

Redesigning the New Student Experience

Betsy O. Barefoot
John N. Gardner
Policy Center on the First Year of College

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- Where to Look for Models
 - The secondary school?
 - The four-year college or university?
 - Other community college?
- Remember the danger of a self-fulfilling prophecy
 - “If you build it they will come; if you don’t, they surely won’t.”
- Confronting the “Grade 13” syndrome

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- A question of purpose: What is the purpose of a student's first term or first year on your campus?
 - What do you hope to accomplish?
 - What do you hope that students will accomplish?
 - How does that purpose influence what you choose to do?

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- Structure and organization
 - How does your campus structure the new student experience?
 - Is there sufficient organization and coherence? Who's in charge?
 - Are there sufficient resources to support your new student initiatives?

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- **Student transitions**
 - **How do you contact and interact with prospective students?**
 - **Are student expectations accurate – are they too high, too low? How are institutional expectations communicated?**
 - **What kinds of transition support do you offer?**
 - **Convocation or “induction” ceremony**
 - **Orientation – required/not required**
 - **First-year seminar – required/not required**
 - **Counseling and advising – the “case management” method**
 - **Mentoring**
 - **Early alert systems, attendance monitoring**

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- Faculty involvement in the new student experience
 - Ramping up the level of faculty interaction with new students (especially out of class)
 - Bringing adjuncts/part-timers on board
 - Faculty development activities that focus on the particular needs of new students
 - Faculty development that focuses on teaching “gatekeeper” courses
 - Special rewards/incentives for faculty

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- Which students should be your focus?
 - Low-income
 - Underrepresented
 - Developmental
 - Honors
 - ESL
 - Transfer bound/vocational-technical
 - How to meet the needs of ALL students who enroll at your institution

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- What are your campus's learning objectives for new students?
 - Writing, speaking, critical thinking, math competency
 - Engaging students in learning – collaborative learning
- Learning communities as an engagement model
- Using technology to engage students in learning (e.g., electronic portfolios)

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- Creating a climate that accepts and appreciates diversity
- Linking “diversity experiences” with learning outcomes
- Using the co-curriculum as a means to foster diversity

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- Introducing students to the roles and purposes of higher education
 - Education for a career
 - Education for personal growth
- Clarifying students' purposes for higher education
 - Commitment to a goal
 - Interaction with committed upper-level students

Redesigning the New Student Experience

- Building in continuous improvement
 - What's working well for new students?
 - What are the barriers and problems?
 - How do you know?
 - How is information used for improvement?
 - How is information shared with others?
 - How does your institution learn from others?

What works in enhancing the new student experience

- First-year seminars
- Learning communities
- Substantive orientation
- Personal academic advising/counseling
- Renewed focus on teaching in the first year
- Supplemental Instruction
- Developmental education (especially at the community college)

What works in enhancing the new student experience

- Structures for developing peer relationships
- Structures that build out-of-class faculty/student interaction
- Academic support – one-to-one or group tutoring and assistance
- Summer “early start” programs
- Personal, holistic counseling and advising
- Lots of individual attention for each and every student
- Setting high expectations for both institution and students

Contact Information

John N. Gardner, Executive Director

gardner@brevard.edu; 828-966-5309

Betsy O. Barefoot, Co-Director

barefoot@brevard.edu; 828-966-5310

Policy Center on the First Year of College,
Brevard, NC

www.fyfoundations.org