

TO: Tom Rocklin and Bill Nelson
FROM: Elizabeth Whitt
DATE: July 30, 2007
RE: Notes from Newsprint: Small-Group Brainstorming Action Plans

Here are notes from the newsprint – these are from the initial small-group brainstorming activity, not the more focused discussions post post-its. I've used bracketed question marks where I can't figure out what was intended.

Group One

1. First Semester/First Year
 - Connections: connect with something in first 6-8 weeks
 - 'First Experiences'
 - Require an early common activity from 'suite of things we know work' (e.g., CIC, learning communities, peer mentoring, 1st-year seminar, CT, WISE)
 - Extend summer orientation at beginning of the fall semester
 - Issues: capacity, funds
 - 'Support group' or team of advisors for each student (e.g., academic advisors (faculty and staff), peer advisors, career advisors ('missing as part of immediate effort'), residence hall advisors, residence hall/virtual resource 24/7.
 - Immediately in first semester
 - Assign career advisor from beginning and require meetings
 - Early ID/intervention of students at risk
 - Coordinated system
 - Identification of students at risk and connection to a "Success Coach". Could be a peer or faculty who meets with the student weekly to discuss progress and make sure the student connects to needed services.
 - Greater use of ACT Student Profile information where students identify before coming to campus areas in which they might need help. Provide connections to services.
2. Friday classes: continue to explore expanding offerings.
3. Faculty education/development regarding student success, student development; information about 'what matters' shared widely
 - Role for research group?
 - Role for Center for Teaching?
 - Making sure faculty understand what those who are in student services understand about the student experience on campus. We've got lots of data, we need to figure out how to share it in meaningful ways.
4. Clear, coordinated, intentional messages about expectations
5. Adjustment/transition from residence hall to living off campus – can create problems for student success
 - How to prepare students for this transition? When? By whom?

6. What's important for student success after the first year? (So much of what we're talking about focuses on the first year)

- Research group task?

Group Two

1. Create connections with the local community
 - Inter/Intra policy factors (NASPA) [?]
 - Health Advocacy Ninjas
2. Getting students involved 'early in the process'
 - Ensure that students engage in what we know 'works' for student success
 - Consistent messages about student involvement/engagement
 - Consistent messages about what it means to be an Iowa student
 - What does it mean to be remarkable?
 - Consider requiring CT (small group setting is critical during adjustment)
 - Consider small-group instruction in first year
 - Disseminate widely information about what we know 'works' at UI
 - Offer Courses in Common the 2nd semester of the first year [?]
 - Look at the intellectual piece [?]
 - Need greater guidance (for students?) re: Pathways to Success
 - Need a common, shared definition of student success
 - Advance the 'Camp Success' notion as means to extend orientation into the first year
3. Greater faculty involvement in CT instruction
4. Need for students to connect with non-students [?]
5. Tutoring – perhaps not enough tutors for advanced courses [?]
6. Need for mentoring (university and community) [?]
7. Stop creating new programs unless we can (communicate?) and collaborate
8. Consider virtual learning communities (non-residential)
9. Invent ways to make large classes smaller
 - Biology 102
 - Supplemental Instruction – peer-led team learning
10. Develop policy on what role undergrads can assume in instruction (none exists)
11. Issue: unhealthy rituals that interfere with student success – Develop new rituals
 - Take a critical look at spirit, pride, and tradition
 - Relearn 'lost' traditions that are healthy
 - Invent new traditions that are healthy

- Example: Collegiate Service Day (based on academic college, department, and year in school)
- 12. Redefine faculty involvement with undergrads
 - Reexamine faculty rewards/compensation/P&T
 - Faculty involvement in conversations about institutional advising philosophy and practices
 - Are there other points of engagement? [?]
- 13. Project to advance student engagement (in and out of class) on the official student transcript/record
- 14. Consider various 'infusion' topics in the courses taken by all first-year students [?]
 - HLC subcommittee found that first-year courses might not be the best platform [? – for?]
- 15. Common themes
 - "You've got to get the faculty involved"
 - Increase integration of social and intellectual lives of students
 - Think and act in terms of cultures, networks, and traditions [?]
 - Consistent and clear messages about what it means to be successful
 - Understand that being successful might look different for different students
 - Healthy rituals
 - Student engagement in 'this' process is essential [?]

Group Three

1. What aspects of student success will we focus on in identifying actions?
 - Engagement (students, faculty) – with the community, in and out of class, curriculum/cocurriculum
 - Bridging in- and out-of-class engagement/Integrating academic and non-academic aspects of student experiences
 - Shared responsibility for student success (faculty, staff, students)
 - Recognition for faculty engagement
 - Cultural issues regarding faculty engagement (w/ students) and student engagement (with educationally-purposeful activities/healthy activities) – barriers
 - Identity development, social responsibility, integrity, sense of purpose, critical thinking
 - Persistence to graduation
 - Skills and competencies (e.g, financial competencies) – impact on in college experiences, after college/life/goals
 - Clearly-marked pathways to student success
2. First-Year 'messages' about engagement/involvement
 - Faculty recognition and awards for faculty engagement with students and their success
 - Titles, funding, fellowships
 - What P&T implications?
 - Expand student involvement in faculty research
 - Expand student and faculty involvement in service learning

- Recognition and awards for student engagement
 - Emphasis on beginning students and student groups
 - Financial awards for students (e.g., scholarships for incoming students based on engagement before college and commitment to maintaining engagement in college)
 - Concern: parents and others tell students 'don't get involved' and focus on school work
- 'Pick One': pick one thing to get involved in other than school work
 - FY transitions
 - Importance of opportunities for reflection and application – what are you learning, etc.?
 - What settings?
 - Critical thinking and integration
 - Civic engagement
 - In classes?
- 3. Faculty Involvement with Students and their Success
 - What preparation for faculty to foster student success?
 - Focus on faculty in the largest first-year classes?
 - What faculty are in contact with first-year students?
- 4. Expand student participation in CT (require it? both sides of this issue felt strongly)
 - CT is something parents want, not students?
 - CT instructor: my experience is students say 'I didn't want to take CT, but it was really helpful.'
 - Data in support of CT, particularly for 'high ability' students
- 5. Student role in student success: peer educators, undergraduate TAs, ongoing orientation leaders
 - Training: for students, for faculty – demonstrate 'clear pathways'
 - Issue/Concern: largely first-year residence halls (absence of upperclass students) – implications for governance, programs, buy-in for efforts; what models for what works in this situation?
 - Issue: passivity of students – "If you want to get first-year students to do anything, you have to pick them up and carry them.'
- 6. Communication (shared responsibility)
 - Lack of communication/information between staff and faculty, among staff, among faculty: "We don't know what we're doing.' 'Two worlds': in class experiences and out of class experiences.
 - Need institutional focus, priority
 - Need education and coordination – of faculty and staff
 - Faculty learning communities?
- 7. TA training: student success, first-year experiences and issues
- 8. Physical and psychological barriers to student use of opportunities and resources; lack of exploration and risk-taking (e.g., Hatcher, museums, Old Capitol)
 - "Seize the campus"

Group Four

1. Examine space in terms of student success

- Create learning support space
 - Create nexus: library, wellness center
 - More common areas in support of student-faculty interaction
 - Open late/open early (depending on what the activity/office)
 - Involve stakeholders (including students) in planning
 - How to make outreach services available to students who need them most? (including working students, transfer students)
 - More residence hall space to house more students – guarantee all incoming students a room
2. Build institutional identity
- Hawkeye Fridays
 - Departmental t-shirts, discounts for participation
 - “Message” Project
 - Setting expectations, providing support
 - Embrace non-athletic school spirit and importance of representing university well
3. Build assessment (across undergraduate education)
- More and better assessment of how we’re doing
 - In small units and fed to centralized place
4. Increase faculty-student interaction
- Faculty and students – interaction opportunities out of class
 - Organized study opportunities in a course
 - Resident faculty in dorms, seminars
 - Places to find out what faculty like to do – match to student interests
 - Resources for faculty: student needs, interests, etc.
5. Peer mentoring/Use of peers in fostering student success, academic and social support
- Expand peer advising
 - Camp Herky
 - Supplemental Instruction
 - Help teach CT
 - Health Ninjas
 - Training programs for peer instructors
6. Transitions, Ceremonies, Experiences
- Ongoing orientation
 - Beginnings and endings (e.g., end-of-first-year celebration)
7. Motivate students to encourage engagement
- Activities other than drinking
 - Example: Honors program, dances, festivals
 - Are students’ lives too planned/organized for them?
 - Welcome Week: small group involvement
 - Upperclass students TA in CT?
 - CT: expand sections/student involvement
 - Expand living-learning communities

- Revise/re-examine policies to open doors for student organization recruitment
 - Academic credit for engagement
 - Eliminate fall 'rush' in fraternities and sororities
 - Examine what happens in fraternities and sororities for first-year students and ongoing awareness [?]
8. Create student space
- Understand student flow for information dispersion/wellness
 - Student learning centers
 - Reconfigure library space
 - Examine current space in Capitol Center
 - Campus planning
 - Faculty and student – mingle/common space
 - Fields open at night
 - Central locations for student support centers
 - More residence hall space for more students who must live off campus now
9. Expand Orientation/Formal first-year experiences – whole first year, beyond first year
- Examine advising beyond first year
 - What are peer institutions doing?
 - What could we centralize?
 - Master template for UI Web [?]
 - Making sure students and parents can find what they want
 - Institutional commitment to celebrate beginnings and transitions
 - Welcoming activities for students new to departments