

CHARGE:
TASK FORCE ON FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Background

Research on college impact and student success is clear: institutions are well-advised to focus resources on the transition and academic and social adjustment of first-year students. Universities that seem to be effective at fostering student success are characterized by “coordinated, complementary programs for new students that start with pre-college socialization activities and continue through much or all of the first college year.” (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2005, p. 286). These programs include extended orientation programs, first-year seminars, learning communities, and ‘one-stop’ services for first-year students, including advising, financial aid, and various forms of academic assistance.

At the University of Iowa, conversations about, and interest in, (1) extending new student orientation beyond the traditional 2-day summer experience and (2) expanding formal transition experiences to a greater proportion of the first-year class than currently is the case (e.g., approximately 1000 new students are enrolled in College Transitions in Fall 2007) have taken place for several years. Results from the Research on Iowa Student Experiences (RISE) study, for example, identified several potential areas of concern regarding the academic and social adjustment of UI first-year students. In addition, of the ‘top priority’ actions discussed at the Student Success Team (SST) Retreat in July 2007, examination of, and planning for, first-year experiences at Iowa generated the most support and the greatest sense of urgency. Discussions at the retreat also advocated encouraging increased faculty engagement in student success initiatives, particularly those for first-year students; identifying ways to use, and encourage, faculty expertise should be part of any effort to study and address FYE at Iowa.

Sponsor

The task force is sponsored by and will report to the Executive Committee of the Student Success Team.

Charge

The task force will:

1. Identify programs and practices for first-year students.
2. Describe elements specific to the University of Iowa regarding first-year student programs, practices, and experiences.
3. Recommend a comprehensive first-year student experience program for the University of Iowa.

Deliverables

The work of the task force will proceed in two stages, each yielding a written report. :

In *Phase One*, the task force will address points 1 and 2 of the charge, including:

- Taxonomy of first-year experiences.
- Description of proven practices for first-year students, including evidence of the practices' effectiveness.
- Models for the assessment of the outcomes associated with first-year experiences.
- Internal environmental scan of the University of Iowa identifying and assessing current practices and programs for first-year students.

The *Phase Two Report* will address point 3 of the charge and will constitute a proposal for the future of first-year student programs and experiences at the University of Iowa. The report will include:

- Detailed descriptions of the key features of the proposed practices, programs, and/or experiences
- Intended outcomes and means to assess their achievement
- Overall scope and scale of the proposed program
- Governance model
- Staffing model
- Resource needs

Support

- The Office of the Provost will consider requests for modest funds for travel to support the task force's work (e.g., to conferences or for site visits).

Scope notes

- The task force need *not* address the source of resources to operate the proposed first-year program.
- The task force will consider both academic and non-academic experiences, programs, and practices.
- Issues to consider in assessing and recommending programs and practices will include – but are not limited to – communicating clear expectations, healthy choices, safety, ethical behavior, and respect.
- The task force will keep in mind the likelihood of a future committee to address the needs of new transfer students and will maintain and provide information to be used by that committee.

Membership

- Michael Barron (Office of Admissions), Chair
- Alejandra Almazan (Student Financial Aid)
- Amy L Bartachek (Tippie Undergraduate Program)
- Andrew Cinoman (Office of Admissions)
- Brian Corkery (Academic Advising Center)
- Jane Dorman (College of Engineering)
- Valerie Garr (College of Nursing)
- David Grady (Student Services)
- Nancy Hauserman (Tippie College of Business)

- Gloria Hurtado (Alumni Association)
- Peter Hubbard (College of Liberal Arts)
- Kelly Karnes (Office of Student Life)
- Robert Kirby (University Honors Program)
- Anne Kvinge (Student)
- Jodi Linley (Department of Physiology)
- Leonard MacGillivray (Professor, Chemistry)
- Aaron Parker (Student)
- Emil Rinderspacher (Office of Admissions)
- Gabriela Rivera (Center for Diversity and Enrichment)
- Kathryn Sojka (Residence Life Programs)
- John Solow (Professor, Economics)
- Sophie Switzer (Student)
- Katherine Tachau (Professor, History)

Due dates	September 1, 2008	<i>Phase One Report</i>
	November 1, 2008	<i>Phase Two Report</i>