

**Student Life and Diversity
First-year Student Task Force Report**

Submitted by:

Frank E. Ross, Ph.D.
Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Life and Diversity

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Context

IUPUI participated in the Foundation of Excellence in the First College Year project.

Participation in this very extensive self-study allowed the university to view our students' first-year experience in a new way, noting how we are excelling, and calling attention to areas for development.

The results of this national project are being used across the campus in a variety of ways.

The Division of Student Life and Diversity used the report as the foundation for a task force charged with evaluating our effectiveness in working with first-year students and impacting their learning.

Specifically, the goals established for the task force included:

- (1) Develop a statement of how SLD contribute to the learning of our first-year students, and
- (2) Develop a set of recommendations that would improve first-year student learning outcomes.

Task force members included: Frank E. Ross, Chair; Tralicia Lewis; Beth Harsany; Michael Hudson; Lisa Mancuso; Jennifer Thompson; Rebecca Nestor and Nicole Oglesby.

Members of the task force used an accelerated improvement process to complete this work and meet the established goals.

Results

Statement of how SLD contributes to the learning of first-year students:

The Division of Student Life and Diversity, an educational partner at IUPUI, supports the transition of first-year students through developmentally appropriate programs and services, both inside and outside of the classroom. The result is holistic student learning which enhances academic, social and personal development.

Recommendations to improve first-year student learning outcomes:

1. Encourage the academic success of first-year students through increased strategic partnerships and collaborative work.
2. Streamline communication for first-year students and families during all phases of their transition process.
3. Provide programs and services that lead to the development of practical competence for first-year students.
4. Support first-year students' exploration and learning about their own identity development.
5. Provide increased opportunities for first-year students to interact with and learn about diverse people.

6. Evaluate programs and services specifically for first-year students of color.
7. Increase civic engagement among first-year students.
8. Promote connectedness to IUPUI and develop school spirit and pride in first-year students.

University College

University College is the academic unit at IUPUI that provides a common gateway to the academic programs available to entering students. University College coordinates existing university resources and develops new initiatives to promote academic excellence and enhance student persistence. It provides a setting where faculty, staff, and students share in the responsibility for making IUPUI a supportive and challenging environment for learning. University College is a national leader and campus champion for the success of first-year students. As such Student Life and Diversity must continue in our role as educational partners and collaborate with University College to fully support and enact these recommendations.

Next steps

Task force members began to develop strategies to meet each of the goals, or recommendations for improvement. Assistant Vice Chancellor Frank Ross will work further with Katie Busby, SLD Director of Assessment and Planning, in the strategic planning process, refining measurable goals, establishing timelines, and collecting data. Task force members provide the following recommendations for immediate action:

1. The statement of how SLD supports first-year students should be posted on the web.
2. This report should be shared with the directors and with all members of the Division.
3. This report and future plans should be shared with University College administration and other invested stakeholders.
4. Professional development related to first-year students should be provided for SLD members to enhance working knowledge of this student population and their issues and needs.