

TO: Tom Rocklin and Bill Nelson  
FROM: Elizabeth Whitt  
DATE: July 30, 2007  
RE: Notes from SST Retreat: Four Focused Discussions

#### Group One: Increasing Peer Involvement

1. Mentoring program
  - A. For credit or stipend using upper division students
  - B. Both academic and activity mentoring
  - C. Virtual mentoring – program tracks student inquiries and provides a response to a specific question plus related information based on other inquiries
  - D. Locations for face-to-face mentoring on both sides of campus plus possible email or blog development
  
2. Camp ?
  - A. Program development and implementation by students
  - B. May conflict with early arrival programs like marching band, athletics or rush but those groups only cover a small proportion of students – Camp ? would be available to students without an early arrival option. Some activities would still be available to students attending other group functions (you can't march all day!)
  
3. Supplemental course information
  - A. Under faculty or TA supervision, students would provide supplemental information about a course either through ICON or a course web page. Could develop into a tutorial resource or used to announce study group meetings, etc.
  
4. Living transition
  - A. Written and/or online materials to help student transition to living off-campus. Written by and for students.
  
5. Space
  - A. Identify common gathering places and utilize the space as student information centers – how far are students willing to travel to get information.

#### Group Two: How to Increase Faculty Involvement with Students

Action Step 1: Faculty will be assigned to a Learning Community

This might include:

- Dinner with the students of that LC
- Field Trips
- Dances
- Engage in Research Forums (e.g. Honor's Program Ideas)

- Sharing of Scholarly Papers & Presentations
- A “Free Lunch/Dinner” program
- This should include both academic and non-academic involvement

Action Step 2: Get faculty to engage with students about the work/research they are doing, that might be outside of the course learning.

Action Step 3: Allow students the opportunity to actively engage in the classroom with the faculty member.

This might include:

- Co-present a paper with a faculty member
- Co-teach a class
- Assist a faculty member with research

Action Step 4: Message to faculty that clearly and concisely states what “student success” at the University of Iowa means.

This might include:

- Messaging to Faculty from a variety of avenues (Provost, President, etc.)
- Conversations with students beyond classroom content

Action Step 5: Faculty Senate as a venue to engage more faculty with students.

- It was determined that the Provost should choose to use the Faculty Senate as he sees fit.

Action Step 6: Require student organizations to have faculty advisors

Action Step 7: Implement a plan and present it to faculty as it was for the “Outcomes Assessment”.

- Here is the plan, you need to make it happen, but can choose how you make this work for your area, department, etc.

Action Step 8: Reinvent/rejuvenate the Faculty Speakers Bureau

Action Step 9: Free Faculty lead programs with the Residence Halls

Action Step 10: Promote shared experiences that occur annually.

This might include:

- Winter session courses
- Special student abroad trips

Action Step 11: Pizza Night at the fraternity or sorority chapter houses

Action Step 12: Engage Faculty in Welcome Week activities

This might include:

- Serving or attending the Welcome Back Picnic
- Distributing ice cream at Student Organization's Fair
- A film series with small discussion groups led by faculty

Action Step 13: Engage President, Provost and Vice Presidents in intentional activities with students, in order to "model the way" for faculty participation.

Action Step 14: Work on identifying a "common space" for faculty to be more visible on campus.

Action Step 15: Implement a "Pick One" program for faculty, to ask them to engage in one outside activities from their classroom teaching.

This might include:

- Advising a club or organization
- Associate and interact with a Learning Community
- Serving as a Faculty Advisor to a Greek Chapter
- Volunteering for a campus wide Civic Engagement Program (Dance Marathon, 10 K Show, etc.)

### Group 3: Early Student Engagement

#### A. Ongoing New Student Orientation

1. "Ongoing": through the fall semester (on topics of adjustment to college, transitions, etc.) only? Or through the spring semester as well (including reflection on the first semester, 'more academic' topics and issues)?

In general, we talked about the fall semester as though it were a course for credit; the spring semester, if needed, could be either a course or several gatherings.

2. Fall semester ongoing orientation:

- Expand CT? Require CT?
- Issues: concerns about requiring ongoing orientation (why would we assume everyone would want or need it? student: CT is 'parent-driven,' not something students want), concerns about not requiring ongoing orientation (why would we not require it, if we know it is useful? What messages do we send if we don't require it? CT instructor: typical student reaction at the end of CT: "I didn't think this would be helpful, but it was").
- If we require it, perhaps consider organizing groups/assigning groups based on student interests, majors, needs, living arrangements, etc. rather than at random.
- Add CT-type elements to first-year seminars; to be taught by a 'traveling' group of instructors trained in CT issues. Perhaps just one class period? (Issues: faculty reluctance to be involved in adjustment-related topics; faculty ownership of the first-year seminars; can't require faculty to include something in the seminars they don't want, but why not include an understanding that this information would be included when faculty seek to teach a first-year seminar?)

- Involve peer mentors as instructors
  - Include elements of 'seize the campus': get students out of their 'comfort zones' and residences to experience range of opportunities the campus offers (e.g., Hancher, Old Cap)
  - In general, seems a good idea to consider requiring some sort of structured 1<sup>st</sup>-year experience, just not the same experience for everyone. On the other hand: what are the advantages of a common experience that we'd lose if we went that route?
3. "Camp X" (related to the topic of continuing/ongoing orientation)
- Issue: How to structure time between 'move-in' and the first day of classes so (1) students use the time in healthy ways, and (2) the institution uses the time to communicate important messages about expectations, welcome, etc.
  - Discussion about trimming of fall NSO activities at UI and elsewhere because of lack of student interest and participation; concerns also about intruding on current activities (e.g., marching band, Greek recruitment)
  - Issue: What purposes would (should) this event serve and for whom? What formats and settings are best to achieve these purposes? How would this event fit with 'ongoing orientation'?
  - Possible to adapt Freshman Interest Group (FIG) model of making a large campus feel small; organize students according to interests?
- B. Communicating the Message "Get Involved"
1. Another message: "Pick 1"
2. Issues: How to get students to feel comfortable experimenting before they 'pick one'? How to get students to explore when they are reluctant to do anything by themselves/that doesn't fit what friends are doing/that requires showing up on one's own/etc.?
3. Perhaps find ways to expose students to 'chunks' of information over a period of time v. one 'student involvement fair' once a year early in the semester (this can seem overwhelming and doesn't encourage (1) learning about options, (2) considering options, or (3) exploring before deciding).
4. Potential venues for exposure to options for involvement: CT, 1<sup>st</sup>-year seminars, Rhetoric courses. What else? (concern about overloading residence halls)
5. Role here, too, for peer mentors.
6. Faculty-staff partnerships: Communication w/ one another and students about what opportunities and resources are available, how to support student engagement and exploration;

collaborate on programs and opportunities based on expertise and interests (e.g., faculty teaching or research related to programming interests in dorms).

7. Perhaps a webpage with messages and information about getting involved w/ link to seek electronic responses. Seems as though students prefer to ask questions and seek information via electronic formats and not in face-to-face interactions.

C. Encouraging/Expecting Engagement in Academics

1. "Coordinating Council" of faculty who teach first-year classes. To communicate what UI values about academic engagement; to craft and send messages (to students, to others) about attendance, about engagement, about learning, about getting help, etc.

2. Engagement includes/requires opportunities to reflect on their learning within and across courses and experiences in- and out-of-class. Where and how does this occur? With what impact? Where should it occur?

3. Engagement includes/requires opportunities to apply in-class learning outside the classroom. Where and how does this occur? With what impact? Where should it occur? What role for learning communities and living-learning communities in fostering academic engagement?

Group Four: Intentional, frequent, appropriately-targeted message (spirit, pride, tradition, ritual, values, expectations, and pathway)

1. Finish "Message Project"
2. Develop a map of messages to disseminate (Orientation, Camp Hawkeye, offices, departments, Hawkeye Fridays)
3. Peer advisors in CT
4. Create courses for peer helpers
5. Create corps of peers (e.g., leadership training, student ambassadors)
6. Encourage CT instructors to identify good people [?]
7. Study ways to use space to bring students together with each other and with faculty
8. CT tug-o-war [?]
9. Talk about current traditions
10. End-of-first-year celebration/ceremony
11. Who we are tinged by who we want to be [?]
12. Welcome students back – get offices to welcome students
13. Transitions (housing, advising to departments?) [?]
14. Create Camp X and follow-up activities
15. Shop message to faculty (what should expectations be for undergraduates? – e.g., 'Hawkeyes are academically engaged'). What does this mean to faculty?