

**UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**  
**First-Year Experience**  
**Summer Bridge, First-Year Seminars, and Themed Learning Communities**  
Response to External Review  
January 2015

First-Year Experience programs (Summer Bridge, First-Year Seminars, and Themed Learning Communities) at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) underwent a thorough external review from April 30-May 2, 2014 and received feedback from the review team in June, 2014. The feedback report indicated that University College First-Year Experience (FYE) has made a positive impact at IUPUI, especially within the areas of student retention and success, however significant challenges remain. These challenges include resource limitations in the face of rapid growth in response to increased student participation. Additional challenges relate to maintaining program integrity and quality despite restrictions or limitations of practices integral to future success of programs.

Upon receipt of the external review report, FYE program directors and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs reviewed and analyzed the report in detail and created an action plan for response. This action plan included the development of an executive summary of recommendations (including a hyperlink to the full external review report) which was shared in August 2014 with IUPUI Deans, key Vice Chancellors, University College faculty and staff, and key stakeholders and constituents in most IUPUI schools. Communities of interest were asked to share the report widely. In addition, the FYE leadership has discussed the recommendations of the program review team widely across campus to obtain input from a variety of stakeholders including the Council on Retention and Graduation, in the Division of Student Affairs, the First-Year Seminar Faculty Learning Community, Themed Learning Communities instructional teams, the University College Curriculum Committee, the Office of International Affairs, and the Division of Undergraduate Education Strategy Team.

A second component of the action plan involved identifying key individuals to serve on two separate, but parallel, task forces for Summer Bridge and Themed Learning Communities. Since revisions of the First-Year Seminar program (FYS) had already begun in the University College Curriculum Committee prior to the review, that group continued work towards a revision of FYS goals and outcomes, which will eventually lead to a formal revision of the program's guiding document,

*A Template for First-Year Seminars at IUPUI.* Task force composition was determined by late August and included representation from key campus stakeholders in each program. A series of task force meetings was convened from September through December to review the recommendations and assist in defining future directions for each program. With all task force meetings now concluded, program directors are in the process of finalizing recommendations and taking them forth to University College leadership for consideration.

Following are the six key recommendations from the external review followed by our responses. Additionally a FYE action plan is included to provide a broad overview of activities.

## **Recommendations**

### **1. Clarify mission, audience, and capacity of the first-year experience programs**

- **Create a statement of purpose (differentiation between programs)**
- **Clarify intended audience**
- **Clarify mission to aid in allocating adequate resources**
- **Clarify mission to increase accountability of First-Year Experience programs outside of University College**

The University College Curriculum Committee spent the fall semester discussing the goals and outcomes of the University College First-Year Seminar. A faculty-developed draft of suggested “fundamental and powerful course concepts,” along with related course goals and student learning outcomes, is currently under discussion by the University College Curriculum Committee with an anticipated completion goal of spring 2015. Once finalized, the committee will incorporate the revised curriculum into the program’s guiding document, *A Template for First-Year Seminars at IUPUI*. Several schools outside of University College have been closely watching this revision process and are waiting for the final document so that fidelity and consistency of FYS offerings can be enhanced across campus.

The Summer Bridge and Themed Learning Communities task forces have recently concluded discussions and, at the writing of this report, program directors are developing recommendations to clarify mission, purpose, and intended audience for these programs. Program leaders anticipate that some recommendations – such as establishing clearer missions and better defining intended audiences for the programs – can be implemented immediately, while

items such as longer term growth issues and resource limitations will need to consider once input on the recommendations is received from University College and IUPUI leadership.

Clarity of program mission and audience should be further enhanced as a result of efforts to improve communication channels with the Office of Orientation Services. Both the Associate Dean and Director of First-Year Programs have been added to the Orientation Advisory Council in an effort to improve alignment and enhanced student selection of appropriate programs

## **2. Articulate and demonstrate program effectiveness more clearly**

- **Identify meaningful and measurable outcomes outside of persistence and retention rates**
- **Align student learning and program outcomes with the stated goals of Bridge Programs, First-Year Seminars, and Themed Learning Communities**
- **Selectively engage in more direct measures of student, faculty/staff, and program outcomes.**
- **Unpack the combined effect of Bridge Programs, First-Year Seminars, and Themed Learning Communities**

As part of its efforts to examine and clarify First-Year Seminar program goals, the University College Curriculum Committee (with extensive input from the First-Year Seminar Faculty Learning Community and the University College Lecturers) has been closely examining and revising existing student learning outcomes to ensure alignment with program goals.

In an effort to elaborate on the information we have regarding students' experiences in Themed Learning Communities, the TLC Director and Executive Director of the Office of Student Data, Analysis, and Evaluation (OSDAE) analyzed two years of focus group data this fall. The focus groups provide insights on students' experiences one semester or one year after completing the TLC program, with attention to continued relationships with peers and instructional team members, out-of-class and integrative learning experiences and whether the value of the TLC experience is more fully realized later.

In the spring semester, TLC faculty will be invited to participate in a project led by the Executive Director of OSDAE to begin assembling and evaluating direct measures of learning

Program leadership has engaged in ongoing discussions with OSDAE about creating a more comprehensive assessment plan for the first-year experience, including an increased focus on longitudinal data.

While the culture at IUPUI and strategic directions tend to focus on persistence and retention rates, careful consideration has been given to identify other undergraduate experiences that contribute and correlate with retention. Experiences such as enhanced faculty/staff interaction and major/career exploration and planning are currently being developed for implementation in FYS in fall 2015. Further identification of more direct and indirect measures of student, faculty/staff, and program outcomes is likely with increased goal/mission clarity and development of a longitudinal assessment plan in spring 2015. Other measures are being discussed as ways to better capture authentic assessment of student learning and engagement, through the use of technology, rubrics and analytics.

The combined effects of Summer Bridge and Themed Learning Communities are well demonstrated via assessment. While both task forces have discussed the pros and cons of uncoupling these programs, it appears that the benefits of such a move would vary widely from school to school. Instead of recommending a blanket uncoupling of these initiatives, both programs plan to consider combining and/or uncoupling programs on a case-by-case basis, in close consultation with our sponsoring academic school partners.

### **3. Develop and assess instructional teams**

- **Consider reducing the number of members on instructional teams**
- **Reconsider the expected contribution of each member of the instructional team to the experience of students in these programs (clear expectations for each team member)**
- **Establish clearer timelines and expectations to develop instructional teams**
- **Assess teams as teams in addition to evaluating individual performance**
  - **There is no mechanism to capture the effectiveness of teams and their impact on learning and/or student experience as a unit**
- **Establish equity of value for participants.**

The First-Year Seminar Program, the Summer Bridge program, and the Themed Learning Communities program have all worked closely with University Library leadership to revise the contribution of the librarian to the instructional team – in some cases agreeing to replace the librarian’s contribution with other sources of information literacy information (modules, faculty resource bank, etc.); in others, agreeing to utilize the librarians’ time more strategically and thus reduce the required time commitment to the instructional team. Likewise, the Office of Academic and Career Planning and the Office of Academic Affairs collaborated to create and implement a more defined, reduced role for the academic advisor in the first-year seminar for fall 2014, resulting in a more resource-efficient, strategic role for the advisor in the instructional team. The Office of Student Transitions and Mentor Initiatives are currently working on a revision of the mentor role in the first-year seminar and will present it to the Curriculum Committee for consideration in spring of 2015.

The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Director of Advising are working to create a system for evaluation of the advisor in the first-year seminar. Discussions are underway with the University College resident faculty to create and implement a mechanism for team members to evaluate their experience on first-year seminar instructional teams. A mentoring logic model has been developed which will create a faculty mentoring program to be implemented in fall 2015, including the assignment of a mentor to all new FYS faculty. In summer 2014, the Office of Academic Affairs sponsored a faculty fellowship for development of a comprehensive FYS instructor development plan, which resulted in a pilot FYS faculty training event in August 2014, with additional components to be rolled out in spring/fall 2015.

The adoption of revised FYS goals and outcomes in spring 2015 will be coupled with clearer expectations of instructional team members and re-defined roles, to be incorporated into the revised program’s guiding document, *A Template for First-Year Seminars at IUPUI*.

Similarly, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and the TLC Director developed a brief survey that was piloted this fall to provide an opportunity for TLC faculty to provide insights into the collaboration within TLC instructional teams. This preliminary information will be used to develop an evaluation tool that will be regularly implemented to assess the effectiveness of teams.

Assessment plans will identify timing for further exploration of equity and value for instructional team members participating in first-year experience

programs. First, however, clear expectations and instructional roles must be defined, along with an improved mechanism for instructional team evaluation and accountability.

#### **4. Align and revise student selection processes to fulfill program mission and maximize use of available resources**

- **Re-establish mission clarity , then identify the appropriate target population(s) for each program based on clarified mission and goals**
- **Provide mechanisms for students to learn about the programs and the benefits of participation and then register for the programs/courses**
- **Consider whether alignment of the Summer Bridge and FYS programs make program administration and student registration more difficult than necessary**
- **Consider uncoupling these programs if data do not demonstrate that coupling is an essential element to producing the programmatic outcomes**

Summer Bridge and TLC task forces have worked to clarify mission and goals for each program and to identify appropriate student populations for each. Various mechanisms are under consideration for improved dissemination of program information to students and to ensure access to both high-demand programs for those who are identified as target populations.

The Themed Learning Communities program implemented a new marketing strategy with a visible presence around campus, a station in the new student orientation resource fair and mailings to incoming students. The TLC Task Force meetings clearly emphasized the importance of students receiving information about all TLC programs prior to new student orientation, and selecting a program to enroll in based on their individual interests. An advisory group has been established to help guide this process and ensure it segues into new student orientation. Finally, a committee has been implemented to explore the possibility of pre-registering students in all first-year programs in future years. The Themed Learning Communities will be one of the pilot programs for pre-registration in the summer of 2015.

The Summer Bridge task force concluded that the alignment of Summer Bridge and fall semester FYS, while logistically challenging, is essential to positive program outcomes. While uncoupling the TLC and Summer Bridge programs was discussed by both task force groups, consensus was not reached, and the

potential impact of uncoupling the interventions seems to vary from school to school. Program leadership agreed to discuss the pros and cons of coupling the programs with each school as new sections are proposed.

To ensure access to Summer Bridge by students who best fit the intended audience outlined by the task force, new measures will be piloted in summer 2015, including pre-registration of certain at-risk populations and enhanced enrollment management throughout the summer orientation season, including reserved seats for late-arriving students

## **5. Engage campus interest in these programs to systematize resources and processes to maximize success**

- **Investigate sharing the responsibility for community building on campus more broadly and evenly between University College and the Division of Student Affairs**
- **Broaden the sharing of responsibility for first-year student success by advocating a campus-wide commitment to and engagement with the first-year experience**
- **Recommend a campus-wide conversation on the respective roles and responsibilities of the schools and University College with respect to first-year student support and success**
- **Recruit new faculty to the First-Year Experience programs**
- **Investigate whether first-year seminar faculty development should be provided through, or in collaboration with, the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)**
- **Review team recommends that the Executive Vice Chancellor and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education announce, launch, and lead a campus-wide initiative during the 2014-15 academic year to refocus attention across the schools, support units, and University College on the first-year student experience at IUPUI**
  - **Goal of the initiative should be the development of a policy statement (e.g., “Statement of Shared Responsibilities for First-Year Student Success at IUPUI”) outlining the respective roles and obligations of schools, University College, the Honors College, the Division of Student Affairs, Enrollment Services, the Center for Teaching and Learning, and the Center for Service and Learning**

Thirteen new first-year seminar faculty were recruited for fall 2014; all attended a pilot half-day training program and were required to participate in mid-semester classroom observations. Similarly, new faculty participating in the Themed Learning Communities were invited to attend a brief orientation and connect with their instructional team members prior to the curriculum planning retreat. The Summer Bridge and TLC task forces included administrators and faculty from the majority of participating campus schools and divisions. Summer Bridge leadership also plans to hold meetings with other campus stakeholders, including Student Life, Residence Life, Auxiliary Services, International Affairs, the Online Math Academy program leadership. The Director of First-Year Programs is currently participating in the Division of Student Life Weeks of Welcome (WOW) Task Force, investigating ways to create a more seamless transition process for new freshmen and extend the community-building that takes place during Summer Bridge into the Student Life-sponsored WOW events.

The TLC Co-curricular committee, a group focused on advancing the partnerships between the Division of Student Life and the Themed Learning Communities, is continuing their efforts to move this work forward. The Office of Student Transitions and Mentoring Initiatives and the Office of Academic Affairs will jointly pilot a program in spring 2015 to extend the mentoring component of the fall first-year seminar beyond the classroom and into the spring semester through community building and outreach activities by the student mentors. Finally, the Center for Teaching and Learning has agreed to provide instructional design support to TLC faculty at the 2015 TLC Curriculum Planning Retreat as well as developing subsequent workshops of interest.

Now that the Division of Undergraduate Education (DUE) has been established, enhanced potential for campus-wide discussions related to first-year experiences is anticipated. Under this new structure, program leadership intends to pursue more effective collaboration and coordination of programs throughout IUPUI with a renewed focus on better serving our entering students.

## **6. Develop strategies to address enrollment and organizational changes**

- **Plan for the students who will be entering the institution five to ten years from now in the context of articulated institutional goals for that time frame**



- **Explore second semester course offerings to increase the impact of first-year experience on different types of students**
- **Provide campus leadership regarding pending curricular and institutional student success initiatives to counteract possible segmentation and challenges to program fidelity**

First-Year Experience Programs in University College will continue the practice of regularly reviewing enrollment trends and changes in our new student population and, in conjunction with OSDAE, plan accordingly to best serve our students. These changes are likely to include increases in the proportion of residential students on campus and those who arrive in college with credit for previously completed college coursework. Such developments have already impacted planning for fall 2015 programming, in part due to continued increases in dual credit, and in response to general education implement and degree mapping. At the same time, the programs intend to stay aligned with their revised missions and recognize that their target audiences may have less access to opportunities such as pre-college programming to earn dual credit.

For several years, University College explored and eventually piloted second semester FYS. Even with a scaffolding of goals and student learning outcomes from the first semester, second semester FYS pilots were unsuccessful. In light of current general education requirements and course credit limitations, continued exploration of a second semester credit bearing FYS has been tabled. Instead, in spring 2015, a new pilot initiative is being jointly launched by the Office of Student Transitions and Mentor Initiatives and of the Office of Academic Affairs in University College to provide second semester mentoring to first year students. Peer mentors with an established fall FYS mentoring relationship will continue with that relationship into the second semester in a voluntary mentoring program providing continued support for students' ongoing transition to college. Students in the spring semester will have the opportunity to engage in a variety of ways, including but not limited to, one-on-one coaching on topics such as time management, study skills, goal setting, and other relevant topics.

With the recent appointment of a RISE Director, increased opportunities are expected for University College and FYE programming to enhance integration of high impact practices. The RISE Director has created a steering committee and collectively an action plan has been developed to support high impact experiences in and out of the classroom.

## **Conclusion**

Our First-Year Experience Programs have established us as national leaders with respect to quality and innovation. Leadership has continually strived to establish a culture of excellence and creativity coupled with an innovative spirit. These well-established programs have a long track record of contributing to IUPUI student success and are widely viewed as institutional assets. The program review has provided a valuable opportunity for critical reflection. As we move forward, continued input from our communities of interest at IUPUI will provide strength and guidance to further advance and enhance the impact and reputation of University College and IUPUI.

**University College**  
**First-Year Experience Action Plan**  
**January 2015**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsible Individual</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Timeframe for Development and Planning</b>	<b>Implementation</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Mission differentiation , purpose, intended audience of FYE programs	Director of FYPs Director of TLCs Associate Dean Academic Affairs	Need more mission clarity to define what FYE is best for students	Spring 2015	Summer/Fall 2015	All FYE program information, websites, communication will be modified to reflect changes. Use to guide operations and decision-making moving forward.
Identify meaningful & measureable outcomes outside of persistence and retention (P&R); align learning outcomes with FYE goals; increase direct measures of outcomes	Director of FYPs Director of TLCs Associate Dean Academic Affairs	Need to expand success standards beyond P&R, align outcomes with mission/goals	Spring 2015	Fall 2015	Better alignment of learning outcomes and development of assessment plan identifying direct and indirect measures of outcomes
Reduce members (or roles/times) on instructional teams	Director of FYPs Director of TLCs Associate Dean Academic Affairs	Limited resources  Clarity of roles and responsibilities	<b>Advisor</b> -completed  <b>Librarian</b> -spring 2015 <b>Student mentor</b> -spring 2015	Fall 2014  Fall 2015	Improved allocation of resources and refinement of roles and responsibilities
Establish clearer timelines and expectations to	Director of FYPs Director	Time and expectations to provide team cohesion	Spring 2015—TLC Retreat/professional development	Fall 2015	Provides for team cohesion and understanding of expectations

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develop instructional teams	of TLCs Associate Dean Academic Affairs	Accountability	Spring 2015-FYS professional development		Improves accountability and program efficacy
Assess teams as teams	Director of FYPs Director of TLCs Associate Dean Academic Affairs	Effectiveness of team	Spring 2015  Faculty assessment of advisor to be piloted in Spring 2015	Fall 2015	Provides evidence of teams' impact on learning and/or student experience
Equity of value for FYE instructional team	Associate Dean Academic Affairs  Director of FYPs  Director of TLCs	Current and future ownership and leadership for FYE  Sharing of best practices  Compensation equity	Ongoing  Faculty mentoring model has been developed	Phased implementation based on team accountability and clarity of expectations  Limitation in current payment model articulated by fiscal	Alignment of expectations with instructional payment  Improved instructional team cohesiveness  Improved morale
Align student selection process in with mission/goals	All	Defines appropriate target population for FYE program	Current>ongoing  Student selection, pre-registration (of targeted populations) and enhanced enrollment management (i.e. holding seats) underway in preparation for summer orientation	Phased implementation contingent upon current pilot assessment results	Best FYE fit and placement for student based upon metrics and other indicators  Serving more at-risk students  Termination of lower-impact hybrid FYS model

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Engage campus interest in FYE programs to systematize resources and process to maximize success	All, including Associate Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education and University College Dean	Enhanced campus-wide discussions related to first-year experience	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>FYE program conversations have provided enhanced communication and partnerships with communities of interest</p> <p>Division of Undergraduate Education (DUE) has been established</p> <p>DUE strategic directions currently under development will enhance resources and focus on student success</p>	Phased implementation	<p>Increased communication, coordination and collaboration between FYE programs and communities of interest, most importantly degree granting schools</p> <p>Continue with campus-wide conversations related to FYS programs</p> <p>Expand FYE program resource site(s), increasing the research related articles, best practices and more</p>

# University College

## First-Year Experience Action Plan

### January 2015

Recommendation	Responsible Individual	Rationale	Timeframe for Development and Planning	Implementation	Outcome
Engage students in co-curricular programming	FYE program directors in conjunction with Division of Student Affairs	Increased alignment and promotion of establishing community on campus	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Student Affairs staff served as consultants at 2014 TLC retreat</p> <p>TLC co-curricular committee developing targeted, themed-based messaging about co-curricular opportunities for fall 2015</p> <p>TLC program developing a co-curricular assessment instrument to be rolled out in fall 2015</p> <p>FYP and TLC programs collaborated with Student Affairs to offer professional development opportunities for faculty related to student welfare and campus life issues in summer 2014</p> <p>Pilot linkage between a first-year seminar and Jagventure summer experience will be piloted in fall 2015</p>	Fall 2015 with continued phased implementation as action items defined	Engage more students and instructional teams in community building; support early student engagement with the Principles of Co-Curricular Learning (PCLs); building commitment to campus and establishing student culture at IUPUI; enhancing student learning beyond the classroom

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Recruit new faculty to FYE programs	FYE program directors, faculty and Associate Dean Academic Affairs  Work with faculty involved in mentoring program	Increase recruitment pool of instructors committed to FYE	Ongoing  Recruited twelve new FYS instructors for fall 2014  Anticipated increase of instructors for fall 2015	Ongoing—as need arises	Increased opportunities to develop and recruit instructors for FYE programs with commitment to undergraduate education and serving first-year students
Develop strategies to address enrollment and organizational changes	FYE program directors in conjunction with Associate Dean Academic Affairs	Ongoing review of enrollment trends to modify FYS program offerings and/or selection  Ongoing review of students coming with dual-credit and/or AP—modify FYS programs and linkages as appropriate	Ongoing...short and long term	Ongoing evaluation and assessment of enrollment trends	Improved short and long term planning of FYS program offerings/linkages and needs
Continued integration of high-impact practices with FYS programs	FYS program directors in coordination and collaboration with RISE director and faculty	Increase early engagement with high-impact practices	Ongoing—RISE Director has developed an action plan which includes visibility and focus on increasing high-impact opportunities  High-impact professional development opportunities underway for spring 2015	Ongoing	Increased integration of high-impact practices in FYS programs  Evaluation and assessment of practices to ascertain impact on student engagement and learning

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Explore second semester course offerings	Associate Dean Academic Affairs  FYP director	Increase impact of first-year experience on different types of students	New pilot initiative launched in spring 2015, in collaboration with the Office of Students Transitions and Mentor Initiatives, to provide sustained support through the second semester via voluntary mentoring	Pending assessment of spring 2015 pilots, potential for larger-scale rollout in academic year 2015-16	Sustained transition support for students beyond the first semester; increased opportunities for community building