Applied Studies	Race and Ethnicity in Modern America	Aaron Rife
LAS	Cross Cultural Communication	Becky Nordyke
LAS	Solving Global Problems	Carolyn Shaw, Michael Hall
Applied Studies	Superheroes Go To School	Daniel Bergman
Fine Arts	Music As the Key to My Success	David Hunsicker
Business	Solutions by Design: An Introduction to Design Thinking	Dotty Harpool
Honors	Creative Discovery	Elaine Bernstorf
Fine Arts	Music Really Does Make your Smarter	Jeb Wallace, Carmen Lemoine, Elaine Bernstorf, David Hunsicker
LAS	World Cultures in Popular Media	Jennifer Musaji
Honors	Discovering Humanity	Kimberly Engber
Honors	Election 2016	Neal Allen
Honors	Law and Politics	Neal Allen
LAS	Energy Science and the Environment	Nick Solomey
LAS	Powerful Narratives: Storytelling and Social Justice in the Hispanic World	Rocio del Aguila
LAS	Cooking Communities: Food and Culture in the Hispanic World	Rocio del Aguila
Engineering	Introduction to Technology and Innovation	Samantha Corcoran, Christopher Wyant, Konstantinos Mykoniatis, Jennifer Hadley
Fine Arts	Music As the Key to My Success	Tom Wine
LAS	Contemporary Civil Rights Movements in the United	Robin Henry
Applied Studies	Creativity and Problem Solving	Jim Granada
LAS	Fundamentals of Diversity	Chinyere Okafor

My FYS helped me:	Strongly Disagree FL16	Strongly Disagree FL17	Strongly Disagree FL18	Somewhat Disagree FL16	Somewhat Disagree FL17	Somewhat Disagree FL18	Neither A nor D FL16	Neither A nor D FL17	Neither A or D FL18	Somewhat Agree FL16	Somewhat Agree FL17	Somewhat Agree FL18	strongly Agree FL16	strongly Agree FL17	Strongly Agree FL18	ALL Disagree FL16	ALL Disagree FL17	ALL Disagree FL18	ALL Agree FL16	ALL Agree FL17	ALL Agree FL18	N= FL16	N= FL17	N= FL18
Develop my information literacy skills (library / research)	7.50%	9.09%	5.30%	7.50%	22.08%	16.56%	18.33%	11.69%	17.88%	45.00%	37.66%	37.75%	21.67%	19.48%	22.52%	15%	31.17%	21.86%	66%	57.14%	60.27%	120	77	151
Develop my writing skills	8.33%	22.08%	7.95%	8.33%	16.88%	17.22%	21.67%	11.69%	23.84%	40.00%	36.36%	36.42%	21.67%	12.99%	14.57%	16%	38.96%	25.17%	61%	49.35%	50.99%	120	77	151
Develop my public speaking skills	6.61%	15.58%	10.60%	9.09%	16.88%	14.57%	23.97%	18.18%	26.49%	39.67%	32.47%	30.46%	20.66%	16.88%	17.88%	15%	32.46%	25.17%	60%	49.35%	48.34%	121	77	151
Develop my notetaking skills	16.67%	24.68%	12.67%	24.17%	14.29%	15.33%	31.67%	23.38%	27.33%	18.33%	20.78%	29.33%	9.17%	16.88%	15.33%	40%	38.97%	28.00%	27%	37.66%	44.66%	120	77	150
Develop my time management skills	11.86%	16.88%	8.61%	12.71%	9.09%	13.25%	24.58%	14.29%	29.14%	33.90%	38.96%	31.79%	16.95%	20.78%	17.22%	24%	25.97%	21.86%	50%	59.74%	49.01%	118	77	151
Develop my financial literacy skills		27.27%			16.88%			14.29%			32.47%			9.09%						41.56%				
Develop a greater respect for global diversity	7.50%	15.58%	5.30%	5.96%	9.09%	5.96%	13.33%	25.97%	29.80%	25.00%	15.58%	26.49%	48.33%	33.77%	32.45%	13%	24.67%	11.26%	73%	49.35%	58.94%	120	77	151

I found it helpful to include lessons about:	Strongly Disagree FL16	Strongly Disagree FL17	Strongly Disagree FL18	Somewhat Disagree FL16	Somewhat Disagree FL17	Somewhat Disagree FL18	Neither A nor D FL16	Neither A nor D FL17	Neither A or D FL18	Somewhat Agree FL16	Somewhat Agree FL17	Somewhat Agree FL18	strongly Agree FL16	strongly Agree FL17	Strongly Agree FL18	ALL Disagree FL16	ALL Disagree FL17	ALL Disagree FL18	ALL Agree FL16	ALL Agree FL17	ALL Agree FL18	N= FL16	N= FL17	N= FL18
Learning styles (visual, audio, kinetic, etc)	6.14%		7.38%	7.89%		4.70%	21.05%		21.48%	26.32%		27.52%	38.60%		24.83%	14%		12.08%	64%		52.35%	114		149
Schedule planning	5.98%		6.71%	4.27%		6.04%	17.95%		21.48%	37.61%		27.52%	34.19%		27.52%	10%		12.75%	71%		55.04%	117		149
Career development	6.19%		2.70%	10.62%		5.41%	28.32%		25%	29.20%		24.32%	25.66%		20.95%	16%		8.11%	54%		45.27%	113		148
Financial literacy (budgeting)	7.07%		6.04%	11.11%		12.08%	30.30%		18.12%	24.24%		21.48%	27.27%		13.42%	18%		18.12%	51%		34.90%	99		149

By being enrolled in this class:	Strongly Disagree FL16	Strongly Disagree FL17	Strongly Disagree FL18	Somewhat Disagree FL16	Somewhat Disagree FL17	Somewhat Disagree FL18	Neither A nor D FL16	Neither A nor D FL17	Neither A or D FL18	Somewhat Agree FL16	Somewhat Agree FL17	Somewhat Agree FL18	strongly Agree FL16	strongly Agree FL17	Strongly Agree FL18	ALL Disagree FL16	ALL Disagree FL17	ALL Disagree FL18	ALL Agree FL16	ALL Agree FL17	ALL Agree FL18	N= FL16	N= FL17	N= FL18
I feel more connected with my freshmen peers.	4.96%	9.09%	9.33%	10.74%	10.39%	9.33%	16.53%	14.29%	14.67%	38.02%	38.96%	39.33%	29.75%	27.27%	27.33%	15%	19.48%	18.66%	67%	66.23%	66.66%	121	77	150
I feel more connected with the faculty on campus.	4.92%	12.99%	8.00%	9.02%	9.09%	12.67%	27.05%	28.57%	26.00%	36.07%	33.77%	29.33%	22.95%	15.58%	24.00%	13%	22.08%	20.67%	59%	49.35%	53.33%	122	77	150
I am more aware of different engagement opportunities on campus.	5.04%	6.67%	4.70%	3.36%	5.33%	5.37%	15.13%	17.33%	18.12%	35.29%	30.67%	42.95%	41.18%	40%	28.86%	8%	12.00%	10.07%	76%	70.67%	71.81%	119	75	149

Question	Strongly Disagree FL16	Strongly Disagree FL17	Strongly Disagree FL18	Somewhat Disagree FL16	Somewhat Disagree FL17	Somewhat Disagree FL18	Neither A nor D FL16	Neither A nor D FL17	Neither A or D FL18	Somewhat Agree FL16	Somewhat Agree FL17	Somewhat Agree FL18	strongly Agree FL16	strongly Agree FL17	Strongly Agree FL18	ALL Disagree FL16	ALL Disagree FL17	ALL Disagree FL18	ALL Agree FL16	ALL Agree FL17	ALL Agree FL18	N= FL16	N= FL17	N= FL18
Helped me connect with others on campus	7.63%	5.19%	15.86%	5.08%	10.71%	12.58%	21.19%	20.78%	28.48%	27.12%	33.77%	23.84%	38.98%	29.87%	19.21%	12%	15.58%	28.44%	66%	63.64%	43.05%	118	77	151
Helped me find support resources	5.08%	1.30%	12.58%	4.24%	9.09%	6.62%	15.25%	12.99%	22.52%	30.51%	31.17%	32.45%	44.92%	45.45%	25.83%	9%	10.39%	19.20%	75%	76.62%	58.28%	118	77	151
Helped me understand the course content	5.93%	6.49%	16.56%	10.17%	10.39%	9.27%	18.64%	14.29%	24.50%	27.97%	38.96%	28.48%	37.29%	29.87%	21.19%	16%	16.88%	25.83%	65%	68.83%	49.67%	118	77	151
Was a valuable resource during my transition to WSU		1.30%			9.09%			20.78%			23.38%			45.45%			10.39%			68.83%			77	

Question	Strongly Disagree FL16	Strongly Disagree FL17	Somewhat Disagree FL16	Somewhat Disagree FL17	Neither A nor D FL16	Neither A nor D FL17	Somewhat Agree FL16	Somewhat Agree FL17	strongly Agree FL16	strongly Agree FL17	ALL Disagree FL16	ALL Disagree FL17	ALL Agree FL16	ALL Agree FL17	N= FL16	N= FL17
My service learning experience complemented the course content	5.00%	12.50%	5.00%	10.71%	20.00%	17.86%	35.00%	26.79%	35.00%	32.14%	10%	23.21%	70%	58.93%	40	56
My service learning experience added value to the course	10%	14.29%	2.50%	10.71%	12.50%	17.86%	47.50%	28.57%	27.50%	28.57%	12%	25.00%	75%	57.14%	40	56

How would you rate your overall satisfaction with the course?

0= unsatisfied; 10 = very satisfied	Min FL16	Min FL17	Min FL18	Max FL16	Max FL17	Max FL18	Mean FL16	Mean FL17	Mean FL18	Std Dev FL16	Std Dev FL17	Std Dev FL18	Variance FL18	N=FL18
Individual course scores for 9 courses:	5	0	0	10	10	10	7.78	5.95	6.72	1.55	3.23	2.55	6.5	141

Would you recommend a FYS to other first-year students?

Answer Fall 2013	%	N=
yes	59%	97
no	41%	69
Total	100%	166

Answer Fall 2014	%	N=
yes	79%	77
no	21%	21
Total	100%	98

Answer Fall 2015	%	N=
yes	85%	63
no	15%	11
Total	100%	74

Answer Fall 2016	%	N=
yes	73.28%	85
no	26.72%	31
Total	100%	116

Answer Fall 2017	%	N=
yes	61.64%	48
no	38.36%	28
Total	100%	73

Answer Fall 2018	%	N=
yes	66.89%	101
no	33.11%	50
Total	100%	151

Overall, do you think this course contributed to your *personal* success? [2013, 2014, 2015, 2017]

2013: 3.24 out of 5
2014: 4.06 out of 5
2015: 3.92 out of 5

2017	%	N=
Yes	47.30%	35
No	52.70%	39

2018	%	N=
Yes	52.32%	79
No	47.68%	72

How would you rate how this course contributed to your *academic* success at WSU? [2013, 2014, 2015]

2013: 3.16 out of 5
2014: 3.91 out of 5
2015: 3.86 out of 5

Overall, do you think this course contributed to your *academic* success? [2013, 2014, 2015, 2017]

2016	%	N=
Yes	54.46%	61
No	45.54%	51

2017	%	N=
Yes	42.47%	31
No	57.53%	42

2018	%	N=
Yes	46.67%	70
No	53.33%	80

FYS: Election 2016

Jaiden Soupene '20, Topeka Intern 2019, Kansas Legislature

The **relationships I built in this course with my peers also proved to be very beneficial** as many of the students who took FYS: Election 2016 went on to become leaders in student government, the Sunflower, and other vital organizations on campus. I am **currently a staff member in the Kansas Senate Minority Leader's office** and I served as a finance intern for the Laura Kelly Gubernatorial campaign. **Without the knowledge and encouragment I gained from this FYS course I would not be where I am today.**

Kylie E. Cameron '20, DC Intern 2017, Communications Intern for Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-MO), Advertising Manager for *The Sunflower*, Summer 2019 intern for KMUW

Fast forward to the fall, the first day of class, Prof. Allen assigns us 20 hours of volunteer service for a campaign or special interest group to work with during the election. Panicking, I began my search for volunteer work and stumbled upon an email from the Sedgwick County Democrats looking for a volunteer intern to assist the Deputy Field and Political Director with state Senate and House campaigns. Just a few days later I was sitting in the Sedgwick County Democratic Party's Headquarters calling through a phonebank and then later organizing them. **Little did I know, this assignment and the far more than 20 hours of work I did with the Sedgwick County Democrats would lead to much, much bigger things.**

Never in a million years would I of that I would be **doing what I love for my favorite senator** [Claire McCaskill D-MO) in our nation's capital and this really would not have all been possible without FYS: Election 2016 and I will be forever grateful to Prof. Allen for the potential he saw in me. Because of him, I was able to jump right into the political scene and was already **farther ahead than where most of my coworkers were when they were freshman.**

Matt Kelly '20, Editor of *The Sunflower*, DC Intern 2017, National Reporting Intern for opensecrets.org

My first-year seminar, Election 2016, stands out as **one of the most influential classes I've taken at WSU.** I entered college undecided, but **immersing myself in the day-to-day absurdity of the presidential election** and **engaging in thoughtful conversations with my peers** convinced me to declare as a political science major. It was in my seminar that I first heard of WSU's D.C./Topeka internship program, which I pursued — eventually landing a political reporting internship at the Center for Responsive Politics in Washington. Upon graduation, I hope to return to the capital to report on national politics.

FYS: Election 2018

Constantin Ganchev '22, Engineering Major

The FYS program has given me more opportunities to participate in activities outside of the classroom than any other course. The Election 2018 class helped me to be politically active by allowing me to connect with congressional and gubernatorial candidates and volunteer for theircampaigns.

Francisco Salgado '22, DC Intern 2019, National Migrant and Seasonal Headstart Association

My first year seminar course has had a massive and profound effect on me and my career. Had it not been for this course, I would never have become an active member of the College Democrats at WSU nor would I be **in Washington, DC gaining practical experience about politics firsthand.** FYS: Election 2018 gave me the political knowledge needed to hold deep conversation about our government with important people.

Alex King '22, Engineering Major

The FYS program introduced me to the world of politics and **helped me learn about something which I most likely would have not learned on my own.** I directly **helped with the logistics of the Ron Estes campaign** and Laura Kelly campaign through text and phone banking. I truly feel as though this first year seminar did precisely what it was intended to do. **If my own opinion matters, I believe that the program should become permanent.**

-Konstantin Ganchev

First Year Seminar (FYS) Persistence Rates for Fall First-Time-In-College (FTIC*) Students

Retained Years:	Fall 2016 Cohort			Fall 2017 Cohort			Fall 2018 Cohort		
	All	non-FYS	FYS	All	non-FYS	FYS	All	non-FYS	FYS
cohort base year	*1,393*	*1,203*	*190*	*1,437*	*1,162*	*275*	*1,606*	*1,340*	*266*
1st year fall to spring	1,272	1,095	177	1,277	1,037	240	1,400	1,160	240
2nd year fall to fall	1,068	913	155	1,059	863	196			
2nd year fall to spring	997	850	147	979	795	184			
3rd year fall to fall	945	805	140						
3rd year fall to spring	887	756	131						
Persistence Rates:									
1st year fall to spring	91.3%	91.0%	93.2%	88.9%	89.2%	87.3%	87.2%**	86.6%**	90.2%**
2nd year fall to fall	76.7%	75.9%	81.6%	73.7%	74.3%	71.3%			
2nd year fall to spring	71.6%	70.7%	77.4%	68.1%**	68.4%**	66.9%**			
3rd year fall to fall	67.8%	66.9%	73.7%						
3rd year fall to spring	63.7%**	62.8%**	68.9%**						

* FTIC are matriculating high school seniors who are enrolled with no post-secondary earned hours post high school graduation, some may carry enough AP credit to start as sophomores or juniors.

** estimated census value based on current term pre-census enrollment.

WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY

General Education Writing Rubric Assessment, Fall 2016

Summary: Pre and Post test scores on the composite Writing Rubric and each of the individual sub scores showed statistically higher post-test scores relative to pre-test values but the magnitude of differences between pre and post scores were very small.

Scoring (4=high)	Mean Writing Rubric Score*		Context of & Purpose for Writing		Content Development		Genre & Disciplinary Conventions		Control of Syntax & Mechanics	
	Pre test	Post Test	Pre test	Post Test	Pre test	Post Test	Pre test	Post Test	Pre test	Post Test
mean	2.76a	3.11b	3.03a	3.22b	2.70a	2.88b	2.68a	2.93b	2.31a	2.87b
std dev	.70a	.66b	.78a	.67b	.70a	.70b	.82a	.80b	.78a	.74b

effect size for composition and individual scores is not meaningfully significant (<.02).

Student counts by score level:

Score levels	Pre test	Post Test	Pre test	Post Test	Pre test	Post Test	Pre test	Post Test	Pre test	Post Test
	122 100%	122 100%	122 100%	122 100%	122 100%	122 100%	122 100%	122 100%	122 100%	122 100%
4	17 13.9%a	32 26.2%b	38 31.1%a	42 34.4%a	14 11.5%a	21 17.2%a	23 18.9%a	32 26.2%a	8 6.6%a	21 17.2%b
3	61 50.0%a	74 60.7%a	51 41.8%a	67 54.9%b	60 49.2%a	67 54.9%a	41 33.6%a	53 43.4%a	38 31.1%a	69 56.6%b
2	42 34.4%a	14 11.5%b	32 26.2%a	11 9.0%b	45 36.9%a	32 26.2%a	54 44.3%a	34 27.9%b	60 49.2%a	27 22.1%b
1	2 1.6%a	2 1.6%a	1 .8%a	2 1.6%a	3 2.5%a	2 1.6%a	4 3.3%a	3 2.5%a	16 13.1%a	5 4.1%b

* Values in the same row & sub table not sharing the same subscript are significantly different at $p< .05$ level , **bold font** shown for display purposes to highlight difference.
Sample: 122 enrolled thru end-of-term students. Excludes WSUF102B, WSUF102A and WSUN102A as score outliers being 2.5 or greater standard deviations from the mean.

End-of-term Grade Distributions by Course

end of term course grade	All	WSUA 102A	WSUA 102B	WSUA 102C	WSUA 102D	WSUA 102E	WSUD 102A	WSUD 102B	WSUE 102A
total	122	5	16	12	19	23	9	19	19
A	67	4	5	4	11	10	7	12	14
B	37	1	6	2	7	12	0	4	5
C	12	0	4	3	1	1	1	2	0
D	4	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0
F	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
A	54.9%	80.0%	31.3%	33.3%	57.9%	43.5%	77.8%	63.2%	73.7%
B	30.3%	20.0%	37.5%	16.7%	36.8%	52.2%	0.0%	21.1%	26.3%
C	9.8%	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	5.3%	4.3%	11.1%	10.5%	0.0%
D	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	5.3%	0.0%
F	1.6%	0.0%	6.3%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Business Intelligence and Predictive Modeling (BIPM)

Fall 2017 First Year Seminar (FYS) Pre and Post Writing Rubric Test Scores,

FYS Class Sections:

course	title	class section	valid n*
		total students:	112
WSUA102D FYS: Cross Cultural Comm		14697	18
WSUA102E FYS: Wrld Culture in Pop Media		14698	5
WSUB102A Solutns by Design: Int Dsgn Th		16065	11
WSUD102A FYS: Superheroes Go to School		15623	14
WSUE102A FYS: Intro to Tech and Innov		14693	6
FYS: Intro to Tech and Innov		15805	11
FYS: Intro to Tech and Innov		15806	5
FYS: Intro to Tech and Innov		15807	8
FYS: Intro to Tech and Innov		15808	3
FYS: Intro to Tech and Innov		15809	7
WSUF102A FYS: Music Makes You Smarter		14694	20
WSUF102B FYS Music As My Key To Success		14695	4

*excludes students without both pre and post test values.

Term-to-term Persistence Rate:

Fall 2017 to Spring 2018   90.2%

Bivariate Pre-Post Test Analysis (paired T-test):

Dimensions:	Pre-test Mean	Sig	Post-test Mean	post-pre difference	percentage change	N
Total score (1-4 high) mean	1.90	0.000	2.25	0.35	18.4%	112
std dev	0.64		0.62			
sub-scores:						
Context Purpose (1-4 high)	2.40	0.007	2.60	0.20	8.4%	106
std dev	0.87		0.86			
Context Development (1-4 high)	2.02	0.000	2.31	0.29	14.6%	110
std dev	0.72		0.82			
Genre (1-4 high)	1.91	0.000	2.26	0.35	18.4%	109
std dev	0.63		0.64			
Sources (1-4 high)	1.68	0.000	2.11	0.43	25.7%	108
std dev	0.65		0.74			
Syntax (1-4 high)	1.82	0.003	1.98	0.16	9.0%	110
std dev	0.59		0.68			

Executive summary: Bivariate post test score differences from pre-test scores were statistically significant showing an increase in ability/understanding. Sample size and fluctuations across class sections prohibited a class section analysis and overall sample size prohibited a multivariate analysis with controls (e.g., demographics, academic ability, performance).

Wichita State University
General Education Committee Survey of Faculty Regarding the First-Year Seminar Proposal
Launched October 9, 2015 – Ended October 23, 2015

Respondents (survey population 926, 24% response rate)

Position Type	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Tenured/Tenure Eligible Faculty	128	57.4	57.4
Full-time lecturer	20	9.0	66.4
UP who teaches FT	25	11.2	77.6
Emeritus faculty	9	4.0	81.6
Other*	41	18.4	100.0

*e.g., PT lecturers/instructors, adjunct, administrator who teaches, clinical educator, engineering educator, academic instructor

Are you willing to teach a first-year seminar course?

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	134	61.8	61.8
No*	83	38.2	100.0

*If respondent selected no, the survey jumped to the comment section

Would you attend a workshop on developing a first-year seminar course?

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	92	88.5	88.5
No	12	11.5	100.0

Would you be willing to attend course development workshops to assist you in developing student success content for the first-year seminar course?

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	92	88.5	88.5
No	12	11.5	100.0

Would you be willing to attend courses development workshops to assist you in linking general education outcomes to a first-year seminar course?

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	95	92.2	92.2
No	8	7.8	100.0

First-Year Seminar Instructor Guide

2018-2019

Office of Student Success
Wichita State University

Introduction

First-Year Seminar is a unique, three-credit hour course designed specifically for new students and part of our General Education program. Seminar topics cover a broad range of issues and will include elements that engage students in our community of learners and teach successful student and life skills.

History of First-Year Seminar at WSU

Taken from the General Education Committee Review of Student Learning Outcomes, AY 2016-2017

The proposal to create a required FYS for all incoming freshmen at WSU, originated in the General Education committee in 2014-15, based on the premise that such an offering would promote retention and student success. The idea was a modification to the WSU 101 courses which had not been as well received as had been hoped. The new proposal was to offer courses with specific disciplinary (or interdisciplinary) content combined with student success content. The proposal was presented to the Faculty Senate in November 2015, and was accepted as a pilot project in December 2015, to be implemented in the fall of 2016.

Faculty were recruited and curricula were approved by the Gen Ed committee in spring 2016, and 11 courses were offered for fall 2016. Although the Senate only approved courses for the fall semester, several instructors were asked to offer their courses a second time in the spring 2017 semester in order to gather more data to present to the Faculty Senate for a final decision regarding FYS in the fall 2017. This fall, full data from 2016-17 will be presented to Senate as well as recommendations regarding whether FYS should become a permanent part of the curriculum or not starting in 2018-19. Approval in the fall 2017 would allow all departments that want to offer FYS courses to be able to complete fall 2018 schedule building by the Jan/Feb 2018 deadline. Faculty Senate voted in spring 2018 to extend the pilot two more years.

Understanding first-year students

To begin understanding first-year students, we must first break it down to their most basic level of needs. We use Maslow's hierarchy of needs to demonstrate this below. In order for students to be successful they need to have the lower levels met, so helping to get students connected to resources will be crucial to their success.

Lowest Level: Food, water, sleep
Second Level: Security of body, employment resources, family, health, property
Third Level: friendship, family, sexual intimacy
Fourth Level: Self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect for and by others

<u>Top Level:</u> Creativity, morality, spontaneity, problem solving

Think about what your concerns were going into your first year of college. What were you nervous or confused about? Students are worried about where they are going to eat, who they will eat with, how they will pay for their meal, where will they be living, who their friends will be, where they will park, and the list goes on. Other concerns new students have can relate to choosing a major or career path, finding a job, getting involved, etc.

For the most part, students entering college today are born after 2000. To help gain an understanding of these student's world view we will use the Mindset List. Since these students have been alive:

- They are the first class born in the new millennium, escaping the dreaded label of "Millennial."
- Outer space has never been without human habitation.
- They have always been able to refer to Wikipedia.
- When filling out forms, they are not surprised to find more than two gender categories to choose from.
- The Prius has always been on the road in the US.
- They never used a spit-bowl in a dentist's office.
- *Horton* has always heard a *Who* on stage in *Suessical* the musical.
- Robert Downey Jr. has always been the sober *Iron Man*.
- Mass market books have always been available exclusively as Ebooks.
- Films have always been distributed on the internet.
- Thumbprints have always provided login security – and are harder to lose – that a password.
- Donny and Marie who?
- Afghanistan has always been the frustrating quagmire that keeps on giving.
- Presidential candidates winning the popular vote and then losing the election are not unusual.
- They have grown up afraid that a shooting could happen at their school, too.

Transition is defined by Goodman et al. (2006) as "any event, or non-event, that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles." We see a student's entire first year as a transition to college and the First-Year Seminar courses are designed to assist them in this process. Within their first year, students should have had the opportunity to experience the following:

- Gain perspective and sense of purpose between the demands and opportunities of college life
- Develop cognitive, behavioral, and communication skills to assimilate to campus
- Opportunities for interaction with faculty
- Foster development of a peer group, creating an atmosphere of comfortableness and reduced anxiety
- Acclimate students to the facilities, services, and members of the campus community

The term "first-year experience," as advocated by the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition at the University of South Carolina, describes a comprehensive and intentional approach to the first college year. It comprises both curricular and co-curricular initiatives. It is the sum of all experiences students have in their first year at college.

The "first-year experience" is far more than a single event or program, successful programs reflect institutional mission, student demographics, and campus culture.

High-Impact Educational Practices

A list of commonly used programs and educational initiatives for use on college campuses has been developed and is referenced throughout student development theory and research. The initiatives on this list are referred to as High-Impact Practices and are considered beneficial for students from many backgrounds.

First-Year Seminars and Experiences

Many schools now build into the curriculum first-year seminars or other programs that bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students' intellectual and practical competencies. First-year seminars can also involve students with cutting-edge questions in scholarship and with faculty members' own research.

Common Intellectual Experiences

The older idea of a "core" curriculum has evolved into a variety of modern forms, such as a set of required common courses or a vertically organized general education program that includes advanced integrative studies and/or required participation in a learning community (see below). These programs often combine broad themes—e.g., technology and society, global interdependence—with a variety of curricular and co-curricular options for students.

Learning Communities

The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with "big questions" that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors. Many learning communities explore a common topic and/ or common readings through the lenses of different disciplines. Some deliberately link "liberal arts" and "professional courses"; others feature service learning.

Writing-Intensive Courses

These courses emphasize writing at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum, including final-year projects. Students are encouraged to produce and revise various forms of writing for different audiences in different disciplines. The effectiveness of this repeated practice "across the curriculum" has led to parallel efforts in such areas as quantitative reasoning, oral communication, information literacy, and, on some campuses, ethical inquiry.

Collaborative Assignments and Projects

Collaborative learning combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one's own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others,

especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences. Approaches range from study groups within a course, to team-based assignments and writing, to cooperative projects and research.

Undergraduate Research

Many colleges and universities are now providing research experiences for students in all disciplines. Undergraduate research, however, has been most prominently used in science disciplines. With strong support from the National Science Foundation and the research community, scientists are reshaping their courses to connect key concepts and questions with students' early and active involvement in systematic investigation and research. The goal is to involve students with actively contested questions, empirical observation, cutting-edge technologies, and the sense of excitement that comes from working to answer important questions.

Diversity/Global Learning

Many colleges and universities now emphasize courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies—which may address U.S. diversity, world cultures, or both—often explore "difficult differences" such as racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power. Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by study abroad.

Service Learning, Community-Based Learning

In these programs, field-based "experiential learning" with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students have to both apply what they are learning in real-world settings and reflect in a classroom setting on their service experiences. These programs model the idea that giving something back to the community is an important college outcome, and that working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life.

Internships

Internships are another increasingly common form of experiential learning. The idea is to provide students with direct experience in a work setting—usually related to their career interests—and to give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field. If the internship is taken for course credit, students complete a project or paper that is approved by a faculty member.

Capstone Courses and Projects

Whether they're called "senior capstones" or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applied what they've learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of "best work," or an exhibit of artwork. Capstones are offered both in departmental programs and, increasingly, in general education as well.

Course Objectives

Overarching Goals:
1. Exploration of engaging academic, interdisciplinary content.
2. Exposure to and development of student success and professional skills.
3. Development of positive relationships with peers, faculty and staff members.

General Education Basic Skills Learning Outcomes
1. Engage in higher-order thinking that moves beyond rote memorization and factual acquisition to more advanced higher levels of thinking (e.g., thinking critically and creatively).
2. Articulate and defend their positions through dialogue, discussion, and writing.
3. Effectively access and critically evaluate information from a variety of sources.
4. Identify appropriate library and other resources to facilitate research and accurately provide citations.
5. **If course has diversity content/designation:**
   a. Illustrate/Demonstrate an appreciation for diversity as it applies to the course content.
   b. Appreciate human diversity and how it promotes critical and creative thinking as well as personal and professional (career) development.

Student Success Learning Outcomes included in FYS
1. Understand the expectations of higher education and how they differ from secondary education
2. Learn strategically by developing skills and habits that promote deep learning and long-term retention of knowledge.
3. Develop more effective life and study skills in areas including time management, note taking, test taking and personal finance.
4. Capitalize on university resources and extracurricular experiences designed to promote their success.
5. Integrate academic and career planning.

Disciplinary Learning Outcomes
These outcomes are developed by the faculty based on the unique disciplinary content of the course.

Example Matrix Illustrating how coursework is aligned with the Learning Outcomes:

	Gen Ed Outcome 1	Gen Ed Ouctome 2	Student Success Outcome 1	Student Success Outcome 2	Disciplinary Outcome 1
Assignment 1	x	x			
Assignment 2		x	x		
Assignment 3				x	x

Components for FYS

Course content should be roughly divided as follows: 70% on interdisciplinary content, 25% on Student Success content, and 5% on the Common Read. Student success content can often be thematically presented to align with interdisciplinary content.

Student Success content must include information literacy (for example face-to-face sessions, online tutorials, videos, and/or resource guides) and *at least three* of the following components: financial literacy, goal setting, degree planning, career planning, time management, stress management/mental health tips, study skills, test taking tips, note taking tips.

REQUIRED COMPONENTS (beyond interdisciplinary content):
1. Information Literacy
   * Consult the Information Literacy section of this guide for more information on activities and options for your course.
   * The Library will supply a pre- and post-test that all FYS students will be expected to complete.
2. Student Success Content (at least four of the following components):
   * Topics available for your course include: financial literacy, goal setting, degree planning, career planning, time management, stress management/mental health tips, general study skills, test taking tips, note taking tips, textbook reading, becoming a sophisticated learner (previously learning styles), or other appropriate topics agreed upon by instructor and Student Success.
   * Work with Student Success to develop activities and/or schedule presenters when needed.
3. Common Read
   * Student Success will provide the title of the book as well as copies for instructors in advance so instructors can appropriately incorporate the book.
   * An instructor's guide will accompany the book if needed and will include ideas on activities and assignments for use in the course.
   * **Attendance at Academic Convocation is required for FYS students.** The event will be streamed online and available for students who can't attend the event due to their class schedule.
4. Written Assessment
   * The first written assignment should be submitted for independent evaluation within first three weeks of semester (include writing prompt).

- The last written assignment should be submitted for independent evaluation at end of semester (include writing prompt).
- The rubric used for evaluation of the written assignments is from the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), is included at the end of this guide and is used in WSU's General Education program.

COMPONENTS STRONGLY ENCOURAGED FOR INCLUSION:

1. Peer Coach
   - A Peer Coach is an undergraduate student who is hired, trained and paid by Student Success and assigned to your course.
   - Each instructor who has a Peer Coach is required to meet with your coach at the beginning of the semester and monthly or as needed or requested by either the instructor or the coach. The expectation for both parties is to schedule a meeting at a specific time, outside of office/student hours.
   - Consult the section on Peer Coaches for information on what they are trained and expected to do in your course.
2. Campus Engagement
   - Work with Student Involvement to learn about events that might enhance the classroom content or experience.
   - Encourage students to attend one or more co-curricular events to make more connections with peers, faculty and staff.
   - Include Academic Convocation on your course syllabus and in your course content.
3. Diversity Content
   - Include in your assignments or activities ways for students to consider different viewpoints other than their own.
   - Consult the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to learn about resources and events that could enhance classroom content or experiences.
   - Explain this component clearly in your syllabus and send it to review to be tagged as a course with diversity content.
4. Service-Learning
   - Consider including a service-learning opportunity in your course. This will look very different for every course and allows the possibility of applied learning opportunities early.
   - Service-Learning is different from community service. Consult Student Involvement to learn about options that may fit your course content and enhance the students' experience.

Many of these components can be covered at the same time either during class or by sending students to an event. For example, you can encourage students to participate in Wu's Big Event and that would be their service-learning experience as well as a campus engagement opportunity. Another way to combine two or more components into one activity or assignment would be teaching students about note taking while reviewing information about financial literacy or the common read. These components are not meant to create more work for your or your students, but rather to encourage meaningful work that prepares them for college life by developing skills to be successful in college and building connections to the campus community.

Assignments

Assignments need to allow students to demonstrate evidence of achieving the learning outcomes for the course. This will be accomplished through a mix of homework assignments, papers, projects and presentations. At a minimum, each section will assess students on the following:

Attendance and Participation - can include beyond-the-classroom learning opportunity	10-20%
Homework (e.g., projects, quizzes, daily assignments)	10-20%
Papers/Essays — formal and/or informal writing	15%-25%
Dialogue / Group Discussions/Presentation(s)	10%-20%
Final/Culminating Project — The final should challenge students to reflect upon and synthesize the major course goals. Methodologies could include portfolios, take-home projects or papers, presentations, videos, etc.	10-20%

Information Literacy

As part of the Gen Ed requirements, all FYS courses should help students "develop fundamentals of information literacy and library research." Below are some suggestions for how to incorporate the University Libraries into your FYS.

- Collaborate with the liaison librarian for your course before you finalize your syllabus and Blackboard shell to discuss options for including information literacy throughout the course. The liaison librarian for your FYS course is the subject librarian for your discipline. See libraries.wichita.edu/subjectlibrarians for a list.
- Ask the librarian about engaging activities to reinforce information literacy concepts.
- Embed the liaison librarian in your Blackboard shell so that s/he can add content about information literacy and library research skills that will be helpful to students.
- Consider having the librarian give at least two library instruction sessions.
  - o One for an introduction to the library and information literacy or a session focusing on an aspect of information literacy of your choice.
  - o The second time just before an assignment requiring citations is due so that the librarian can assist students in constructing their citations in whichever style you specify. Improperly formatted citations were the most frequently mentioned information literacy problem in the library's survey of the fall 2016 FYS professors.
- Consider bringing your class to the library's instruction room, Ablah 217 for at least one of the library instruction sessions. It has about 25 computers for hands-on activities.

- Have students work through at least part of the information literacy tutorials before the librarian gives the introductory library instruction session to the class.
- Instruct students to have questions that occurred to them while working through the tutorials to ask the librarian at the beginning of the introductory library instruction session.
- In addition to whatever engaging activity you and the librarian include in the library instruction session, have students do an assignment due the next week that requires demonstration of some skill the librarian covered.
- Encourage students to seek out the liaison librarian at the reference desk or schedule one-on-one appointments.

Library Request for Your Assistance in Assessing FYS General Outcome

Would you please help the library assess the FYS General Education Outcome "Develop fundamentals of information literacy and library research?"

- The library would like to do short online pre- and post-tests as the assessment.
- The library would appreciate it if you would please have your students complete the pre-test at the very beginning of the semester.
- Then the library would appreciate it if you would have them complete the post-test about 3 weeks before the end of classes.
- The Coordinator of Library Instructional Services will email you the links to the pre- and post-tests at the appropriate times during a semester.
- It would be great if you would be willing to give your students incentive to complete the two tests – for example, by giving points for completing them or by giving extra credit. The more tests completed, the more valuable the results of the pre- and post-tests.

Student Success Content

One of the benefits for students enrolled in First-Year Seminars is the focus on developing student's study skills. This course will teach students various strategies and resources to achieve academic success in college. Student Success has many resources and tools for faculty to incorporate study skill development into their curricula. Most of these resources can be accessed online by going to www.wichita.edu/StudySkills.

For faculty and staff wishing to bring in guest speakers to cover study skills the following options are available:

- **Presentations by a Success Coach or other staff member from Student Success** are available on time management, note taking, test taking, textbook reading, general study skills, etc. by request.
- **Presentations by your Peer Coach** (or a Peer Coach assigned to another FYS course) who are also trained to present on the same topics or work one-on-one with student as needed.
- **Existing class assignments or activities provided by Student Success** to include in your course.

We strongly recommend incorporating these skills into the delivery of your course content. **Be sure to be clear about the purpose behind each activity when introducing the assignment to students.** For example, explain to students the focus for the day's class will be on note taking. Next, give a brief presentation on how to take notes and have students practice taking notes during a lecture/presentation/video that is related back to your class theme. At the conclusion of the lecture, review the activity and have students reflect on what note taking style works best for them.

If you need any assistance incorporating study skills with your class theme please consult Student Success and we would be happy to help.

Common Read

WSU Reads, Wichita State's common read program, has selected *Designing Your Life, How to Build a Well-Lived, Joyful Life* by Bill Burnett and Dave Evans as the book for 2019-20 academic year. This book is distributed to all new students during orientation over the summer and in the spring and is used across campus in a variety of ways. All First-Year Seminars will use this book as well as all English composition courses. For more information on the WSU Reads program, the book selection process, or the book selected for upcoming years visit www.wichita.edu/WSUreads.

Opportunities to incorporate the WSU Reads book into the classroom
- Tied into course content where relevant
- Writing sample – if the topic is really a stretch to relate it back to the theme of your course, have students write a paper about a theme or chapter of the book and use that as either their pre- or post-writing sample for the course
- Note taking and test taking skills – have students practice taking notes about the book or create a test on a specific chapter of the book to give students practice preparing for a test
- Group work and discussion – simply have students work together to develop a presentation on a section or theme within the book to develop their group work and public speaking skills

In addition, there will be many opportunities outside of class for students to engage with the book. Instructors can choose to assign students extra credit for attending events related to the book such as: Academic Convocation, Dine & Dialogue, and Coffee & Conversation.

Fall 2019 Events:
Academic Convocation: Thurs, Sept. 12, 9:30 a.m. in Wilner Auditorium
Coffee and Conversation: TBA
Dine and Dialogue: TBA

Spring 2020 Events:
Academic Convocation (available online) – search "Academic Convocation Wichita State University" on WSU's YouTube channel.
Dine and Dialogue: TBA
Coffee and Conversation, TBA

Written Assessment

FYS instructors are required to submit two writing samples from their classes to be evaluated by an external reviewer based on the AAC&U Written Communication rubric to assess GEO #3. The first

paper should be assigned within the first two weeks of the semester to gauge students' writing at the beginning of the course, and then again towards the end to assess how much their writing has improved during the course. Papers can be submitted either in hard copy, digitally through email, or via Blackboard. The writing prompt must be included when you submit your papers so the reviewers know what the students were asked to write about to be able to evaluate the context of and purpose for writing.

Peer Coaches

All First-Year Seminar Instructors have the option to be paired up with an undergraduate Peer Coach. Most instructors request a Peer Coach for their class. The role of a Peer Coach is to help students develop into independent learners by supporting them in their transition to college, developing time management and study skills, and connecting them with campus resources. Peer Success Coaches are responsible for the following:

- Facilitating workshops on study skills, time management, test-preparation, etc.
- Preparing handouts, learning aids, etc. for classes and workshops
- Helping students strengthen academic background, understand class materials, comprehend the textbook, organize assignments and notes, and improve general learning and study skills
- Being knowledgeable of campus resources and referring students when appropriate
- Having an awareness of relevant campus events and important deadlines (last day to withdraw with "W", etc.)
- Meeting one-on-one with students to determine any underlying issues and developing a plan for success

Similar to TAs, Peer Success Coaches can lead classroom activities and discussions and should be seen as leaders in the classroom. They **should not** have access to grades or be used for grading assignments as this will interfere with the trust and relationships they are building with the students outside of the classroom.

Campus Engagement

Student Success outcomes #1 and #3 relate to building connections across campus. We want to ensure that students are connecting and engaging with other students, faculty and staff around campus, as well as developing an affinity for Wichita State University. The best opportunity for students to become engaged on campus is by getting involved with student organizations and attending events. Between Student Involvement, Student Activities Council, Student Success: First-Year Programs and many more departments, there is always something happening on campus for students to get involved in. We suggest that you attend events together as a class and talk about what that experience was like for them the next time you meet. Incentivize students to attend campus events by giving out extra credit points for those who attend and write a reflection about their experience.

There are numerous benefits to involvement on campus:
- More likely to stay at WSU and graduate
- Build network of friends and professionals
- Attend conferences/workshops
- Gain new skills

Events to consider:

Back to School Bash: TBA
Shocker Resource Fair: TBA
Clash of the Colleges: Fri, Aug. 23, 4 p.m., Cessna Stadium
Volunteer Fair: TBA
Syllabus Party: TBA
Involvement Fair: TBA
Wellness Fair: TBA
Academic Convocation: Thurs, Sept. 12, 9:30 a.m., Wilner Auditorium
Family Weekend: TBA
Wu's Big Event: TBA
Shocktoberfest: TBA

Check the following websites and departments for more events:
- www.wichita.edu/involvement
- www.wichita.edu/odi
- www.wichita.edu/firstyear
- www.wichita.edu/calendar

Diversity Content

As a part of First-Year Seminar meeting general education requirements, all courses are encouraged to have some type of diversity content incorporated into it. GEO #6 is for students to "develop an appreciation for diversity". Some First-Year Seminars, due the topic, will inherently cover diversity content throughout the course of the semester. If this is the case for your course, great! However, if your course does not naturally have diversity content worked into the curriculum, you may need to find ways to incorporate this into the learning and experience that students get while enrolled in your FYS.

Some options for how to incorporate diversity content into the classroom are:

- Bringing a representative from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion into the classroom to facilitate a discussion on a specific topic
- Encourage students to participate in one of the trainings hosted by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion such as Safe Zone, Gender Diversity, etc.
- Incentivize student's participation with in events focused on diversity, especially discussion based programs such as the Brown Bag Series hosted by ODI, by giving extra credit points

Service Learning

Community Engagement is the "application of institutional resources to address and solve challenges facing communities, through collaboration with these communities."

Community Engaged Pedagogy is a method of experiential learning that emphasizes action, reflection, & real world engagement that supports students in their development of real-world skills.

Service-Learning at Wichita State University is an experiential learning method that integrates community service with instruction and reflection to increase student civic-mindedness and build community capacity.

Benefits of Service Learning for Faculty

- Student centered
- Measurable outcomes
- Identification with the community
- Scholarship support
- Engagement with multiple systems
- Faculty development
- Grant opportunities
- Curriculum improvement

Benefits of Service Learning for Students

- Building relational and communication skills with multiple systems
- Identify development: awareness of self and diverse individuals and populations
- Developing research skills: inquiry/interviewing, listening, storytelling, empathy, recognition of impact
- Cognition benefits: lessen resistance to change, build tolerance of ambiguity, curiosity, experience with project management, moved to action, critical and creative thinking
- Empowerment interest in Higher Ed

Benefits of Service Learning for the community

- Engagement with University and students
- Experiencing re-energizing
- Support for goals
- Shared leadership
- Strengths-based approach
- Processing and experiencing challenge and growth
- Reflection and feedback opportunities
- Teaching through experiences
- Outreach and appreciation for special knowledge

Community-Based Partnerships

- United Way 211 Website (http://www.unitedwayplains.org/ & www.211kansas.org)
- Lord's Diner, Food Bank, Boys & Girls Club
- Community Service Board (www.wichita.edu/csb) transportation issues, campus events, info & help
- Community Engagement Institute (www.communityengagementinstitute.org)
- IMPACT Center application for opportunities
- Campus Connect (Galaxy Digital)

What do I grade?

- Grade the reflections

- Grade the principles related to your class
- Adding points for increased depth in reflection
- Assignments in and out of class
- You can utilize community partner feedback for portion of grading
- Rubrics
- Student Individual &/or Group Presentations (related to content, style, use of technology)
- Self and Peer Assessment
- Portfolios
- Project newsletter
- Social Media activity/documentation
- Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, Instagram

Questions regarding Service Learning can be directed to:

Student Involvement at 978-3022 or getinvolved@wichita.edu.

Financial Literacy

Students who drop out after their first year of college often cite financial issues as their primary reason for leaving (Inceptia, 2012). There are many campus and community resources available to help educate students about financial literacy. Below is a list of partners to utilize for classroom presentations or for handouts and additional information.

Office of Student Money Management:

115 Neff Hall, 316-978-3254
OSMM@wichita.edu
www.wichita.edu/OSMM

My College Money Plan

www.mycollegemoneyplan.org

Office of Financial Aid

203 Jardine Hall, 316-978-3430 or 855-978-1787
finaid@wichita.edu
www.wichita.edu/financialaid

Commerce Bank

RSC 1st floor, 316-978-3850
https://commercebank.com/shockercard

Meritrust Credit Union

316-683-1199
www.meritrustcu.org

Tips from faculty for FYS Instructors

Some of these are obviously good practices for all classes, but the impact is high when carrying out these strategies for a class full of first semester freshman.

- Explain the learning value of each activity. Take a few minutes to regularly communicate to the class why the course includes the modules that it does: student success components, extracurricular components, service learning, etc. It can be obvious to us (who designed the course) why these elements are included and how they advance the FYS goals, but it may be less obvious to the students. A few quick sentences when introducing a class visitor from OSMM or the Career Center regarding the goal of helping students succeed outside the classroom and beyond college is likely all that is needed.

- Explain concepts and norms that we might assume that they already know. Its ok for those who know to get a reminder, but it might be the first time a student hears about key concepts or norms as a college student. [Ex: if you skip class, your professor is likely to assume it is a deliberate choice, not that you were sick. Communicate with your professor.]

- Work collaboratively with the student Success Coaches. They are in the course to build connections with the students. They can help serve as a liaison between the faculty member and students. They provide insights for faculty into what students might be struggling with or thinking about with regard to the content and structure of the course. They can serve as an additional voice to drive home the key points the faculty member wants to convey (additional 'words of wisdom', and from a peer sometimes have more impact). Keep the success coach in the loop and find ways they can enhance the students' experiences in the course.

- Carefully consider the level of knowledge the students might bring to the class. If your course is designed to appeal broadly, you may not have any majors in the course, and in fact might be teaching to students from multiple colleges. This requires a different approach than courses that are designed to draw in students from more specific majors. • Have them create some evaluation materials like a quiz and use it. It may help them read the materials in a different way.

- Do several activities so the students team up or mingle. Building community contributes to the goal of retaining these students at WSU.

- Work on peer-review activities. This can provide opportunities for mentoring and well as learning from each other. 5

- Encourage discussion outside the class (Blackboard forum, Facebook group, etc.)

- Encourage them to get out of their comfort zone as a learning tool and give them support in doing this. This might take many forms (role playing, giving a speech, interviewing someone on/off campus, discussing controversial topics, attending talks or performances, etc.).

- Take them to places like the library or a talk.

- Invite a guest to talk about x topic.
- Have some kind of personal meeting(s) with them. They have met with advisors, but likely have not had any personal meetings with a faculty member on campus. Help them recognize that faculty members are people who want to see them succeed.
- Send reminders a couple days before each deadline, and encourage them to learn how to keep calendars and take responsibility for their assignments because not all faculty will provide reminders.
- Put everything on Blackboard for easy and timely location. Explain the format you want for each assignment and put it on Blackboard.
- Give them all the good feedback you can. You are helping them transition effectively to the college environment and they need to know what they expectations are and how they can improve their work.
- Submit mid semester evaluations and use SEAS (Student Early Alert System). They need to be told explicitly if they are performing well or if adjustments are needed to achieve the grade they want in the class.

Complete?	Task
	Attend Training/Information Session hosted by Academic Affairs on FYS (annually scheduled in May). Watch for announcement in WSU Today.
	Email Kim (Kim.Sandlin@wichita.edu) indicating your interest in developing a course to receive a copy of the WSU Reads book to be included in your course.
	Develop your FY Seminar and syllabus.
	Complete the Curriculum Change Form (now online process through CIM) and submit it to your department for approval (after department approval, it will be forwarded to the college curriculum committee for approval). **On the form, be sure to check the "This is a general education course" box in the routing determination section and also include which Gen Ed division (fine arts, humanities, social/behavioral sciences, mathematics/natural sciences) the course should be assigned to.**
	Decide if you want the Diversity Content attribute on your course. If so, indicate your intention while preparing the CCF.
	Once course has been designed and the CCF has been submitted, contact Lydia in Academic Affairs (Lydia.Santiago@wichita.edu) to arrange for the one-time payment of the development stipend in the amount of $1500.
	Make necessary changes to course based on feedback received from either department and/or college. If no changes are needed, the CCF will be forwarded to the Faculty Senate General Education committee for final approval.
	Make necessary changes to course based on feedback received from the General Education Committee, submit to General Education Committee for final review if needed.
	Once course has been approved by the department, college and General Education Committee, contact the person in your department or college who completes the schedule building process. You will need to establish the days and times your classes meet. All classes must meet at least two times each week. *If you are in Fairmount College, your contact is Kathy Gale in the LAS Advising Center.*
	Attend Instructor Workshop organized by Student Success and held annually in May (fall courses) and December (for spring courses). Place your request for a Peer Coach at this meeting if you haven't done so already.
	Once semester is underway, contact Lydia in Academic Affairs (Lydia.Santiago@wichita.edu) to receive the teaching stipend. The amount of the teaching stipend will be at the current overload rate of each department/college. Half of the stipend will be paid near the beginning of the semester and half near the end.
	Attend FYS instructor meetings (3 per semester).

You will need to begin the CCF approval process one year prior to teaching the course in order to ensure timely placement in the schedule of courses. Courses are expected to be approved and placed in the schedule early in the schedule-building process to maximize the opportunity for enrollment. It is strongly suggested you begin offering your course during the fall semester.

The *Empirical* Case for the First-Year Seminar:
Evidence of Course Impact on Student Retention, Persistence to Graduation, and Academic Achievement

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Introduction

Not all first-year seminars are created equally. Some seminars focus only on the development of basic academic skills (e.g., study skills courses), critical thinking skills (e.g., academic seminars) or major-specific information (e.g., discipline-based or pre-professional seminars). This manuscript focuses on the impact of first-year seminars that go beyond strictly academic topics and take a holistic (whole-person), student-centered approach to promoting college success. This type of first-year seminar is often referred to as an "extended orientation," "college transition," or "FYE" (first-year experience) course. It is the most common form of first-year seminar higher education, accounting for over 60% of all reported seminars offered nationally (Tobolowsky & Associates, 2008). The holistic nature of the course is consistent with what Upcraft and Gardner (1989) called for in their seminal text, *The Freshman Year Experience*: "Freshmen succeed when they make progress toward fulfilling [the following] educational and personal goals: (1) developing academic and intellectual competence; (2) establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships; (3) developing an identity; (4) deciding on a career and life-style; (5) maintaining personal health and wellness; and (6) developing an integrated philosophy of life" (p. 2). This holistic type of first-year seminar is one in place at the University of South Carolina (University 101), which has served as a prototype and national model for more than a quarter of a century: "University 101 subscribes to the belief that development is not a one-dimensional affair but must reach far beyond the intellect and into emotional, spiritual, occupational, physical and social areas" (Jewler, 1989, p. 201).

National research suggests that holistic first-year seminars have the most significant impact on student outcomes. Swing (2002) conducted a multi-institutional study of different types of first-year seminars, based on self-reported student outcomes from over 31,000 students attending 62 institutions. He found that *college transition* seminars which focused on academic and non-academic (holistic) topics, "performed best overall across the ten learning outcomes investigated" (p. 1). College transition seminars with a holistic focus were especially more effective than *discipline-based* seminars housed in academic departments that focused exclusively on introducing first-year students to an academic discipline or major field of study. Consistent with Swing's findings is the observation made by Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot (2005) based on their national experience with first-year seminars: "The most effective first-year seminars are those that are designed to facilitate first-year student success in both academic and non-academic facets of college life."

Collectively, these findings and observations point strongly to the conclusion that first-year seminars should move beyond just cognitive and academic-skill development to address development of the student as a "whole person." Additional cross-institutional and campus-specific research supporting this recommendation is summarized in the following sections.

National (Multi-Institutional) Research

Multi-institutional evidence for the positive impact of first-year seminars on student behavior and campus perceptions is provided by the National Survey of Student Engagement (2005), which included students' survey responses from more than 80,000 first-year students. Results of this Web-based survey revealed that relative to students who did not participate in the course, first-year seminar participants reported that they: (a) were more challenged academically, (b) were more likely to engage in active and collaborative learning activities, (c) interacted more frequently with faculty, (d) perceived the campus environment to be more supportive, (e) made greater gains in learning during their first year of college, and (f) were more satisfied with their first-year experience. Compared to students who only participated in orientation but not a first-year seminar, course participants reported greater engagement, higher levels of satisfaction, and greater developmental gains in the following areas: (a) academic advising and planning, (b) career advising and planning, (c) financial aid advising, (d) academic assistance, (e) academic challenge, (f), active and collaborative learning, and (g) student-faculty interaction (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2005).

Student retention (persistence) and *academic performance* (achievement) have been the two most frequently assessed outcomes of the first-year seminar. Positive impact of the seminar on these outcomes has been reported through use of multiple *research methods* (quantitative and qualitative, and experimental and correlational), for all types of *students* (at-risk/well-prepared, minority/majority, residential/commuter, male/female), at all institutional *types* (2-year/4-year, public/ private), *sizes* (small/mid-sized/ large) and *locations* (urban/suburban/rural) (Barefoot, 1993; Barefoot et al., 1998; Boudreau & Kromrey, 1994; Fidler & Godwin, 1994; Glass & Garrett, 1995; Grunder & Hellmich, 1996; Shanley & Witten, 1990; Sidle & McReynolds, 1999; Starke, Harth, & Sirianni, 2001; Swanson, Vaughan, & Wilkinson, 2017; Tobolowsky, 2005). As Barefoot and Gardner note, "First-year/student success seminars are remarkably creative courses that are adaptable to a great variety of institutional settings, structures, and students" (1998, p. xiv).

In a study conducted by the Institute of for Higher Education Leadership & Policy (Sacramento, CA), the academic progress of a sizable cohort of California community college students were tracked across time. Student participation in a college success (first-year experience) course proved to be one of the factors associated with students achievement of important educational milestones—such as: (a) completion of developmental education, (b) passing college-level English and Math courses within two years, (c) avoiding excessive course withdrawals and (d) accumulating at least 20 credits in the first year of college enrollment (Moore, Shulock, & Offenstein, 2009).

The Division of Community Colleges within the Florida Department of Education examined the impact of student success courses (a.k.a. first-year experience courses) across the state and found that students who completed such courses (compared to students who did not take or complete such courses) had significantly higher rates of: (a) continuous college enrollment, (b) program completion, and (c) transfer to 4-year universities within the state. Furthermore, the positive impact of student participation in these courses was not restricted to students who tested into developmental education; similar effects were found for students who entered the community college system "college ready" (Florida Department of Education, 2006). Subsequent analyses conducted by the Community College Research Center at Columbia University (NY) revealed similar findings, even after controlling for a variety of student demographic characteristics (Zeidenberg, Jenkins, & Calcagno, 2007).

In a meticulous synthesis of more than 2600 postsecondary studies on the impact of college

programs and experience on student development, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) reached the following conclusion: "The weight of the evidence suggests that a first-semester freshman seminar is positively linked with both freshman-year persistence and degree completion. This positive link persists even when academic aptitude and secondary school achievement are taken into account" (pp. 419-420). In a more recent synthesis, which included reviews of research studies published after release of their original volume in 1991, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) reached a similar conclusion:

> With rare exceptions they [first-year seminars] produce uniformly consistent evidence of positive and statistically significant advantages to students who take the courses. Some of this evidence comes from studies in which participant and nonparticipant groups are "matched"
on
> various combinations of precollege characteristics. These studies consistently find that FYS [first-year seminar] participation promotes persistence into the second year and over longer periods of time. More recent studies employ various multivariate statistical procedures to control for academic ability and achievement and other precollege characteristics. Whatever the procedure, the research points to the same conclusion, indicating positive and statistically significant net effect of FYS participation versus nonparticipation on persistence into the second year or attainment of a bachelor's degree. In short, the weight of evidence indicates that FYS participation has statistically significant and substantial, positive effects on a student's successful transition to college and the likelihood of persistence into the second
year
> as well as on academic performance while in college and on a considerable array of other college experiences known to be related directly and indirectly to bachelor's degree completion (pp.400-401 & 402-403).

Consistent with Pascarella and Terenzini's comprehensive reviews of the literature is the conclusion drawn by Hunter and Linder (2005), based on their review of research on first-year seminars published in the *Journal The First-year Experience and Students in Transition* and in three volumes of studies published as monographs by the National Resource Center at the University of South Carolina (Barefoot, 1993; Barefoot et al., 1998; Tobolowsky, 2005):

> The overwhelming majority of first-year seminar research has shown that these courses positively affect retention, grade point average, number of credit hours attempted and completed, graduation rates, student involvement in campus activities, and student attitudes and perceptions of higher education, as well as faculty development and methods of instruction (p. 288).

Under the auspices of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, Brownell and Swaner (2010) conducted a cross-institutional review of the literature and identified first-year seminars as one of their top-five "high impact" practices.

Local (Single-Institution) Studies

In addition to national (cross-institutional) research, there have been numerous local (single-

institution) studies conducted on the impact of first-year seminars. The results of these studies on two key student outcomes—student retention and academic achievement—are summarized below.

◆ *STUDENT RETENTION* OUTCOMES

The best documented outcome of the first-year seminar is its positive effect on student retention; it is a finding that has been replicated across a wide variety of institutional settings and student populations. Based on her 10-plus years of experience reviewing research studies on the first-year seminar as Co-Director for Research & Publications at the University of South Carolina's National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience, Barefoot (2000) reported that there is a growing body of research indicating that first-year seminars are positively correlated with improved student retention. Barefoot's conclusion is reinforced by a national survey of more than 1,000 institutions conducted under the auspices of ACT, which asked chief academic officers to identify three campus retention practices that had the greatest impact on student retention. The reported practice that ranked first in terms of having the most impact on student retention was a "freshman seminar/university 101 course for credit" (Habley & McClanahan, 2004). More recently, Permzadian and Credé (2016) conducted a meta-analytic review of close to 200 published studies of first-year seminars and reported that if institutions implemented a first-year seminar with an the average effectiveness of the studies reviewed, it would see a reduction in attrition rate of approximately 27.4% and an estimate gain in net review generated from first- to second-year retention of $417,750 at public 4-year campuses and $694,650 at private 4-year campuses.

Described below is a summarized series of single-institution studies that demonstrate the first-year seminar's positive impact on student persistence through and beyond the first year of college.

1. Persistence to Completion of the *First Semester/Quarter* of College

Research conducted at Sacramento City College revealed that students who participated in the first-year seminar persisted to completion of the first term at a rate 50% higher than non-participants (Stupka, 1993). California State University-San Marcos also reported statistically significant differences (p<.01) between college-continuation rates of students who enrolled in a first-term seminar versus those who did not (Sparks, 2005).

2. Persistence to the Second Term of College

At Miami Dade College, developmental students who concurrently enrolled in a first-year experience course in the fall had significantly higher re-enrollment rates for the spring term than students who did not participate in the course (Griffin & Romm, 2008).

At the University of Northern Colorado, first-generation students who participated in first-year seminar had significantly higher persistence rates to the second term, even when controlling for demographic characteristics and prior levels of academic performance (Vaughan, Parra & LaLonde, 2014).

3. Persistence to Completion of the *First Year* of College

At Widener University (PA), first-year seminar participants returned for their sophomore year

at a rate that was approximately 18% higher (87.3% vs. 69.6%) than their expected return rate—as predicted by their entering SAT scores (Bushko, 1995). Research conducted at Miami-Dade Community College found that participants in the first-year seminar displayed a 67% first-year retention rate, compared to 46% for non-participants (Belcher, 1993). The University of South Carolina conducted a series of studies on successive cohorts of first-year students enrolled in University 101 (first-year seminar). Results of these studies revealed that for 16 consecutive years, first-year students who participated in the seminar were more likely to persist to the sophomore year than non-participants. In 11 of the 16 years, the differences reached statistically significant levels—despite the fact that course participants had higher course loads and lower predicted academic success—as measured by standardized-admissions test scores (Fidler, 1991).

At Ramapo College (New Jersey), the average first-to-second-year retention rate for five consecutive years *after* the first-year seminar became a requirement was significantly higher than the average retention rate for first-year students who entered the college during the three-year period that preceded course adoption (Starke, Harth, & Sirianni, 2001).

Controlling for student background characteristics and participation in academic support programs, students at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis who participated in a first-year seminar displayed first-year retention rates that were significantly higher ($p < .01$) than non-participants (Jackson, 2005).

At the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, students who participated in a first-year seminar returned for their sophomore year at a higher rate than did students with better pre-college academic preparation. Moreover, course participation was associated with higher persistence rates for students at all levels of academic ability—as measured by ACT score, college preparatory courses completed, and high school rank (Miller & Janz, 2007).

At Central Connecticut State University, students who participated in a first-year seminar were 40% less likely to leave the university in their first year (Miller & Lesik, 2014).

4. Persistence to Completion of the *Sophomore Year*

At the University of Maryland, students who were randomly assigned to participate in the first-year seminar displayed significantly higher retention rates throughout their first four semesters in college than students randomly assigned to a control group that did not take the course (Strumpf & Hunt, 1993).

5. Cumulative (Total) Number of *College Units/Credits Completed*

Research conducted at Sacramento City College revealed that first-year seminar participants completed 326% more units than did non-participants (Stupka, 1993); at Oakton Community College (IL), course participants went on to earn 50% more academic units in college than did non-participants (Deutch, 1998). Using an original dataset of 23,267 student-unit records from the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), Cho and Karp (2013) found that students who enrolled in a student success course in the first semester were more likely to earn any college-level credits within the first year and were more likely to persist to the second year. The study also found that students who were referred to developmental education were more likely to earn any college-level credits within the first year if they enrolled in a student success course in their first term.

6. Persistence to *Junior* and *Senior* Year

At Northern Michigan University, students who participated in the first-year seminar persisted

into the third and fourth year of college at a higher rate than did non-participants (Verduin, 2005). At Northern Colorado University, male students and first-generation students who participated in a first-year seminar persisted through their third year of college at significantly higher rates than non-participants—as large as almost 25% for male participants and 34% for male minority students—even when controlling for their level of academic preparedness at college entry (Swanson, Vaughan, & Wilkinson, 2017).

7. Persistence to *Degree/Program Completion*

At the State University of New York in Buffalo, first-year students who did and did not participate in a first-year seminar were matched according to gender, race, SAT score, high school GPA and intended program of study. Students who completed the first-year seminar graduated within four, five, and six years at higher rates than did their matched counterparts who did not participate in the course (Lang, 2007). North Dakota State University conducted a longitudinal study of 1700 students from four classes of new-student cohorts. Students enrolled in the first-year seminar were matched with non-participants on a variety of pre-college characteristics, which included ACT composite scores, high school rank, size of high school graduating class, and intended academic major. Chi-square tests revealed that the 4- and 5-year graduation rates for seminar participants were significantly higher than for a matched control group of non-participants; moreover, significant differences were found at the end of each year of college enrollment—from students' first year to their year of graduation (Schnell & Doetkott, 2002-2003).

The impressive impact of the first-year seminar on graduation rates has been replicated at a wide variety of institutions. In a study conducted at the University of Prince Edward Island (Canada), 49% of course participants persisted to completion of the baccalaureate degree—versus 28% for non-participants (Robb, 1993). At Ohio University, 4-, 5- and 6-year graduation rates were higher for course participants than non-participants (Chapman & Kahrig, 1998). At Dalton College (GA), institutional researchers tracked students over a 5-year period and found that 30.8% of course participants met the 90 quarter-hour requirement for graduation—compared to 19.4% for non-participants (Hoff, Cook, & Price, 1996).

At the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, both commuter and residential students who participated in a first-year seminar graduated (within four years) at higher rates than non-participants (Blowers, 2005). At Northern Kentucky University, first-year seminar students demonstrated significantly higher 6- and 7-year graduation rates than students who did not take the course, independent of their pre-college curriculum and ACT score at college entry (Stieha, 2005). At the State University of New York, Buffalo, students who participated in a first-year seminar evidenced higher 4-, 5- and 6-year graduation rates than a matched group of non-participants (Lang, 2007).

At Cincinnati State Technical & Community College, compared to non-participants, students who participated in and completed a first-year seminar with a grade of C or higher in their first semester went on to graduate at significantly higher rates—as measured by completion of either a degree or credential within three years after their initial matriculation at the college (McLaughlin & Cuseo, 2017).

Zeidenberg, Jenkins, & Calcagno (2007) used individual student record data provided by the Florida Department of Education on a cohort composed of all students who entered a Florida community college for the first time in fall 1999. These students were tracked for 17 terms were examined in terms of the percentage of these students who completed a credential (a certificate

or an associate degree) during that time period. Using logistic regressions to control for student demographic characteristics and basic-skills placement scores, these researchers discovered that taking a first-year experience (college success) course in addition to enrollment in remediation was associated—at a statistically significant level—with higher probability of completion than enrollment in remedial courses alone.

8. *Time Taken* to Degree/Program Completion

At Keene State College (New Hampshire), 29% of first-year seminar participants graduated within four years—versus 16% of non-participants, and 52% graduated within 5-1/2 years—versus 35% for non-participants (Backes, 1998).

Possible Explanations for the Positive Impact of the First-Year Seminar on Student Retention and College Graduation Rates

Why do students who participate in the first-year seminar demonstrate higher retention and graduation rates? What specific experiences do students have in the course that mediate or eventuate in their higher persistence rates? Conclusive, empirically-based answers to these questions are not yet available; however, the following course experiences are likely to be explanatory candidates.

Increased student use of *support services* and *involvement in campus life*

Research indicates that there is a strong relationship between student retention and student involvement with support services and campus life (Churchill & Iwai, 1981; Davis-Underwood and Lee, 1994; Stoecker, Pascarella, & Wolfle, 1988; Pascaralla & Terenzini, 1991, 2005). Historically, one the most frequently cited goals of first-year seminars has been to increase students' use of campus and involvement in campus life (Barefoot & Fidler, 1996). Campus-specific studies reveal that the first-year seminar increases student involvement with campus services and campus life. For instance, at Champlain College (VT), student utilization of the *learning resource center* and *tutoring services* has remained consistently and substantially higher among first-year seminar participants than non-participants (Goldsweig, 1998). At Bloomsburg University, one of Pennsylvania's 14 state universities, course participants reported higher levels of academic and social integration on a standardized, externally validated instrument; for example, participants reported more interactions with peers and with faculty outside the classroom, greater use of student services, higher rates of participation in student clubs and organizations, and greater commitment to institutional and educational goals (Yale, 2000). At the University of California-Santa Barbara, first-year seminar participants were found to attend *campus events* and participate in *student government* at significantly higher rates than students who do not take the course (Andreatta, 1998). At the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, students who participated in the seminar reported significantly more *informal contact with faculty* outside of class throughout their first-year of college did than non-participants (Maisto & Tammi, 1991). The University of Wyoming reported an increase in *library circulation* and use of *student services* following institutional adoption of the first-year seminar as a required course (Reeve, 1993).

Particularly powerful results on sustained student use of campus resources among first-year

seminar student were obtained at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, which revealed that students who participated in the course during their initial term on campus went on to use the college's learning resource and tutorial services as *sophomores and juniors* at a rate double that of sophomores and juniors who did not take the course during their first year (Wilkie & Kuckuck, 1989). This finding strongly suggests that the impact of the first-year seminar extends beyond the first term and can exert iterative or cumulative effects on students' engagement with campus resources throughout their undergraduate experience. This may explain, at least in part, why first-year seminar participants have demonstrated higher persistence and graduation rates.

Increased *student satisfaction* with the college experience

College satisfaction is a "primary predictor" of student persistence (Noel & Levitz, 1995), i.e., there is a well-established empirical relationship between students' level of *satisfaction* with the postsecondary institution they are attending and their rate of *retention* at that institution (Bean, 1980, 1983; Noel, Levitz, & Saluri, 1985). Furthermore, it has been found that college satisfaction is a college-experience variable that is least likely to be influenced or confounded by students' college-entry characteristics—e.g., academic preparedness, educational aspirations, gender, and socioeconomic status (Astin, 1991). The importance of *first-year* student satisfaction, in particular, is underscored by Barefoot and Fidler (1992): "First-year students are often compliant and reluctant to complain about even the most egregious injustices. Institutions must take the initiative in determining the existing quality of life for first-year students both in and out of the classroom" (p. 63).

Since the first-year seminar one major purpose of the first-year seminar is to *integrate and involve* students' with key educational agents, support services, and co-curricular opportunities, these greater sense of campus connection may be expected to lead to heightened levels of college satisfaction. The positive impact of the first-year seminar on students' college satisfaction has been demonstrated at Bethel College (Kansas) where before the first-year seminar was implemented, ACT Student Opinion Surveys of college sophomores indicated that the college rated below the mean of other colleges of the same institutional type. However, once the college initiated the first-year seminar, student opinions of the institution improved to the point where it has scored significantly above the mean in a number of areas (Zerger, 1993). At Northern Kentucky University, the Noel- Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory was administered to first-year students, and results revealed that students who participated in the first-year seminar reported a higher overall level of satisfaction with the college than did non-participants; statistically significant differences emerged on the following items: "The campus staff is caring and helpful (p<.01) and, "Faculty care about me as an individual" (p<.05) (Stieha, 2005).

These findings indicating that the first-year seminar has the capacity to increase students' overall college satisfaction and, in so doing, may increase their rate of college persistence.

Increased crystallization of students' *major/career plans and future goals*

Retention research suggests that student commitment to educational and career goals is perhaps the strongest factor associated with persistence to degree completion (Wyckoff, 1999), and students who lack commitment to educational and occupational goals are more likely to leave college (e.g., Astin, 1975; Noel, Levitz, & Saluri, 1985). Educational planning, goal setting, and career exploration are common topics for discussion and self-assessment in the first-year seminar. The seminar's potential for promoting earlier and more accurate crystallization of students' college major and career plans is suggested by findings reported at Irvine Valley

College, where longitudinal research was conducted on course participants' self-reported academic and career plans prior to the course, immediately after the course, and after the third semester of college. This study revealed that students who participated in the first-year seminar reported much more focused career and academic goals at the end of the course and did so, again, after completion of their third semester in college (Belson & Deegan, 1993).

Increased student *enthusiasm for* and *commitment to* their home campus

One of the primary goals of many first-year seminars has been to introduce students to their home institution (Barefoot & Fidler, 1996), including its history, mission, and distinctive features. The first-year seminar class may the only venue in the students' entire college experience where students receive any exposure the college's distinctive unique history and mission, and how they can take advantage of it. This practice not only increases student awareness and knowledge of their own campus, but may also serve the more subtle purpose of cementing an *early foundation* for new students' *long-term commitment* to the postsecondary institution they chose to begin higher education. John Gardner (1986) points out the importance of introducing this topic to first-term students by likening it to the consumer principle of "post-purchase marketing" or the "second sale" in which institutions are trying to help students overcome "buyers' remorse" and instead make a commitment to remain at the institution.

Increasing students' early commitment to their campus not only reduces risk for subsequent student attrition, it may also increase student involvement and effort because research suggests that if students perceive their institution as being committed to them by providing facilitative experiences (such as the first-year seminar), then they expend more effort at becoming academically and socially involved in the college experience (Davis & Murrell, 1993). Similarly, national survey research reveals that student engagement on campus correlates positively with student perceptions of campus support (National Survey of Student Engagement (2005). Thus, the first-year seminar may enhance students' perceived level of support, which in turn, may increase their level of engagement and subsequent persistence.

Improved *academic performance* during the *first year* of college

Another way in which participation in the first-year seminar may promote students' persistence to degree completion is by improving their academic performance during the first term in college. Research indicates that there is a relationship between higher first-term GPA and student retention (Fox, 1986; Pascarella & Chapman, 1983), higher rate of college completion (DesJardins, et al., 2002; Nora & Cabrera, 1996) as well as shorter time to graduation (Goldman & Gillis, 1989; Young, 1982). The first-year seminar has been found to improve students' academic performance during the first year of college (see the following section). Thus, by impacting the short-term outcome of first-year academic performance, the first-year seminar may in turn contribute to the longer-term outcome of persistence to graduation.

Summary and Conclusion

Viewed collectively, the foregoing results warrant the conclusion that any postsecondary institution which is seriously committed to making research-based, data-driven decisions about implementing educational interventions that are likely to improve student retention and graduation rates, particularly for first-generation and underprepared students (Stovall, 1999; Strumpf & Hunt, 1993), should strongly consider adopting or expanding a first-year seminar. This conclusion is supported by a recent national study of institutions enrolling high percentages

of students at risk for attrition (e.g., academically underprepared, low-income, first-generation students) but have higher-than-predicted graduation rates that are near the national average for *all* students. Every one of these high-performing institutions had adopted programs that were intentionally designed to promote student persistence to degree completion, the most common of which was a first-year experience course modeled after the holistic, student-centered seminar developed at the University of South Carolina (SREB, 2010).

◆ *ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT/PERFORMANCE* OUTCOMES

In addition to studies supporting the first-year seminar's positive impact on student retention, numerous campus-specific studies indicate that participation in a first-year seminar also increases students' first-year GPA and decreases their risk of being placed on academic probation (Barefoot, et al., 1998; House, 2005; Jackson, 2005; Porter & Swing, 2006; Soldner, 1998; Williford, Chapman, and Kahrigh, 2000-2001; Scrivener, Sommo, & Collado, 2009; Swanson, Vaughan, & Wilkinson, 2017; Wahlstrom, 1993; Weiss, et al., 2011; Vaughan, Parra, & LaLonde, 2014). National surveys suggest that the improved academic performance of students who participate in the seminar is mediated by their greater likelihood of: (a) attending class regularly, (b) speaking up in class and (c) interacting with faculty, compared to students with similar college-entry characteristics who do not participate in the seminar (Keup & Barefoot, 2005). Further evidence that student participation in the first-year seminar promotes productive change in students' academic behavior is suggested by research conducted at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), it was found that significantly higher percentages of first-year seminar participants than non-participants reported that they were "more likely to spend more than 10 hours per week preparing for class" and "more likely to go to class having completed reading or assignments" (Blowers, 2005).

Although evidence for the positive impact of first-year seminars on academic achievement isn't not as widespread and consistent as it is for student retention (Barefoot, 2000), a substantial number of campus-specific studies do suggest that student participation in the seminar is associated with improved academic performance—as measured by the seven different academic-achievement indicators cited below.

1. Cumulative GPA Attained at the *End* of the *First Term* or *First Year* of College

Research conducted at Genesee Community College (NY) revealed that first-year seminar participants earned a first-term GPA about one-half point higher than a matched control group of non-participants (Wahlstrom, 1993). At Northern Illinois University, five consecutive first-year cohorts were compared with a matched group of non-participants, and it was found that students who took the course earned significantly higher first-term and first-year GPAs (House, 1998). In a follow-up study at the same university, analysis of covariance procedures were used to control for differences between the ACT composite scores of students who enrolled and did not enroll in the seminar, first-year seminar enrollees earned significantly higher mean GPAs (p<.0001) than non-enrollees (House, 2005).

At Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, conditionally admitted students who participated in the first-year seminar achieved a significantly higher first-term GPA (p<.01) than

did non-participants, even after controlling for students' background characteristics and participation in other academic-support programs (Jackson, 2005). At the State University of New York, Buffalo, students who completed a first-year seminar achieved a higher first-semester mean GPA than students with a similar level of academic preparedness (high school GPAs and SAT scores) who did not take the course (Lang, 2007).

At Miami Dade College, developmental students who concurrently enrolled in a first-year experience course during their first term had significantly higher pass rates in their remedial courses than students who did not enroll in the course (Griffin & Romm, 2008).

At Northern Colorado University, male students and first-generation students who participated in a first-year seminar earned significantly higher first-term grade point averages (.5 to .7 grade points greater) than non-participants (Swanson, Vaughan, & Wilkinson, 2017).

2. Cumulative GPA Attained *Beyond the First Year*

At Indiana University of Pennsylvania, at-risk students were randomly assigned to either of two groups, one of which took the first-year seminar and the other did not. Over a period of three successive years, students who successfully completed the first-year seminar achieved significantly higher GPAs (p<.01) than a matched control group of students who did not take the course (Wilkie & Kuckuck, 1989).

3. GPA *Attained* vs. GPA *Predicted*

The aforementioned study at Indiana University of Pennsylvania also found that when first-year students with similar *predicted* GPAs were randomly assigned to take or not take the first-year seminar, the cumulative GPAs *attained* by course participants at the end of their first, second, and third years of college were significantly higher than non-participants (Wilkie & Kuckuck, 1989).

4. Total Number of First-Year Students in *Good Academic Standing* (i.e., Students *Not* Placed on *Academic Probation* or *Academically Dismissed*)

Research conducted at the University of Maryland demonstrated that first-year seminar participants completed their first two years of college in good academic standing at a significantly higher rate than students with comparable levels of academic preparation who did not participate in the course (Strumpf & Hunt, 1993).

At Northern Michigan University, significantly higher percentages of first-year seminar participants than non-participants maintained good academic standing (GPA of at least 2.0) over their first five semesters in college (Soldner, 1998). A subsequent study at the same university examined the aggregated first-term GPAs of eight successive cohorts of new students, and it was found that students who participated in the first-year seminar completed their first term in good academic standing at a significantly higher rate than did non-participants (Verduin, 2005).

At Averett College (VA), after the first-year seminar was adopted and required, there was a 20% drop in the percentage of students that ended their first year on academic probation, without the college making any other changes in its admissions standards or implementing any other retention initiative (Vinson, 1993).

5. Total Number of First-Year Courses *Passed* (versus Dropped or Failed)

Research conducted by a consortium of four community colleges in North Carolina revealed that first-year seminar participants completed an average of nine more units by the end of their

first year of college than did non-participants (Garret, 1993).

6. Total Number of First-Year Courses Completed with a *Grade of "C" or Higher*

Research conducted at Sacramento City College revealed that course participants completed four times as many math classes, three times as many writing classes, and twice as many reading classes with a grade of "C" or higher than did non-participants (Stupka, 1993).

7. Percentage of Students Qualifying for the *Dean's List* and *Honors Program*

At the University of Vermont, where the first-year seminar is taught as an introduction to the liberal arts and sciences with special emphasis placed on critical/creative thinking, research skills and oral/written communication skills, the percentage of students qualifying for the Dean's List and gaining acceptance into the school's honor program was significantly higher for course participants than non-participants (Thomson, 1998).

Conclusion

Arguably, it's safe to say that more rigorous research has been conducted on, and more compelling evidence gathered for, the first-year seminar than any other course in the history of American higher education. Discipline-based course have not been required to justify their existence or their impact on student success; their perennial place in the college curriculum is ensured by the perpetual force of academic tradition and the political power of the academic departments within which they are housed. In his book, *Fixing College Education: A New Curriculum for the Twenty-first Century*, Charles Muscatine, professor emeritus at the University of California-Berkeley, describes his efforts to initiate and sustain an effective and innovative program for undergraduates. His program was eventually terminated by a faculty committee because of concerns about "educational quality." However, Muscatine notes that during the faculty review process, "No faculty group . . . ever attempted to determine the actual 'quality' of the courses in the regular academic program, against which the quality of unconventional courses might be judged" (p. 35).

Similarly, the non-traditional or "foreign" nature of the first-year seminar's student-centered content and student-engaging pedagogy have frequently activated the university's "organizational immune system," resulting in frequent and virulent attacks on the course's academic legitimacy. Consequently, the first-year seminar has become higher education's most repeatedly challenged and most thoroughly assessed course. Since "necessity is the mother of invention," innovative methodologies have been devised to document the course's positive impact and ensure its birth and survival. One would be hard pressed to find any other curricular intervention in higher education that has received more rigorous evaluation or has better qualifications to serve as a "best practice" for promoting student success.

Appendix:
Methodological Notes

Reflecting the fact that the majority of first-year seminars are offered as an *elective* course (Barefoot & Fidler, 1996; National Resource Center, 1998), most campus-specific research studies on first-year seminars have used a *quasi-experimental* (a.k.a., *matched-pair)* design, whereby course outcomes for students who elect (volunteer) to take the course are compared with those of a "matched" control group—i.e., first-year students not enrolled in the course whose personal characteristics are similar to (match) those of course participants with respect to student variables that are likely to influence educational outcomes (e.g., high school GPA or rank, standardized college-admission tests—ACT/SAT, residential status—commuter/on-campus).

   Although the matched control group in the quasi-experimental design serves as an effective control for these potentially confounding students' demographic variables, it does not control for the "volunteer effect" or "self-selection bias," i.e., the possibility that students who elect (volunteer) to take the course (selecting themselves into it) may be students who are more motivated to succeed in college than students who opt out of the course. To address the possibility that higher levels of student motivation may account for the positive findings

generated by matched-control group studies, the University of South Carolina surveyed its first-year seminar (University 101) participants and matched groups of non-participants at the start of the term to assess whether they differed in their reported level of college motivation (e.g., perceived importance and likelihood of completing their degree; willingness to participate in campus activities and student organizations). Surveys conducted on several cohorts of first-year students revealed no differences between the two groups in their college-motivation survey scores, suggesting that the course's positive impact could not be explained away as merely an artifact of student self-selection (Fidler, 1991).

Experimental Design

At least three published studies on the first-year seminar have employed a true *experimental* design, whereby students were *randomly assigned* to either an experimental group that takes the course or a control group that does not. At Indiana University of Pennsylvania, high-risk students were randomly assigned to either register or not register for the first-year seminar. Students who successfully completed the first-year seminar achieved significantly higher GPAs ($p<.01$) over a 3-year period than a matched control group of students who did not take the course (Wilkie & Kuckuck, 1989).

An experimental design was also used at the University of Maryland at College Park, which yielded results indicated that, relative to a control group, students who took the course displayed significantly higher rates of retention (with good academic standing) throughout their first four semesters on campus (Strumpf & Hunt, 1993). Yet another experimental study was conducted at Bloomsburg University (PA), whose students were randomly assigned to be course participants or non-participants. Using a standardized, externally- validated survey instrument, it was found that course participants reported higher levels of both academic and social integration—for example, more interactions with peers and faculty outside the classroom, greater use of student services and participation in student clubs or organizations, and greater commitment to institutional and educational goals (Yale, 2000).

Some campus-specific studies eliminated the volunteer effect by requiring the first-year seminar for all its students and evaluating course impact by means of a *time-series* research design. In this research design, outcomes obtained after the course is required of all students are compared with student outcomes achieved prior to the course requirement. Thus, previous cohorts of first-year students who did not experience the seminar serve as a "historical" control group to compare   outcomes obtained with the "current" experimental group (cohort) of first-year students who are required to take the course. At Ramapo College (New Jersey), a time-series design was used to provide evidence that the average freshman-to-sophomore retention rate for five successive cohorts of freshmen who participated in the seminar was significantly higher than the average retention rate for freshmen who entered the college during the three-year period prior to the course requirement (Starke, Harth, & Sirianni, 2001). Similarly, at Averett College (VA), a time-series design revealed that after adoption of the first-year seminar, there was a 26% reduction in freshman-to-sophomore attrition rate and a 24% drop in the percentage of freshmen completing their first year on academic probation (Vinson, 1993). It is noteworthy that during the time period when the seminar was adopted and evaluated on both of these campuses, there were no significant changes made in student-admission standards, nor were was any other major retention initiatives implemented.

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