change, Media Studies, Middle East Studies)
✓ All undergraduates must complete a Senior Capstone community-based service learning course, in which they become part of a large, ongoing community partnership and plan a project with their class and faculty mentor.
III. Models in Brief

Model F – *University 101*

- The University 101 program was created in the late 1970’s to address student unrest on campus. The goal of the program was to foster community and dialogue between students and faculty and help students feel more positively about their experience at a large university.

- Faculty shape the freshman seminar course to their interests, but are required to meet specific objectives and cover several topics, including Sexual Health and Violence Prevention, Financial Responsibility, Alcohol and Drugs, Library/Information Literacy, and Career Planning.

- Although only 25% of majors require students to take a freshman seminar, 80% of freshmen at the university choose to do so.

- Faculty teaching the courses must attend a two and a half day workshop focused on teaching methods, in addition to a half day session each semester they teach to update them on academic policies and university resources.

- 98% of University 101 courses are team taught by a faculty member and peer leader (junior or senior student).

Model G – *First-Year Seminar*

- Part of a comprehensive general education program, the First-Year Seminar is a three credit academic course taught by full time faculty and designed around interdisciplinary themes. All courses must meet the nine skill objectives of the general education program, including information literacy, critical thinking, and communication.

- A recent addition to the First-Year Seminar requires all freshmen to complete a career interest inventory (FOCUS), followed by consultation with an advisor.
Professional Services Note

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