Managing Crisis, Facing Uncertainty, and Driving Change: Opportunity and Challenge for College Transitions in a COVID-19 Climate

Jennifer R. Keup, Executive Director
National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition
Technical Difficulties?

• Attempt the alternate audio option provided

• Send us a question through the GoToWebinar control panel

• Contact GoToWebinar Support Center at (888)259-8414
Mission: The National Resource Center serves education professionals by supporting and advancing efforts to improve student learning and transitions into and through higher education.

Core Commitments
• Student transitions
• Connection between research and practice
• Collaboration
• Inclusion
• Lifelong learning

Areas of Activity
• Conferences and continuing education
• Publications
• Research Grants and Assessment
• Communication and partnerships
Today’s Goals:
What We Won’t Be Doing

Just tell me what to do!
Today’s Goals: What We Will Be Doing

- Acknowledging our current space
- Identifying issues
- Crafting questions
- Framing inquiry
- Introducing models and methods
- Offering food for thought
But Wait....

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

YOU ARE HERE
COVID-19 Response

Managing Crisis
Managing Uncertainty ("Coping")
Managing Change
COVID-19 Response

Managing Crisis
Managing Uncertainty ("Coping")
Managing Change
COVID-19 Response

Managing Crisis
Managing Uncertainty ("Coping")
Managing Change

YOU ARE HERE
A crisis is a terrible thing to waste. It should give people, institutions and politicians the necessary courage to implement change.
The Power of the Question
4 Guiding Questions

• What roles do student transitions and the first-year experience (FYE) play in representing the culture and brand of the institution and delivering on the promise of an undergraduate education?

• What does it mean to be a student at your institution and how do we provide that experience within the parameters of our current environment?

• In ways are we able to address and ameliorate equity issues that have been highlighted by the pandemic and #BlackLivesMatter movement?

• How do we set a precedent in the first year for the rest of students’ educational experience when we are faced with such uncertainty?
Question #1:

What roles do student transitions and the first-year experience (FYE) play in representing the culture and brand of the institution and delivering on the promise of an undergraduate education?
Who You Are is What You Do

The measure of who we are is what we do with what we have.

Vince Lombardi
“The first-year experience is not a single program or initiative, but rather an intentional [and comprehensive] combination of academic and co-curricular efforts within and across postsecondary institutions.”

(Koch & Gardner, 2006)
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Source: 2017 NSFYE; N = 525 institutions
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But Wait, There’s More!

It isn't what you do, but how you do it.

John Wooden
Reframing Transition
FYE is More Than a Relay
FYE is a Constellation of Support

- Early Alert
- Placement Testing
- Residential Life
- Service Learning
- Campus Activities
- First-Year Advising
- Orientation
- Learning Community
- First-Year Seminars
A Constellation of FYE Programs

Legend:
- Lines represent correlations phi > .25
- Colors of boxes represent percentage of institutions reporting FYE program offered.
  - Dark Blue = > 70%
  - Royal Blue = 50-69%
  - Light Blue = 30-49%
  - Gray = < 30%
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Where does fraternity and sorority life fit in the constellation of FYE?
Question #2:

What does it mean to be a student at your institution and how do we provide that experience within the parameters of our current environment?
Where did that quote go?!?!
Reframing Retention Strategy

• Profile... “recognizes that an institution’s retention and graduation rates are...more a function of what the institution is rather than what it does.”

• Progress... “students are making satisfactory academic progress rather than just persisting”

• Process... what we do to support students toward success once they are at the institution

• PROMISE... “connects retention strategies to institution brand strategies”; are we doing what we said we would do?
What is your PROMISE?
Campus Objectives for FYE

- Academic success strategies: 80.4%
- Knowledge of resources: 75.6%
- Connection with institution: 75.0%
- Intro to academic expectations: 69.8%
- Retention: 62.8%
- Common first-year experience: 61.6%
- Student-faculty interaction: 61.1%
- Career exploration/preparation: 56.8%
How Do We Achieve This?
Liminal Peripheral Participation

Periphery (Consumer)

Centrality (Contributor)

COMMUNITY
Liminal Peripheral Participation

This is an iterative process

Centrality (Contributor)

COMMUNITY

Periphery (Consumer)
Critical Questions

• How does fraternity and sorority life operationalize “community”?

• How does F&SL’s definition of “community” facilitate or hinder the institution’s definition of the same term?

• How is F&SL a vehicle for movement toward centrality in the LPP model?

• Are there a range of equitable options for movement toward centrality?
Question #3:

In ways are we able to address and ameliorate equity issues that have been highlighted by the pandemic and #BlackLivesMatter movement?
Life in Pandemia

- #BLM and racial violence
- Students living with food/housing insecurity
- Digital divide
- First-generation student support
- Rural and urban education climates
- Disparity across institutional type and wealth
- Access to HIPs diminished
- Salience of intersectionality
Racial Climate Model

Historical Legacy of Inclusion/Exclusion

- Resistance to Desegregation
- Mission
Racial Climate Model

Compositional Diversity
- Diverse Student Enrollments
- Diverse Faculty & Staff Hires

Presence as Protest
Racial Climate Model

Behavioral Dimension

- Social Interaction Across Race/Ethnicity
- Classroom Diversity
- Pedagogical Practices
Racial Climate Model

Psychological Dimension

- Perceptions of Racial/Ethnic Tension
- Perceptions of Discrimination
- Attitudes and Prejudice Reduction

#BLM & Antiracism
Racial Climate Model

Organizational / Structural Dimension

- Definition(s) of Merit
- Admissions Practices
- Hiring Practices
- Tenure Policies
- Content of the Curriculum
- Budget Allocations
- Policies and Procedures

Organization as agent of equity
When you really want to find the answers to the great questions of your life, you need to look for them deep in yourself.

Frank M. Wanderer
“The most valuable finding [is] the ‘equity effects’ that appear in students’ report of their learning as their success is boosted by HIPs; the equity-minded perspective that educators can nurture; the principles of inclusive excellence that can guide colleges and universities in providing a liberal education that offers not only equitable access to HIPs, but also equitable achievement of outcomes.”

(Schneider & Albertine, 2013)
How to be HIP

• Create an investment of time and energy
• Include interaction with faculty and peers about substantive matters
• Real-world application
• High expectation
• Include frequent feedback
• Exposure to diverse perspectives
• Demand reflection and integrated learning
• Public displays of accountability
How do we set a precedent in the first year for the rest of students’ educational experience when we are faced with such uncertainty?
Definition of FYE

“The first-year experience is not a single program or initiative, but rather an intentional [and comprehensive] combination of academic and co-curricular efforts within and across postsecondary institutions.”

(Koch & Gardner, 2006)
“Every year is a transition year, whether the transition involves finding a major, joining a new group of friends, forming a different self-image, or embarking on a path to graduate school and the workplace. The undergraduate experience steadily evolves, bringing forth new opportunities and issues to confront.”

(Beck & Davidson, 2016)
Under the SIT Umbrella

Macro

- High school to college (FYE)
- Sophomore year
- Transfer
- Senior-year/transition out of college into:
  - Careers
  - Graduate school
Under the SIT Umbrella

Micro
- Major change
- Study abroad/away
- Moving from on-campus to off-campus residence
- Interpersonal relationships
- Personal development
- Other?

Macro
- High school to college (FYE)
- Sophomore year
- Transfer
- Senior-year/transition out of college into:
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# Campus Response to Transition

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<th>Sophomore Year</th>
<th>Junior Year</th>
<th>Senior Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Academic Advising</td>
<td>Internships</td>
<td>Capstone Experiences</td>
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<td>Common Reading Programs</td>
<td>Career Exploration</td>
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<td>Student Engagement</td>
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<td>Graduate and Professional School Applications</td>
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Calls to Integrate

- **Boyer Commission - Reinventing Undergraduate Education** (1998)
  - First-year seminars and programs form bridge from HS on one end to “more open and more independent world of the ... university on the other”

- **Achieving and Sustaining Institutional Excellence in the First Year of College** (Barefoot et al., 2005)
  - **Criterion 1**: An intentional, comprehensive approach to improving the first year
  - Description of Criterion 1 suggests an overall integrated approach to student success
Calls to Integrate

• **Helping Sophomores Succeed** (Gardner, et al., 2010)
  ➢ A need to create a “seamless approach” to the administration of support initiatives across the undergraduate experience

• **NACAC Ethical Guidelines** (2020)

• **Supporting Student Success in South Africa** (Scott, 2012)
  ➢ Initiatives should be like the Janus face, looking forward and backward simultaneously
  ➢ Programmes supporting students in transition should be a special but not discrete part of the educational process
Horizontal Alignment

Strategies used to assess learning and achievement are based on what has been taught and on the learning objectives students are expected to meet.
What students learn in one lesson or course prepares them for the next lesson or course. Educational experiences are purposefully structured and logically sequenced so that students gain the knowledge and skills to progressively prepare them for more challenging, higher-level work.
“Students don’t see progression as freshman, sophomore, junior, senior but see it as entering, persisting, and graduating.”
(Lane, 2014)
Food/Feast for Thought
What are Your Takeaways?

Thought is action in rehearsal.
Sigmund Freud
Reflection in “Threes”

• What are three things you learned today?
• Who are three people you are going to talk to about what you learned today?
• What are three resources you realize you have based upon your time here today?
• What are three things you are going to do in the next week with what you learned today?
• What are three things you are going to do in the next 3 months with what you learned today?
Questions & Answers