

**The
University Of Iowa
First-Year Experience
Task Force**

**Phase II Report:
Recommendations for a
Comprehensive First-Year
Experience Program**

March 2009

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**PHASE II REPORT
OF THE
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE TASK FORCE
AT
THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA**

Introduction

The *First-Year Experience Task Force at The University of Iowa* was established by the Executive Committee of the Student Success Team in summer 2008. Michael Barron, Assistant Provost for Enrollment Services and Director of Admissions, chairs the committee. See Appendix A for a complete list of task force members.

The task force has been given the following charge to be delivered in two reports:

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

In the *Phase I Report*, the task force addressed the first two components of the charge and:

- Developed a taxonomy of first-year experiences;
- Described proven practices for first-year students, including evidence of the practices' effectiveness;
- Identified models for the assessment of the outcomes associated with first-year experiences;
- Completed an internal environmental scan of The University of Iowa, identifying and assessing current practices and programs for first-year students.

The task force delivered the *Phase I Report* to Elizabeth Whitt, Director of Student Success Initiatives, in November 2008.

This Phase II Report addresses the third component 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:

- Forward: A Note from the Chair;
- Process for Phase II;
- Proposal;
- Governance;
- Resource Needs;
- An Historical Context for Creating an Integrated and Comprehensive First-Year Experience Program at The University of Iowa; *and*
- various appendices.

I) Forward: A Note from the Chair

The initial work of this Task Force provided for the discovery of both the universe of what have come to be called “first-year experience” programs as well as the identification of best practices. The philosophical and pedagogical basis for supporting the learning and transitional process of first-year students to university expectations and campus life is captured in the Phase I report of the Task Force. As a result, they will not be reiterated here in Phase II in any major way except by occasional reference as our recommendations are presented.

The concepts behind these recommendations may be found in the RISE Report, the Higher Learning Commission Accreditation Report, and in the works of George Kuh, Joseph Cuseo and the ground-breaking efforts of the original first-year experience chronicled by John Gardner. Many of these references and more are found in the Phase I report which is included as a companion to this Phase II report. The Action Committees of the Student Success Team effort provided valuable information and recommendations that assisted the Task Force in establishing the foundations for its work.

Identifying these foundational concepts and discovering examples of best practice allowed the Task Force to identify those programs already in place at The University of Iowa which can best be characterized as the beginnings of a comprehensive first-year experience. In other words, we already are delivering some programs known elsewhere to have high impact on student academic success and successful transition into the university community. A matrix of those programs appears in the appendix of this report. What is missing with the current university efforts is the coordination and oversight that allows these efforts to be integrated into a comprehensive program delivered with intention for the overall success of new students.

This Phase II report provides our best thinking of how to move the university toward a comprehensive program in a coordinated and thoughtful way. While our recommendations may appear simple, they stand on a considerable body of research and experience related to student success which spans decades. What we propose has fairly straightforward administrative constructs, but requires a high level of administrative resolve to ensure that key stakeholders campus-wide participate in the creation and delivery of a program that aims holistically at establishing a culture of success for students at The University of Iowa from their precollege contacts with the University through their first university year.

II) Process for Phase II

Learning Outcomes

The committee agreed that the IOWA Challenge needed to be integrated into the design of the first-year experience program. To that end, we developed learning outcomes for FYE initiatives. See Appendix B.

Visioning Team Process

For the majority of Phase II, the task force worked in small subcommittees. The task force members were divided into three Visioning Teams. Members with similar areas of expertise were distributed across the Visioning Teams (e.g., each group contained at least one faculty member, student, etc.) to provide a comprehensive campus representation in each team. Emil Rinderspacher, Andy Cinoman and Brian Corkery served as conveners for the teams. As

conveners, they were responsible for organizing their group's work and monitoring their group's progress.

The charge for each Visioning Team was to put together their team's proposal for a first-year experience initiative at The University of Iowa. The teams were instructed that the programming should tie together thematically and intentionally across the first year, and should also meet the outcomes-oriented statements the task force created to achieve the expectations of The IOWA Challenge. The teams were encouraged to think creatively; not to limit their ideas based on costs, existing policies or activities. For their proposals, the teams were instructed to include a paragraph describing the team's vision and an outline of programs, activities, policies and procedures that achieve the team's vision.

The Visioning Teams began their process on December 8, 2008. They met in their Visioning Teams during the remainder of December 2008, January 2009 and the beginning of February 2009. During this time, the Visioning Teams worked independently from the larger group. Meeting times and frequency varied by team, and a significant amount of communication occurred via email. Each team presented their proposals to the entire task force on February 16, 2009. The task force discussed the Visioning Teams reports at the February 23, 2009, meeting. The recommendations for this report were gleaned from the Visioning teams reports and resulting discussion. The charge to the teams, team membership and team reports are included in Appendices C – G.

III) Our Proposal

Overview

This proposal recommends both new structure and new programs. However, it does not attempt a great deal of granularity in that it does not map out every conceivable program component that might be packaged and delivered to new students. To do that would be to ignore the dynamic nature of the development of a first-year experience that employs the strengths of existing programs (some of which already are defined as "best practices") while providing an environment and administrative structure to create new initiatives that speak to the uniqueness of The University of Iowa experience. This new structure will allow for the expansion of such efforts to include faculty and classroom involvement as well as incorporating community engagement through volunteerism and service learning.

As noted in the Phase I report, the Task Force did not identify one universal model for first-year experience programs. Rather, the best practices identified were often found in some programs, but not all. It is essential that this new construct at The University of Iowa engage the campus as a whole so that the program will become uniquely Iowa's. It recognizes the decentralized nature of our campus culture while providing the programmatic and administrative imperative to create an inclusive effort.

Our Working assumptions

As we put together our recommendations, the following working assumptions were used:

- Many excellent programs for first-year programs already exist on campus and we should build on these successful programs;
- We need to do all we can do as an institution to ensure first-year student success; we can't leave success to chance;
- We must have a strong institutional commitment to ensure first-year students success;

- First-year students can benefit from a comprehensive program designed to help them make a successful transition to the life of a college student at Iowa;
- Orientation is currently the only program that reaches every first-year student.
- It is fiscally responsible, as well as academically essential, to reduce student attrition by creating a more supportive environment for first-year students.

Our recommendations

We recommend that The University of Iowa establish a **comprehensive first-year experience program**. The purpose of the program would be to have students identify as a member of The University of Iowa community and understand expectations related to community membership. The program would be designed to teach the message of the IOWA Challenge, provide opportunities to enhance student success, increase student satisfaction and retention, and improve graduation rates.

In our research we did not find one universal program model. Rather the program must reflect the value and culture of that institution. To that end we have six recommendations:

1. Create a First-Year Experience Office.
2. Create a required 3 or 4-day first-year immersion program (ala Camp Herky; see page 13 of Phase I Report) that would take place immediately prior to the start of the fall semester.
3. Create programs and activities throughout the first year including an event at the end of the first year that launches students into their second year.
4. Develop a means of intentional programmatic assessment across the first year and beyond.
5. Make it possible for every student to participate in at least two high-impact activities during his or her undergraduate career—one in the first year, and one taken later.
6. Provide a structured set of opportunities for faculty to engage with undergraduate students in their first year of college and beyond.

➤ **Create a First-Year Experience Office**

The focus of the office would be on first-year student success. The Office would be centrally located and adequately staffed to accomplish its mission. Responsibilities would include (but are not limited to):

- Create a comprehensive first-year experience program;
- Coordinate and integrate existing first-year programs and activities to ensure that program content/objectives complement and build on each other, are not duplicative or redundant and are properly timed;
- Evaluate the current reporting structure for stand-alone programs and make recommendations for their inclusion or exclusion under FYE jurisdiction;
- Design and Implement new initiatives including a required immersion program prior to the opening of the fall semester. Earliest timeline for this component is likely to be 2011;
- Manage the *PICK ONE* and *ONE BOOK* programs;
- Centralize resources/information/communication for first-year students and parents;
- Build community among first-year students;
- Create and foster traditions;
- Create and market best practices for working with first-year students;
- Raise campus awareness and deepen commitment of campus to first-year success;
- Communicate and teach the *IOWA CHALLENGE* to new students;

- Address retention through early intervention and exit interviews.

The goal is not for this new office to plan and implement all facets of the FYE program. Rather, the goal is to weave new and existing programs into a comprehensive and integrated effort that will blanket the first-year student and undergird their successful transition into and through the first year. **To be successful, this office and its director must have administrative authority to bring stakeholders together, create a series of programs and interventions that fulfill the mission and scope of the FYE effort making sure that programs complement and build on one another and then collaboratively deliver those programs to new students.** The Director will bring stakeholders together to create an overarching set of learning outcomes for students, and work with the committee to map out how current/new programming would be set up to address these outcomes.

Some resources might be centralized into this office. Hopefully the office would eliminate duplicative efforts and lead to efficiencies in program/service delivery and communication. Although there will be significant costs involved in creating this office, cost savings may be achieved in this manner in the long run.

We envision a First-Year Experience Program that can be packaged and marketed to prospective students and parents to aid in our recruitment efforts. Our message to new students would be that the first year is so important that we have created this structure/series of programs/emphasis to do all we can do to ensure that first-year students are successful.

➤ **Create a required immersion program**

We envision a 2 1/2-4 day program (Camp Herky-like) just prior to the opening of the fall semester. All new first-year students would be **required** to participate. There would be no cost to the student. The program would be a comprehensive introduction to university life and would focus on building social connections, learning about the University and what we expect of our students. The program would:

- Reinforce messages and build on information provided at Orientation;
- Teach the IOWA Challenge;
- Address learning outcomes developed from the IOWA Challenge in an intentional way through a variety of programs and activities;
- Foster the continued development of friendships and social connections;
- Develop healthy Hawkeye spirit, pride, and tradition;
- Incorporate civic engagement;
- Include departmental/college/faculty involvement;
- Address important issues in an intentional way e.g. Alcohol use, safety, diversity, academic success, classroom expectations, financial issues, etc.;
- Incorporate some of the existing welcome week activities;
- Culminate with a Convocation event that would become a first-year tradition and symbolically launch students into their collegiate experience.

Because we believe new students learn best from current students, student peers would be used extensively to facilitate this initiative.

➤ **Create programs/activities throughout the first year.**

Most of the existing first-year programs are “front-end loaded.” In other words they occur near the beginning of the first semester. We envision programs/activities/communications

that span the entire first year to maintain focus/attention on the first-year experience reinforcing our message that the first year is very important to success and to continue community building. These efforts might include:

- Events to develop class identity (invite all first-years to a football game and have them all come down on the field at half time; tug of war contest among college transition sections; first-year service project);
- Faculty and staff welcome dinners/events during the year;
- *PICK ONE*;
- Best first-year teacher awards (first-year students nominate teachers and have awards presented by the President to the instructor during a surprise visit);
- Special communications with students and parents during the year (e-newsletter, periodic reminders of deadlines, activities, events);
- Closed social network for first-years (this is a Facebook-like product where students can meet other first-years, communicate with them. It can also be used to push communication and messages to students);
- End of year event that celebrates the end of the first year and launches them into their second year.

➤ **Develop a means of intentional programmatic assessment across the first year and beyond**

There has been much discussion during the Higher Learning Commission accreditation process and in the Student Success Team about the importance of research and assessment to guide our efforts with students. We think that it is imperative that assessment be built into the first-year experience process in an intentional way.

- It should take place throughout the entire academic career of the student--not just the first year;
- It should take place systematically at key points prior to, during, and after the first year: at Orientation, at Camp Herky, after the first semester, at the close of the first year, at other points to be determined;
- Assessment should be built around a set of "common questions" that focus on key factors that tie to satisfaction with the university, connection to the institution, overall adjustment academically and socially, etc;
- The use of common questions allows us to collect longitudinal data about changes over time in regard to key learning outcomes, as well as cross sectional data that can compare cohorts; for example, those who did not experience a restructured FYE and those who have;
- Common questions should also be linked to the behavioral/learning outcomes that are established for our students (e.g., *The IOWA Challenge* learning outcomes included in this report).

Because this assessment would take place during the entire career of the student and because the SST group has been working on establishing an institutional research position, **we recommend that a standing Assessment Committee be formed to determine the focal points for assessment, to create the common questions, and to interpret the data.** The committee might be under the direction of whoever is designated in charge of institutional assessment.

- **Make it possible for every student to participate in at least two high-impact activities during his or her undergraduate career—one in the first year, and one taken later.** Part II of the Phase I report, explains Kuh's work regarding high-impact experiences and the importance they play in student success. Research has shown that some initiatives are more effective, or have a higher impact, than others. The RISE Report also speaks to this goal.

It's important that the success from our new first-year initiatives carry over into the student's remaining years at Iowa. We think all students should have access to and perhaps be required to participate in at least two high-impact experiences during their undergraduate years at Iowa. One of these experiences would be during their first year. The other would be taken later in relation to the student's major field of study. **Ideally, the University would provide enough opportunities so that one high-impact activity is available to every student every year.**

- **Provide a structured set of opportunities for faculty to engage with undergraduate students in their first year of college, and beyond.** One of the themes that emerged from the RISE report is that students want to find ways to increase the quantity and quality of their interaction with faculty members both in and out of the classroom, and that these interactions are perhaps the most meaningful high-impact experiences for undergraduate students. It will be important to find ways for faculty to play a greater role in the first-year experience of incoming students, and to do this in a way that is respectful of the varied responsibilities of their positions. These could include:

- Involvement in the creation of university-wide learning outcomes for students, and the determination of specific programs that meet these outcomes (i.e., serving on an FYE advisory or planning committee);
- Presenting information to incoming students at Camp Herky about academic success, faculty expectations for students, etc.;
- Involvement in a convocation program during Camp Herky;
- Building the First-Year Seminar Program to include a goal of 100 courses;
- Increasing faculty involvement in Living-Learning Communities;
- Foster the development of Courses in Common into a two-semester program;
- Enhance opportunities for students to participate in research programs;
- Enhance opportunities for students to participate in service learning and community service that are a part of academic courses.

Guiding Principles

We recommend the following principles be used to guide the development of the first-year experience program. The first-year experience at The University of Iowa should be:

- Comprehensive-focused on the student as a whole person, addressing the full range of academic and non-academic factors that affect student success;
- Cohesive—integrated in an intentional way that allows key components to build on one another in a manner transparent to faculty, staff, and students;
- Collaborative—a team-oriented approach across campus will allow for shared input and common expectations while reflecting the broad range of experience, perspective, and needs;

- Relevant—programs and experiences must meet the changing cultural, academic, and social needs of our students while allowing them to take ownership of the process;
- Fun and engaging—when students are enjoying themselves, they are much more likely to learn and participate;
- Involve upper class students—the ideas and support of current students as well as their hands-on involvement and mentoring are crucial to the success of these programs. We should use students when and wherever we can in these efforts;
- Serve as launching pad—programs should serve as means to enhance further opportunities in the sophomore year and beyond e.g., leadership, research, peer mentoring.
- Inclusive—should involve faculty, staff, and all types of students as well as alums and parents;
- Uniquely Iowa—should be infused with opportunities to learn about what makes our University great and unique (traditions, culture, special programs/opportunities);
- Educationally meaningful—should be consistent with the educational mission of the University, while incorporating educationally meaningful practices (Kuh, 2008);
- Use technology—students are used to using the most advanced technology. Our programs must also do this as well;
- The Office of First-Year Experience will have authority to design, deliver and oversee all aspects of the program.

Challenges

Establishing a comprehensive first-year program will not be without its challenges, especially the immersion program at the beginning of the fall semester. The committee identified some of the more formidable challenges:

- Creating sufficient administrative resolve to prioritize funding for the effort;
- Impact on residence hall move-in and contract dates;
- Impact on current programs such as fraternity/sorority recruitment, Hawkeye Marching Band pre-semester rehearsals, Iowa Edge, etc.;
- Incorporating faculty into the process (involvement in co-curricular programs like Camp Herky, “teaching” the Iowa Challenge, providing service learning components within courses, first-year seminars, etc.);
- Creating meaningful, high-impact experiences and opportunities that run throughout the first two semesters, not just the first 2 to 6 weeks;
- Establishing a comprehensive assessment program;
- Clarifying the relationships with the Student Success Team’s initiatives.

IV) Governance

The very nature of first-year experience work requires collaboration across many divisions of the University, including Student Services, but given that this effort is an outgrowth of the Student success Team, our recommendation is that the newly created First-Year Experience office administratively report to the Provost’s Office. At The Ohio State University, the individual with administrative responsibility for first-year experience is an Assistant Vice President. At Virginia Commonwealth University, that person is a Dean. **It makes sense to us that the director of this effort, regardless of title, report to the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of University College.**

Because the success of such an endeavor requires both collaboration and cooperation across several administrative units, we recommend the creation of an **advisory committee** to assist the director in forging partnerships with other campus stakeholders and in vetting new ideas and directions for FYE programming that represent all five of the areas outlined in the Taxonomy for FYE identified in the Phase I report.

The advisory committee should consist of a representative from major stakeholder departments and programs including the associate deans of undergraduate colleges, faculty who teach undergraduates, and current undergraduate students. Final authority for the scope and direction of the FYE program rests with the director with approval from the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education. The advisory committee would be co-chaired by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and the Director of First-Year Experience.

A smaller executive or working committee might be needed to assist with actual program implementation. If this concept is approved, we recommend that the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education appoint a **transition team** to create an appropriate position description for the director and assist in the creation of the advisory committee.

Reporting to the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, the First-Year Experience Office must function as other major offices with that reporting relationship. Although many aspects and functions of The University of Iowa are typically handled by committee, the success of this new effort will depend on the authority given to the director of the First-Year Experience Office to evaluate, recommend and deliver the programs necessary to ensure that new undergraduate students have a smooth transition to the University. The advisory committee recommended in this report will play an important role to foster partnerships with other campus departments and programs and to serve as a sounding board for new ideas, but final authority to carry out the First-Year Experience program must rest with the director and staff of this office.

Difficult decisions undoubtedly must be made regarding which existing programs and functions should be reevaluated for inclusion under the FYE umbrella. Budgetary concerns, efficiency of delivery and program strength are just some of the considerations when reviewing existing programs or considering new initiatives. Some programs may need to be consolidated or placed outside the FYE umbrella. Current (and likely future) budget constraints require that redundancy in program content and cost must be eliminated while maintaining and supporting individual program integrity when such programs strongly support strategic enrollment goals. It is expected that the director, with the advice of the advisory committee and concurrence of the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, will have authority to make such decisions.

V) Resource Needs

The exact funding sources for the recommendations made in this report will ultimately be dictated by whether an FYE office is created as a totally new structure, by restructuring existing offices and staff positions, or a combination of both. **So that we might better understand what the potential costs of the effort might be, our recommendation for funding makes no assumptions about whether new or existing funds will be used.** We envision and office with the following staff positions and pay grades (Note: 50th percentile pay grades from the 2008-2009 pay plan were chosen for this estimate):

Personnel

We are proposing that the office staff consist of four P&S full-time staff, two graduate assistants, and part-time student staff. Staff salaries and fringe would cost \$369,000 (\$278K salary, 91K

fringe). This would not include the 2 full-time staff needed to plan and implement the immersion program.

- o Director (PS 12 or higher) \$77,000
- o Program Manager (PS 8) \$56,000
- o Administrative Assistant (PS 6) \$48,000
- o Editor for web/print (PS 8) \$56,000
- o Two ¼ time Graduate Assistants \$24,000
- o Part time student help as needed \$16,000
(40 hours/week, total at \$8/hour)

General Expense

The General Expense budget will range from \$50,000 to \$100,000 depending on whether this office is responsible for printing and on-campus marketing.

Costs for the Immersion Program

The committee felt very strongly that the immersion program (Camp Herky) be required and be offered at no cost to the student. The total cost of such a program (making no assumptions on contributions from current offices/programs, in-kind contributions from sponsors/vendors or student fees) would be \$450,000 including \$150,000 wages and fringe for 2 full-time Program Associates to coordinate planning and implementation and \$70,000 for student wages.

The committee did discuss possible sources of funding, including making the experience a 1 or 2 semester hour course that would generate tuition revenue.

Costs for new initiatives

We recommend that a *spending account*, perhaps administered within the Provost's office, be established to provide seed money for new initiatives that are developed in collaboration with campus stakeholders. It would be difficult to determine an exact amount, but we would recommend \$100,000 for each of the first and second years of the program. These funds initially would be separate from those that may be earmarked for Student Success Team initiatives although we recognize that some FYE and SST programs may eventually have significant overlap.

Budget Summary*

Year-round staff	\$369,000
General Expense	\$100,000
New Initiatives (contingency)	<u>\$100,000</u>
Subtotal	\$569,000
Immersion Program (full cost)	<u>\$450,000</u>
Estimated Total cost	\$1,019,000

*Makes no assumption about the use of current staff salaries or general expense funds, student fees (current or new), or in-kind donations to meet program costs. Certain aspects of the program could be phased-in over time, resulting in lower initial funding needed.

VI) An Historical Context for Creating an Integrated and Comprehensive First-Year Experience Program at The University of Iowa

The notion that both new students and the university would benefit from some sort of planned intervention as students began their first college year is not new at The University of Iowa. As early as the 1930's, fall orientation programs were the traditional method of orienting new students. These programs were held during the start of the fall semester and were largely nonacademic in nature. The concept of a centralized administrative effort to assist students with their initial transition at The University had its genesis in 1964 when College of Liberal Arts Dean Dewey Stuit suggested a summer preregistration program "...primarily because in the fall of 1963 we had a good deal of confusion in the Field House (registration) because of the large number of freshmen to be registered in one day." (Undated report on the history of orientation: Orientation Services Archives, Calvin Hall) In 1968, student peer advisors were added to the effort and the two-day model was introduced in 1972. Until about 1990, the "summer orientation" experience was the primary means by which the university engaged new students in transition in some centralized, systemic way.

The 1977 Ad Hoc Review Committee for the Orientation Department noted that "The retention of students was not included in any of the philosophy or goal statements" of the department. Further, they asked these questions: "Should an orientation program be concerned about student retention and attrition? Are students more or less likely to stay in school if they have been effectively oriented? Or are other factors, i.e., finances, family problems, etc., more often the cause of students dropping out of school?"

The 1977 Review Committee looked back to a 1974 memo from then Vice President for Student Services and Dean of Academic Affairs Philip Hubbard for guidance:

"Although each student is assigned an advisor much more is needed to bring about a good working relationship. Our objective is to reach each student at an early date and become acquainted with their hopes and plans in order to determine what additional services should be provided...Perhaps most important of all – additional methods will be developed to reach every student as quickly as possible after admission and take such steps as are necessary to provide information and remedial services which may be necessary for academic success."

Interestingly, the 1977 Review Committee also called for an assessment of "...the need for a 'reorientation' program." By that, they meant some type of program for current University of Iowa students: "It was the committee's feeling that many students could benefit from a 'reorientation' program. It was pointed out that the students after being on campus a semester or a year may have questions and concerns to be dealt with as well as be in a position to provide some feedback for the University."

Many individual services and programs to assist students in their transition to the University have been put in place since that time. Until 1990, the summer Orientation Program was the principal institutional effort to assist new students in their transition to college life. The advisors in the Academic Advising Center offered their services and expertise as students moved through their first year and relationships with other university departments began to emerge

through their efforts. Academic Advising and Orientation Services have been closely linked in their efforts to work with students in transition.

In 1990, a program entitled “A Hawkeye Hello” was created in conjunction with the Office of Campus Programs and Student Activities which was the precursor to Week of Welcome and what we now know as Welcome Week. In 1991 Courses-in-Common was created and in 1998 first-year seminars were first offered to entering students. In 2001, the first pilot of College Transition was offered. Learning Communities had their beginnings more than 30 years ago with the Foreign Language House. However, it wasn’t until 1998 that the learning community idea became firmly established. Iowa Edge was created in 2006. All of these efforts as well as others not mentioned were created by individual departments or colleges or by several departments banding together to meet a transition need for new students. The creation of the *Student Success Team* in 2006 by then Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Tom Rocklin actually is the first embodiment of a true campus-wide effort to catalog the many and various programs in place and to speak to the possible coordination of university efforts focusing on the transitional and on-going needs of new students.

The 1998 Orientation Review Committee was a robust effort by a large group of faculty, academic administrators, student services staff and students. In retrospect, their work was seminal relative to establishing the case for investigating a comprehensive transition program for new students. The committee was chaired by Professor Debora Liddell, Division of Counseling, Rehabilitation and Student Development. Although it took some years for this committee’s recommendations relating to the transitional needs of students to come to fruition, their report set the stage for much of what the University is doing today relative to transition programming. The committee recommended to:

Move in-depth discussion about student life, academic expectations, and building community into a 1-2 day program which would take place the Saturday-Sunday prior to the opening of the school year, extend to Weeks of Welcome, and culminate in possible orientation courses of 8 week’s duration. While not detailed in this report, the Committee feels this idea has a great deal of merit and we recommend further study of this possibility. The Committee felt strongly that this August initiative would require a community effort, enlisting not only orientation staff and student advisers, but also university administrators, student life/student activity professionals, residence halls, and other champions of campus life. (1998 Orientation Review Report, page 11)

The 1998 Committee’s deliberations “...moved quickly to issues beyond which the Orientation Services staff can facilitate. In fact, it was impossible to talk about how summer orientation works without discussing the entire freshman year.” The Committee’s report spoke eloquently about the body of research that suggested that colleges that were successful (as evidenced by high retention rates) employed strategies that “...make the institution ‘feel small’ and manageable for newcomers and create opportunities for seamless learning environments (between the in-class and the out-of-class experiences).”

Their report was very clear and expressed strong sentiment “that someone on campus needs to champion the success of new students.” The report continued with the following observation:

In such a decentralized culture like the one we’re in, it is important that this person be visible, connected to various dimensions of academic and student life. The person should understand the nature of learning both in and out of class. The Committee recognizes the individual initiatives of colleges and departments; these are important

programs and should be continued. However, the championing of new student success should fall on the campus as a whole. (1998 Orientation Review Report, page 15)

The 1998 Committee apparently had spirited discussion about how best to accomplish meeting the transitional needs of new students. These discussions took into account the decentralized nature of The University of Iowa as well as the strengths of existing programs. At the end of their deliberations, they issued the following statement of options:

The Associate Provost should consider developing an Office of new Student Programs which would have responsibility for comprehensive services and programs for all new students, including but not limited to: facilitating academic readiness and success, coordinating faculty and peer mentoring programs, developing orientation courses with practitioner-faculty partnerships, championing living-learning subcommittees. Of equal importance is a unit designated to assess climate and needs, develop early-alert systems for students at risk, and evaluate outcomes of first-year initiatives. Of course such an initiative may affect the summer orientation program. Coordination of efforts is important. The possibility may exist that orientation eventually move under the coordination of such an office. The advantage of this option is that it demonstrates a strong centralized commitment to the issue. The disadvantage, of course, is that its start-up may be expensive.

or

Consider maintaining a decentralized approach to student success, encouraging and supporting individual colleges in their initiatives with incoming students. The advantage of this option is that it recognizes and may optimize the decentralized nature of the academic culture at The University of Iowa. It may be less expensive than the above option. The disadvantage is its possible inefficiency and the loss of centrality of concern for new student transition. (1998 Orientation Review Report, page 15)

Although the Student Success Team initiatives of the last several years, including this First-Year Experience Task Force effort, may not have knowingly had these recommendations at the heart of their genesis, these recommendations nevertheless speak to the current Task Force's deliberations and the urgency with which the Task Force makes this recommendation to create a comprehensive and integrated First-Year Experience office and program that is uniquely of and for the success of new students at The University of Iowa.

Appendices

Appendix A.....First-Year Experience Task Force Member List

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Appendix A

First-Year Experience Task Force Member List

- Michael Barron (Office of Admissions), Chair
- Alejandra Almazan (Student Financial Aid)
- Amy Bartachek (Tippie College of Business Undergraduate Program)
- Andrew Cinoman (Orientation Services)
- Brian Corkey (Academic Advising Center)
- Jane Dorman (College of Engineering)
- Valerie Garr (College of Nursing)
- David Grady (Student Services)
- Nancy Hauserman (Professor, Management/Organizations, Tippie College of Business)
- Peter Hubbard (Academic Programs and Services, College of Liberal Arts)
- Gloria Hurtado (Student)
- Kelly Jo Karnes (Office of Student Life)
- Robert Kirby (University Honors Program)
- Anne Kvinge (Student)
- Jodi Linley (Iowa Biosciences Advantage)
- Leonard MacGillivray (Associate Professor, Chemistry, CLAS)
- Aaron Parker (Student)
- Emil Rinderspacher (Office of Admissions)
- Gabriela Rivera (Center for Diversity and Enrichment)
- Kathryn Sojka (University Housing)
- John Solow (Associate Professor and Assistant Departmental Executive Officer, Economics, Tippie College of Business)
- Sophie Switzer (Student)
- Katherine Tachau (Professor, History, CLAS)

Appendix B

Learning Outcomes for the First-Year Experience Initiatives

The FYE Task Force will integrate the Iowa Challenge into the design of a comprehensive First-Year Experience program. Below are student learning outcomes for FYE initiatives coordinated with each area of the Iowa Challenge.

By participating in FYE initiatives, UI students will gain opportunities to:

EXCEL

- create academic goals to guide their college experience;
- understand the academic standards set by faculty and the institution;
- develop motivation and a time management plan to achieve academic excellence;
- enhance skills in problem solving and critical thinking;
- learn when to act alone and when to work with or consult with others;
- learn how to perform in complicated environments and in the absence of specific instructions.

STRETCH

- gain a broad understanding of diversity by participating in activities that allow them to learn about and interact with different cultures;
- step out of their comfort zone, and challenge their current belief systems;
- learn to recognize the authenticity of attitudes or beliefs which may be in direct conflict with their own;
- begin to work cooperatively and effectively with others.

ENGAGE

- get involved in activities that help them connect to the university community, including faculty, staff, other students and alumni;
- develop and enhance their leadership skills;
- become more effective in initiating action and effectively engaging others to enhance outcomes;
- learn to work effectively in team and groups.

CHOOSE

- become more effective decision makers;
- gain a better understanding of the long-term (and short-term) ramifications of their behavior;
- create a set of personal, academic, social, and intellectual goals to guide their behavior;
- learn to budget their money and plan for future financial obligations;
- learn from their experiences and use disappointing outcomes as a means to effect positive change in behavior.

SERVE

- gain a greater understanding of their role in the student body, the university, and the surrounding community;
- engage in activities that give back to the university and the community;
- grow to expect the best from themselves and from others.

Appendix C

Existing Programs MATRIX

Our visioning team took some time to examine current programming in the first year, and examined how well each of these programs accomplish the five learning outcomes developed by the FYE Committee:

- Academic Excellence (AE)
- Diversity (D)
- Campus Engagement (Campus E)
- Personal Responsibility (PR)
- Community Engagement (Comm E)

This content mapping activity allowed us to examine how well the university is meeting the stated expectations of The Iowa Challenge in the first year, while providing a broad general understanding of the gaps that currently exist in our programming. The results of this exercise appear on the following page.

This information was used as a guide for developing our ideas for the First Year Experience.

Current First Year Programs at Iowa	When Offered?	First Year Experience Learning Outcomes					
		AE	D	Campus E	PR	Comm E	
Immersion Programs							
Orientation	Summer before	yes	some	yes	yes	some	
Iowa EDGE	Week before Fall	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Prime Time - UI Honors Program	Week before Fall	yes	some	yes	yes	yes	
Honors Welcome Event	Weekend Before	some	no	yes	yes	yes	
Alcohol EDU	Summer and Fall	no	no	some	yes	some	
Welcome Week	First week of Fall	no	some	yes	no	yes	
Academic Course Programs							
Courses in Common	Fall	yes	no	some	no	no	
The College Transition	Fall	yes	some	yes	yes	yes	
Seminars: FY, Honors, College, NAASE/ITP, Athletic	Fall	yes	some	some	some	some	
Presidential Leadership Course	Fall	yes	no	yes	some	yes	
Online @ Iowa	Fall	some	no	some	yes	no	
College Success Seminar	Spring	yes	no	yes	yes	some	
IowaLINK	Fall and Spring	yes	some	some	yes	yes	
The Transfer Transition	Fall and Spring	yes	some	yes	yes	yes	
University Housing Programs							
Six Week Series - Information Programs	Fall?	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	
University Housing - PATH Program	Fall and Spring	yes	some	yes	yes	yes	
Living Learning Communities	Fall and Spring	yes	some	yes	yes	yes	
MAPworks	Fall and Spring	yes	some	yes	yes	yes	
Campus-Wide Initiatives							
Pick One Program	Fall (and Spring??)	no	some	yes	yes	yes	
One Community, One Book	Fall (and Spring??)	no	yes	yes	some	yes	

Current First Year Programs at Iowa	When Offered?	First Year Experience Learning Outcomes					
		AE	D	Campus E	PR	Comm E	
Student Services							
Advising/Counseling Services: AAC, CDE, etc.	Fall and Spring	yes	some	yes	yes	yes	
Tutoring Services: SI, labs, colleges	Fall and Spring	yes	no	yes	yes	no	
College Programs: mentors, etc.	Fall and Spring	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	
Unique Populations served in first year							
NAASE/ITP	Fall and Spring	yes	some	yes	yes	yes	
China BESTS	??	yes	some	yes	yes	some	
ROTC	Fall and Spring	some	no	yes	yes	some	
Athlete Student Services	Fall and Spring	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	

Appendix D Guidelines for Visioning Teams

Task

- Put together your team's proposal for a first-year experience initiative at The University of Iowa. Programming should tie together thematically and intentionally across the first year. Programming should also meet the outcomes-oriented statements the FYE task force created to achieve the expectations of *The Iowa Challenge*. Don't be limited in your thinking by costs, existing policies, or how things are currently done.

Deliverables

- Each group will present their first-year experience initiative to the entire task force on February 2, 2009. Presentation should include a paragraph describing your team's first-year experience vision and an outline of programs, activities, policies and procedures that achieve the team's vision.

Timeline

- **December 8, 2008** (45 minutes) – break into teams and organize work process for your team.
- **December 15, 2008** (90 minutes) – working meeting in Visioning Teams. All meeting rooms reserved from 10:30 am–12:00 pm; meeting rooms scheduled as follows:
 - Visioning Team # 1 – S326 PBB
 - Visioning Team # 2 – S364 PBB
 - Visioning Team # 3 – C230 Pomerantz Conference Room
- **January 12, 2009** (90 minutes) – working meeting in Visioning Teams; this meeting is optional for staff/faculty/students that have returned to campus from semester break. All meeting rooms reserved from 10:30 am–12:00 pm; meeting rooms scheduled as follows:
 - Visioning Team # 1 – S126 PBB
 - Visioning Team # 2 – S104 PBB
 - Visioning Team # 3 – C230 Pomerantz Conference Room
- **January 26, 2009** (90 minutes) – working meeting in Visioning Teams. All meeting rooms reserved from 10:30 am–12:00 pm; meeting rooms scheduled as follows:
 - Visioning Team # 1 – S126 PBB
 - Visioning Team # 2 – S104 PBB
 - Visioning Team # 3 – C230 Pomerantz Conference Room
- **February 2, 2009** (90 minutes) – Presentations to entire task force, approximately 15 – 20 minutes per Visioning Team. All team members meet in C230 Pomerantz Center.

Appendix E

First-Year Experience Visioning Teams

Visioning Team #1

Emil Rinderspacher (Convener)
Alejandra Almazan
Jodi Linley
Leonard MacGillivray
Kathryn Sojka
Sophie Switzer
John Solow

Visioning Team #2

Andrew Cinoman (Convener)
Jane Dorman
Valerie Garr
David Grady
Nancy Hauserman
Robert Kirby
Anne Kvinge

Visioning Team #3

Brian Corkey (Convener)
Amy Bartachek
Peter Hubbard
Kelly Jo Karnes
Aaron Parker
Gabriela Rivera
Katherine Tachau
Gloria Hurtado

Appendix F

First-Year Experience Visioning Team #1 Report

Visioning Team 1
**First Year Experience
Task Force 2008-2009**

Alejandra Almazan, Jodi Linley, Len MacGillivray, Emil Rinderspacher,
Kate Sojka, Sophie Switzer

Slide 1

Assumptions & Observations

- Must have strong institutional commitment to ensure first-year student success
- Current first-year programs are very good
- Orientation is only program that reaches all first-year students

Slide 2

Assumptions & Observations

- All first-years can benefit from a program designed to help them make a successful transition
- Build on existing programs and services

Slide 3

Our Proposal

- Create an FYE Office
- Create a 3 or 4-day immersion program
- Create programs/activities throughout the first year

Slide 4

First-Year Experience Office

- Focus on first-year student success by integrating existing efforts and implementing new initiatives
- Advisory Committee would provide direction
- Centrally located and adequately staffed

Slide 5

Role of FYE Office

- Create a shared, required first-year experience (design & implement new initiative)
- Coordinate and integrate activities, events, programs for first-years (unify existing programs)
- Create and market best practices for working with first-year students

Slide 6

Role of FYE Office

- Centralize resources, information, communication for first-year students and parents (i.e., new Parents Calendar)
- Address retention through early intervention & exit interviews
- Build community among first-year students

Slide 7

Role of FYE Office

- Raise campus awareness and deepen commitment of campus to first-year success
- Market first-year experience
- Create and foster traditions
- Primary responsibility for communicating the Iowa Challenge to first-year students

Slide 8

Appendix F (cont.) First-Year Experience Visioning Team #1 Report

FYE Immersion Program

- 3-4 days just prior to fall classes
- Required for all first-year students
- Free (no expense to students)

Slide 9

FYE Immersion Program Focus

- Teach the IOWA Challenge
- Build community
- Design using FYE Outcomes
- Focus on Student Responsibility
- Create & support meaningful traditions
 - Convocation

Slide 10

FYE Academic Year Programs

Develop programs/activities throughout the first year that build on front-end programs (e.g. Orientation, Immersion program, Iowa Edge)

Slide 11

FYE Academic Year Programs

- First-Year Class of 2010 introduced at half-time of home football game (on the field)
- Faculty & department welcome dinners for their majors
- "Best First-Year Teacher" Awards (students nominate their instructors)

Slide 12

FYE Academic Year Programs

- Special communication with first-year students & parents
- Pick One
- End of first-year event

Slide 13

FYE Office/Programs Principles

- Recruit, train and use peer educators whenever possible
- Create, enhance, support traditions
- Focus on The IOWA Challenge

Slide 14

FYE Office/Programs Principles

- Develop dept/college/faculty involvement at all levels
- Use cutting edge technology
- Develop student responsibility
- Have fun

Slide 15

Visioning Team 1 Summary

- Excellent programs in place, but more must be done
- Create First-Year Experience Office
 - Unify existing programs & initiatives
 - Design & implement fall immersion program
 - Design & implement academic year programs

Slide 16

Appendix G

First-Year Experience Visioning Team #2 Report

Team Members: Andy Cinoman, Jane Dorman, Val Garr, David Grady, Nancy Hauserman, Bob Kirby, and Anne Kvinge

Our Vision of the First Year Experience at Iowa

The first year experience at Iowa should be:

Cohesive - The first year experience should be integrated in an intentional way that allows for key components to build on one another, and in a manner that is transparent to students, faculty, and staff.

Flexible – There should be freedom to reflect many unique ways to accomplish stated outcomes.

Collaborative – A team-oriented approach across campus will allow for shared input and common expectations, while reflecting the broad range of experience, perspective, and needs.

Welcoming – The first year experience should present The University of Iowa as a warm, genuine, friendly institution.

Relevant – The set of programs and experiences should meet the changing cultural, academic, and social needs of our students, while allowing them to take ownership of the process.

Fun and Engaging –When students are enjoying themselves, they are much more likely to retain information and contribute feedback, while continuing their involvement in future years (as peer mentors or leaders, for example).

Involving Upper Class Students – The feedback and creative ideas of upper class students (as well as their hands-on involvement and mentoring) can help set the course of the programming throughout the freshmen year.

Continuous – The first year experience should assist students in continuing the achievement of student development outcomes begun in earlier programs: developing friendships, engaging faculty, self-understanding, finding a niche on campus, etc.

A Launching Pad – First year experience programs should serve as a means to enhance further opportunities in the sophomore year and beyond, such as leadership, research, and peer mentoring.

Inclusive – The first year experience should afford opportunities for the involvement of faculty, staff, and all types of students, including transfer students and alumni...and parents too!

Uniquely IOWA- The first year experience should be infused with opportunities to learn about what makes our university unique: its traditions, culture, and opportunities on and off campus.

Appendix G (cont.)

First-Year Experience Visioning Team #2 Report

Educationally Meaningful – The first year experience should be consistent with the educational mission of the university, while incorporating educationally meaningful practices (Kuh, 2008).

Learning outcomes for the First Year Experience Initiatives

Below are the student learning outcomes for initiatives of the first year experience. The task force will use the following learning outcomes to design initiatives that will foster student development in the areas of academic excellence, diversity, engagement, personal responsibility and community (on-campus and off-campus) engagement.

Learning outcomes for Excel (academic excellence):

- create a set of academic goals to guide their college experience;
- meet the academic standards set by faculty and the institution;
- gain in self-motivation to achieve academic excellence;
- enhance their skills in problem solving, critical thinking, and higher order reasoning;
- learn when to act alone and when to work with or consult with others;
- develop greater ability to complete tasks in a timely manner;
- learn how to perform in complicated environments and in the absence of specific instructions;
- learn to recognize the authenticity of attitudes or beliefs which may be in direct conflict with their own.

Learning outcomes for Stretch (diversity):

- gain a broad understanding of diversity;
- value and take advantage of opportunities to step out of their comfort zone, and challenge their current belief systems;
- participate in activities that allow them to learn about different cultures;
- value differences and seek out others who are different from themselves;
- get involved in a range of opportunities to learn from people who have different life experiences;
- begin to develop the mindset of a creator rather than a victim;
- begin to work effectively with others across difference.

Learning outcomes for Engage (campus engagement):

- get involved in activities that help them connect to the university community;
- take advantage of opportunities and resources to develop and enhance their leadership skills;
- become more effective in initiating action and effectively engaging others to enhance outcomes.

Appendix G (cont.) First-Year Experience Visioning Team #2 Report

Learning outcomes for Choose (personal responsibility):

- become more effective decision makers;
- gain a better understanding of the long-term (and short-term) ramifications of their behavior;
- create a set of personal, academic, social, and intellectual goals to guide their behavior;
- gain the trust of others through their actions;
- evidence planning and purposeful behavior;
- learn from their experiences and use disappointing outcomes as a means to effect positive change in behavior.

Learning outcomes for Serve (community engagement):

- gain a greater understanding of their role in the student body, the university culture, and the surrounding community;
- begin to engage in activities that give back to the university and the community;
- grow to expect the best from themselves and from others.

Recommendations for the First Year Experience

Communication Issues

Introduce prospective students to key messages through the contact cycle, website(s), e-mails, campus visits, and other yield activities in Admissions.

- Printed publications like the view book can be used to share expectations;
- Messages and information about the first year can be incorporated into Hawkeye Visit Days and other structured contacts with prospective and admitted students (like Next Step Iowa);
- Modify key pieces in the Contact Cycle to admitted students when possible.

Create an FYE website for The University of Iowa, and market it to prospective, admitted, and incoming students. A website like this can:

- Clearly identify the expectations we have of new students: The Iowa Challenge, and the student development/learning outcomes that are created for our students;
- Introduce programming options for students to meet these expectations during their first year, while clearly stating what is required of students as well as what is expected (and the variety of ways these expectations can be met);
- Explain how certain subgroups (Student Athletes, Advantage Iowa Scholars, Direct Admission students, for example) can meet these expectations in a variety of ways.

Appendix G (cont.)

First-Year Experience Visioning Team #2 Report

Create a user-friendly interface to the University website for all incoming students, similar to Hoosier Help Online (H20) and The University of Minnesota's student portal. This interface should be:

- Organized by what students need (and want) so they can connect to campus resources easily, without adding steps to the process;
- Written in student-friendly terminology, to allow for easier understanding;
- A vehicle to introduce campus traditions and culture.

Modify our methods and strategies of communication with new students across the first year to heighten awareness of resources and opportunities.

- Develop a structured contact cycle for all new students (freshmen and transfer) that takes into account when students are most receptive to hearing about particular issues, services, or offices;
- Use a variety of delivery methods (Facebook, ICON, e-mail, listservs, print pieces), while keeping up with new trends in technology and student communication;
- Use language that is student friendly and easily understood by incoming students;
- Communication needs to take place across the entire year in a consistent manner; for example, a weekly electronic contact created by students, for students, called What's Happening on Campus?
- Increase the use of upper class students, faculty, and staff in "small group" experiences like The College Transition and First Year Seminars to communicate important information about the university;
- Improve communication by faculty and staff, so that it is consistent, clear, and intentional.

Create a web-based early alert communication system for students, faculty, staff, and parents to alert University officials to students exhibiting behavior that puts them at risk for leaving the institution.

- Builds on the concepts of Mapworks, but extends the system to be accessible by students, faculty, staff, and parents on an ongoing basis;
- Contacts addressed by a centralized staff that can "triage" situations, contact individuals in crisis, and address situations promptly and consistently;
- In turn, this system could be used for regular communication with all students, faculty, staff, and parents: reminders, deadlines, resources, opportunities, etc.

Programmatic Enhancements

Orientation will become a stepping stone for introducing students to the First Year Experience.

- Key elements of the First Year Experience will be (re) introduced and discussed throughout the two days of the program;
- Print publications like *The Black & Gold Handbook*, and *If I Knew Then What I Know Now* can reinforce The Iowa Challenge and its expectations of new students;

Appendix G (cont.)

First-Year Experience Visioning Team #2 Report

- Increased use of technology in the program can show students how they can meet these expectations;
- Session presenters may need to modify their presentations to include a focus on what happens next: When you return to campus for Camp Herky, this is what you will be asked to do...and during your first year on campus, this is what you will be doing.

Create a pre-semester Welcome Week program: Camp Herky

- During/following Orientation, Camp Herky can be introduced as the next step in becoming a Hawkeye;
- The program can reinforce messages and build on information provided at Orientation;
- Camp Herky can address learning outcomes developed from The Iowa Challenge in an intentional way through a variety of programs and activities;
- Foster the continued development of friendships and social connections;
- Develop new traditions and healthy Hawkeye Sprit;
- Address other important issues in an intentional way that are touched on at Orientation, but not discussed systematically: Alcohol use, Campus Safety, Diversity, etc.
- Include current Welcome Week activities in Camp Herky (or the first week of classes): Community of Color Social, Transfer Welcome, President's Block Party, Student Organization Fair, Downtown Association event, etc.

Expand the Iowa EDGE program.

- Provide the funding to build the program substantially, so it can be offered to a much larger percentage of minority and first-generation students;
- Provide more intentional interaction with parents/family members/guardians on the opening day of the program to provide more opportunities for contact with offices like CDE;
- Involve a greater number of faculty, staff, and peer mentors;
- Continue to expand the academic programming offered throughout the first year;
- Address how participants can participate in Iowa EDGE and Camp Herky to maximize the benefits of both programs.

Expand and build on University traditions and culture.

- Communicate and practice traditions at key points in the year: Orientation, Camp Herky, and throughout the first year;
- Provide more established "branding" of our school colors and the Tigerhawk on our website, in preview materials, on publications, in email communication, etc.;
- Continue to implement the recommendations of the Healthy Traditions Task Force of the SST.

Expand the range of opportunities for students to interact socially on campus.

- Build additional facilities that students would enjoy using (such as a bowling alley, pool hall, movie theater, coffee house), to encourage and increase student interaction;
- Could be integrated into existing facilities, such as the IMU, Field House, certain Residence Halls and the new Campus Recreation Facility.

Appendix G (cont.) First-Year Experience Visioning Team #2 Report

Expand opportunities for leadership, both in the first year and beyond.

- This includes both the ways in which students can gain leadership experience, and enhanced opportunities to learn different styles of leadership.

Expand opportunities for community service.

- Communicate better with students about the opportunities in the Iowa City/Coralville community, as well as how to get started;
- Educate the faculty on how to connect students to existing opportunities;
- Make the entire process more seamless, so the needs in the local community can be addressed in an intentional way;
- Create opportunities for community service that are international;
- Create a wider variety of opportunities can allow the university to mix different communities intentionally, which makes experience more diverse.

Academic Enhancements

Expand opportunities for service learning in academic courses.

- Provide grants to faculty to develop service learning programs in their courses;
- Better promotion of the resources that exist on campus (through the Center for Teaching) to assist in establishing service learning in the curriculum.

Provide more feedback to students about their performance in their courses.

- Provide constructive feedback earlier in the semester, and throughout the semester;
- Build a feedback process into group projects in courses when possible, so peers can provide their ideas as well as faculty;

Provide more opportunities for faculty to interact informally with students.

- Build on programs like The Center for Diversity and Enrichment's *Friday Afternoon Club*; and some Living/Learning Communities like Men in Engineering.

Provide more opportunities for new students to receive mentoring during the first year.

- Upper class students could provide mentoring in environments such as Camp Herky, the Residence Halls, *The College Transition*, and a broader range of academic courses;
- This includes receiving ongoing mentoring from faculty and staff as well. For example, Iowa State offers a program where staff members are matched with incoming students, and are asked to make contact with them at key points throughout the first year.

Continue to provide course seminar options for Living/Learning Community.

- Provide resources for more communities to offer a seminar if this is feasible.

Appendix G (cont.)

First-Year Experience Visioning Team #2 Report

Expand the Courses in Common Program to a two-semester model, like a Freshman Interest Group (FIG).

- Courses are paired with intentionality regarding course content and activities;
- Faculty work together to create opportunities to work with material from each others' courses; for example, to write a paper in one course on a topic that was taught in the other;
- The program might involve fewer courses – two rather than three;
- The second semester might involve peer mentoring from upper class students.

Expand The College Transition Course Program

- Provide opportunities for a larger percentage of freshmen to take the course;
- Expand the course to meet for several extra weeks, to allow for more extensive coverage of topics, to spread out the workload (and grading), and enhance peer relationships;
- Work with particular units (OISS) to modify the course to suit their needs;
- Integrate the use of peer mentors who could assist in course delivery during the fall semester and maintain regular contact with the students through the spring semester.
- Particular course content could be discussed in other venues: first year seminars or living/learning communities, for example.
- Ensure that the assessment process examines stated learning outcomes and focuses on whether course goals are being met.

Other Recommendations

The first year experience needs to include transfer students

- A greater focus on incoming students rather than first year students.

Provide a means for consistent leadership and oversight of first year programming.

- This could mean creating an office of First Year Programs;
- This could mean creating a Director of First Year Programs position.

Develop a means of intentional programmatic assessment across the first year...and beyond.

- Collect longitudinal data throughout all four years, through the use of common questions asked at key points in the college experience. This allows for assessment of university-wide student development outcomes, programming learning outcomes, and satisfaction with the university experience;
- Assess impact of key programs on student learning and retention;
- Analyze cohort differences and between-groups differences; for example, students who took *The College Transition* and those who did not;
- Collect information from alumni about their university experience.

Appendix H

First-Year Experience Visioning Team #3 Report

Team Members: Amy Bartachek, Kelly Jo Karnes, Brian Corkery, Aaron Parker, Peter Hubbard, Gabriela Rivera, Gloria Hurtado, and Katherine Tachau

Guiding Principles

- Comprehensive – needs substantial breadth and depth
- Offer a mix of common experiences (recruitment, 2 day Orientation, and enduring activities) and elective experiences (Camp Herky, Welcome Week, Pick-one, Iowa Edge, One Book)
- Should increase our focus on Tradition-Pride-Community
- True First-Year Program (three stages – recruitment, orientation, the first-year)
- Experiential – needs to be participatory in nature
- Developmentally based – meet students where they are and challenge them to grow
- Visible presence on campus and on the web
- This needs to be a systemic change. It should reflect University values and what we believe is the best interests of students. Funding and staffing need to follow – to do otherwise undermines the effort in fatal ways.
- Re-consider budgetary and funding issues at their most basic levels. Ensure that how we spend our money reflects the values and priorities of our University espouses.

Recruitment

Admissions Process

- Emphasize first-year programming beginning with Admission materials and through initial contacts
- Upon acceptance contact them about programming (post card) – separate notes to students and parents about first-year opportunities, refer to web-site
- Facebook like service used at admission point to start building class cohesion (label them class of 2014) and distributing information. Emphasis on tradition, exploring ISIS, FYE, etc.
- Keep Parents up-to-date with a parents page on web-site

Orientation

Orientation

- Should remain a mandatory two day experience.
- Needs to include all essential and vital information as it only thing all students and parent get.
- Handout FYE marketing materials highlighting Camp Herky, Welcome Week and other FYE events.
- Incorporate FYE message as appropriate
- Register for classes using technology for course exploration and registration to the greatest extent possible
- Pass out One Community – One Book novel

Appendix H (cont.)

First-Year Experience Visioning Team #3 Report

Camp Herky

- W-F with a Sunday Convocation
- Emphasize spirit – pride – tradition
- Incorporate civic Engagement
- Focus on class and community building
- Reinforce 1st year experience opportunities
- Informational activities – study skills, resources, roommates, college instructor expectations, behavioral expectations, campus tour (find you classes), time management, etc.
- Might use a passport system and prizes to encourage attendance
- Fun activities – entertainment, trip to target, visit football stadium – learn cheers
- Departmental/faculty interaction with majors
 - Evening Meals – Formal Dinner and BBQ Picnic
 - Convocation ends it
 - Invite all first-years & transfers
 - Invite faculty and parents
 - Welcome and words from Pres, Mayor, and Hawkeye hero
 - Do something to signify or declare them as Hawkeyes – ring bell, pinning ceremony, repeat at graduation
 - One Book/One Community author as speaker

First-year Activities

Iowa Edge

- Expand Iowa edge as able
- Integrate with Camp Herky as possible

Welcome Week

- Keep this group working with the purpose of welcoming back all students and
- A mass welcome back ceremony – integrates and welcomes the first-years to the rest of the campus community – Kinnick Stadium?
- Encourage Departments/Office and Organizations to sponsor open houses and welcoming activities this week
- Job Fair and Org Fair incorporated
- Kick-off “Night Games” in a big way
- Campus information and directional people as visible as possible

One Community – One Book

- Pass-out book at Orientation
- Speaker come to convocation

Pick-one

- Continue own promotion and activities
- Tie to Job Fair – Organizational Fair

Appendix H (cont.)

First-Year Experience Visioning Team #3 Report

- Work to find ways to extend experience to second semester
- Focus on Quality vs. Quantity of engagement
- Allow upper classmen to remain involved
- Seek a culminating activity – Riverfest?

Class Councils

- Integrate into existing student government
- Help promote class cohesion
- Involve them in organizing floats for homecoming
- Involve them in Riverfest planning
- Allow them to sponsor projects/activities of their own
- Get them involved in community service

The College Transition (enduring, first semester activity)

- Expand so that all first-year students can be offered a place in an enduring activity (learning community, CIC, or first-year experience class)
- Allow overlaps as long as space is available
- Allow people to opt out if they insist
- Consider the roll peers can play in extending this course across the first-year

Other First-year Courses (enduring, first-semester activity)

- Recruit and formally establish the role First-year Seminars, Business, Engineering, NAASE course, Presidential Leadership class, Athletic seminar play as important and enduring first-year activities.
- Encourage them to incorporate the transmission of important first-year messages.

Courses in Common (enduring, first-semester activity)

- Expand and integrate with learning communities as appropriate
- Explore possibilities to offer similar options in the spring semester
- Consider adding activities (social, academic) that take advantage of the “group arrangement”

Learning/Living and Learning Communities (enduring, first-year activity)

- Encourage the development of both living and learning, and learning communities.
- Formalize their role as an enduring first-year activity
- Encourage the development of on-going and steady relationships between the sponsoring group and students involved.
- Encourage them to incorporate the transmission of important first-year messages
- Support the efforts of this group to increase faculty/departmental involvement
- Support this group’s efforts to develop courses integrating work from an academic discipline.
- Support the efforts of this group to add a peer component to these communities
- Seek to extend the shared course experience into the spring

Appendix H (cont.) First-Year Experience Visioning Team #3 Report

Housing (enduring first-year activity)

- Continue commitment and support for Living and Learning Communities
- Integrate programming with that of LC/CT/Seminars – emphasis especially on the second semester
- Make it a priority to assign all first-year students to a room – no lounge living for first-year students.
- Consider requiring all first-years in dorms to put students in best housing situation.
- Create housing options for upper class students to “grow” into linking them to their “sophomore-year experience”.

Riverfest

- Refocus and market this as the end of the year activity (the last celebration before the push to finals)
- Retain and expand it as a part of history and tradition
- Increase funding
- Let class councils play a role

Early Warning

- Develop a system for identifying at-risk students
- Call on all who have contact with students to contribute
- Work with the Academic Advising Center and College Advising Centers to contact those identified
- Act while they are still here and before they have decided to leave
- Make College Success Seminar available to those among this group

Policy and Structure

Action Plan

- A commitment needs to be made.
 - We need to express our values.
 - We need to support this financially. We can't under-fund and under-staff this effort and expect that it will take hold in a unified way.
- Decisions need to be made and a plan developed.
 - We need a clearly articulated framework for our first-year experience program.
 - Define initiatives are included?
 - Determine how they will work together?
 - Develop a mechanism that brings the right people together?
- We need to act.
 - No plan will ever be perfect and no time will ever be ideal.
 - We must put people in place, create reasonable timelines, and begin operations.
 - It is natural to expect that programs will grow and develop in the years ahead.

Appendix H (cont.)

First-Year Experience Visioning Team #3 Report

Structure

- Create a “First-year Experience Office” as an arm of the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education.
- Head this office with a person capable of bringing together the wide variety of campus offices and initiatives that will contribute to this program.
- The “Office” will have two main charges:
 - Provide direction to and coherence among contributors and across the program – this is the person that cements relationships, ensures communications, supports expansion and improvement, budgets, resolves conflict (with the support of Associate Provost), eliminates duplications, creates synergy, evaluates progress, etc. etc. This would include appropriate personnel from:
 - Admissions
 - Orientation
 - Academic Advising Center
 - Office of Student Life
 - Housing
 - The College Transition
 - College Success Sem.
 - The Provost Office
 - The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
 - The College of Engineering
 - The College of Business
 - NAASE
 - Athletics
 - Evaluation and Exam Service
 - Manage staff and in-house initiatives that contribute to the broader First-year Experience Program. This would include oversight of:
 - One Book/One Community
 - Pick-one
 - Learning /Living and Learning Communities
 - The Student Success Team (SST)
- It will be important to hire both programming staff and support staff as necessary to complete the mission.
 - Some of this staff will be retained within the “FYE Office”
 - Learning/Living and Learning Communities Programming
 - Pick-one/One Book- One Community/SST Committee
 - Early Warning/Program Evaluation
 - Support Staff
 - Some of this staff might be appropriately assigned elsewhere, including
 - Admissions – Facebook Program
 - Orientation – Camp Herky
 - College Transition – Peer Leader Efforts
 - Office of Student Life – Class Councils
 - Understand that additional staffing may emerge as programs develop or are added.