

## Student Success Team Annual Report

This year marked important changes in the Student Success Team (SST). Due to the growth of participation and scope of involvement on campus, a SST Coordinator was hired to provide additional continuity and oversight for the group's efforts. In addition, our first large scale projects, including the Pick One student engagement program, and the One Community, One Book project were implemented across campus.

SST membership numbers slightly over 200 at present. The representation of professional and scientific staff members is highest, followed by faculty, merit staff, and students. This year, we held a fall retreat, and three large group meetings, in addition to facilitating a number of educational/staff development opportunities. George Kuh, the country's preeminent expert in student success, visited campus in April. He spent two days consulting with our SST leadership team and Council on Student Learning, among other groups, in addition to delivering two plenary session talks. Because the SST has emphasized Kuh's work so much since our inception, the most valuable aspects of his visit seemed to be the more consultative visits with Student Services Directors, Moving Forward Together members, and the Council on Student Learning which focused on how to apply current research on student success and engagement to our work at Iowa.

The Student Success Team provides an important opportunity for our faculty, staff, and students to participate in a "community of practice" with other like-minded individuals committed to student success. Book discussion groups took off this year, as another avenue for interaction between our large group meetings. Groups read three books (My Freshman Year, Generation Me, and Kuh's High Impact Practices monograph) and discussed context and implications for their work. Student Success Team ambassadors, now numbering over 20, represent the SST in their workplaces and other circles. The purpose of the SST Ambassadors is to help spread information about student success research and practice, especially to those who work on the front lines with students, but who may not be able to participate fully in the work of the SST. A brown bag discussion on the RISE Binge Drinking Brief was also held on campus. Presentations on Student Success at Iowa were provided for the UI Parent's Association and the University Libraries staff.

The SST Retreat normally functions to set the work agenda for the group for the coming year. This year, 5 new action committees were identified; in addition, the One Community, One Book and Pick One committees continued into the fall, and an ad hoc committee planned Convocation for Fall, 2009. We were unable to find enough faculty members willing to participate on a 'faculty engagement' group, however, faculty were involved on all other committees charged this year. This year's committees were:

- ◆ **Student Academic Engagement** (Chairs: Brian Corkery and Norbert Pienta)
- ◆ **Centralizing Assessment/Institutional Research** (Chair: Elizabeth Whitt)
- ◆ **The IOWA Challenge Dissemination Committee** (Chair: Tom Rocklin)
- ◆ **Early Intervention, Phase 2** (Chair: Larry Lockwood)
- ◆ **First Year Experience Task Force** (Chair: Mike Barron)\*

The final reports of those committee's that have closed out\* are available on the SST website (<http://www.uiowa.edu/~success/committees.shtml>). Most of this year's committees are still active at this writing.

The **First Year Experience Task Force** presented their recommendations to the SST Executive Committee this spring and their full report is included on the SST website. The report is a compendium of useful information on what is currently in place at Iowa, paired with a vision for moving forward in an integrated, intentional manner. Key committee recommendations include:

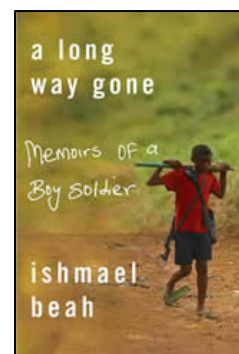
- 1) Create a first year experience office
- 2) Create a required 3-4 day "immersion experience" (a la Camp Herky) immediately prior to fall semester
- 3) Create a framework of experiences across the first year, including a culminating "rising sophomore" event at the end of the year
- 4) Integrate intentional assessment framework across first year and beyond
- 5) Make it possible for every student to participate in two high-impact activities: one in their first year, and one later, in their major.
- 6) Provide a structured set of opportunities for faculty/student interaction, first year and beyond.

In addition, the year was spent focused on implementing recommendations from past committees. For instance, the **Traditions** committee recommended:

- ◆ Recommendation: A freshman t-shirt program to inculcate a sense of school spirit and class identification
  - Action: Freshman t-shirt program piloted in 2008 during Welcome Week; this will be moved to Orientation for 2009 to ensure all students get a shirt
- ◆ Convocation to support an identification with the class of 2013 and an introduction to the academic experience
  - Action: A Convocation: Welcome Celebration will be implemented on August 23<sup>rd</sup> on the west lawn of the Pentacrest
- ◆ Making a more robust traditions website and integrating the Fight Song and Alma Mater into more ceremonies
  - Action: The Fight Song and Alma Mater will be taught at the President's Residence event as a part of Welcome Week
- ◆ Publicizing a list of "47 Things to Do before you graduate from Iowa"
  - Action: Poster created which will be distributed to first year students at Convocation. Additional posters will be distributed to other classes and faculty/staff.

### One Community, One Book

The expansion of "All Johnson County Reads" to include the first-year class at Iowa was new in 2008-09. The chosen book, Ishmael Baeh's, *A Long Way Gone*, was provided to all incoming first year students, along with a Welcome letter from President Sally Mason. The goal was for the book to be integrated into all Rhetoric sections, and to be supplemented with community discussions groups and an author visit. While the students who were required to read the book found it useful and interesting, follow-up data indicate that the book



was not fully integrated into the Rhetoric curriculum, with less than half the instructors using it. While the SST may revisit a shared book experience in the future, the SST Executive Committee felt that we needed a reasonable assurance that the book would be required in a systematic way to continue future funding.



### **Pick One**

Encouraging meaningful student engagement on campus, early in the first semester, contributes to the overall growth, development, and success as a student. Over 1800 first year students registered their choice of an educationally purposeful activity via the Pick One website. Students most often heard about the Pick One program through email and online and they most often learned about their specific group via friends or Orientation. We will be formulating a more comprehensive follow-up system to determine whether students are actually sustaining their involvement post-“pick.” For instance, we know that this year, 86% of first year students who indicated they intended to participate in Dance Marathon (one of the picks that actually occurs during spring semester), did follow through and participate. In order to move toward institutionalizing Pick One, two coordinators in the Office of Student Life (Kristi Finger and Tara Edberg) will work with the Pick One Steering Committee to implement Year 2 of the program, while formulating outcomes plans and a 5-year plan for Pick One.

### **The IOWA Challenge**

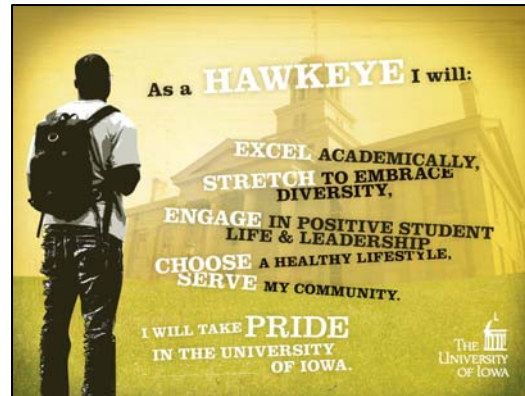
The IOWA Challenge has been termed a “mission statement” for UI students. After a grassroots development process, this year brought a vast expansion of our work with the Challenge, including getting the website up, and rolling the Challenge out to first year students via Orientation. Both Tom Rocklin and Beth Ingram mentioned the Challenge in their Welcome remarks at Orientation. Student Orientation Advisors also discussed the Challenge with their small groups, including giving specifics on how to successfully meet each aspect of the IOWA Challenge.

The IOWA Challenge committee has also generated additional strategies for integrating the Challenge into classrooms and student programs.



Students completing Orientation were asked to sign Herky to show their commitment to upholding The IOWA Challenge.

The Challenge will also be integral within the Convocation, including a pledge that students will be asked to recite. Convocation speakers, including new and returning students, the President, and the Provost, will all be asked to integrate the key concepts of The IOWA Challenge into their remarks.



Thanks to all the staff, faculty, and students who have given their time and energy to supporting Student Success at Iowa.

#### **Student Success Team Executive Committee, 2008-09**

Beth Ingram, Chair, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education  
Elizabeth Whitt, Director, Student Success Initiatives, Office of the Provost  
Sarah Hansen, Student Success Team Coordinator  
Marcella David, Associate Provost for Diversity and Special Assistant to the President  
Nancy Humbles, Program Associate II, Centers for Diversity and Enrichment  
David Grady, Associate Vice President, Student Services  
Emil Rinderspacher, Senior Associate Director, Admissions  
Rachel Williams, Associate Professor, Art and Art History/Art Education  
Carlette Washington-Hoagland, Assessment and Staff Development Coordinator, University Libraries  
Von Stange, Director, University Housing  
William Nelson, Director, Office of Student Life  
Helena Dettmer, Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Services, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Maison Blead, President, UI Student Government