FOUNDATION OF EXCELLENCE

Open Ended Survey Question Results
Complied by students enrolled in 48C:180
Quantitative Research Methods
December 2008
Presentation Team A*

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Research Team

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48C:180 Quantitative Methods in Communication Research

UNI Strengths
Megan Hilsman & Joe Noethe

Variables Affecting Willingness to Teach
Amber Clark, Amanda Greiner & Molly Rosenboom

Incentives to Teach FOE
Karen Brudvig, Vanessa Hall & Molly Lakose

What First Year Students Should Learn
Trevor Bird & Collin Hoyer

General Comments about FOE
Alyssa Fisher, Mallory Morgan & Michael Stout

Teaching Techniques Used Now
Nathalie Riojas, Ashley Pearce & Kellie Schreiber

UNI Weaknesses
Callie Angove & Jessica Parker

Making FOE a Priority at UNI
Emily Hoyer & Beth Westin
Welcome & Introduction
Procedures & Methods

- Class divided into teams of 2-3 students per question
- Categories/Theme developed using input from Task Force & Coder Insights
- Data coded independently
Reliability of Coding

- Reliability calculated for nearly all student teams
- Intercoder Percentage Agreement ranged from 80% to 98.8%
- Overall mean for Percentage of Intercoder Agreement across teams = 90.2%
UNI Strengths

- Faculty & Staff: 23%
- Academics: 16%
- Student Centered Culture: 20%
- Co-Curricular Activities: 19%
- Advising: 12%
- Campus Environment: 10%
UNI Strengths: Academics (23%; n=93)

- Challenging courses/academics (n=39)
- Courses taught by faculty (n=16)
- Ample sections of courses offered (n=10)
- Liberal Arts Core (n=9)
UNI Strengths: Academics cont.

- Honors courses (n=6)
- Department requirements (n=5)
- Planned courses (n=4)
- Curriculum (n=4)
UNI Strengths: Student Centered Campus (20%; n=81)

- Support for students (n=28)
- Give students a sense of belonging (n=10)
- Make students feel at home (n=9)
- Resources (n=9)
UNI Strengths: Student Centered Campus cont.

- Friendly campus (n=8)
- Smaller class sizes (n=5)
- Making students aware (n=5)
- Academic support for athletes (n=4)
- Putting students first (n=3)
UNI Strengths: Faculty & Staff (19%; n=80)

- Faculty is a strength (n=42)
- Faculty is accessible (n=14)
- Support staff is a strength (n=18)
- Support staff is approachable (n=6)
UNI Strengths: Advising (16%; n=65)

- Advising (n=58)
- Orientation programs (n=7)
UNI Strengths: Co-Curricular Programs (12%; n=51)

- Extracurricular activities (n=23)
- Free/low cost activities (n=16)
- Recreational activities (n=6)
- Non-academic life (n=4)
- Entertainment/events (n=2)
UNI Strengths: Campus Environment (10%; n=40)

- Campus is nice (n=14) [physical environment]
- Campus is safe (n=10)
- Campus is fun (n=9)
- Campus is always trying to improve (n=7)
Variables Affecting Willingness to Teach First Year Courses

- Class Size: 33%
- Lack of LAC Knowledge: 17%
- Incentives: 16%
- Maturity/Prepared: 10%
- Technology: 9%
- Teaching Assistant: 8%
- Course Load: 7%
Variables Affecting Willingness to Teach First Year Courses

Most frequently mentioned concerns:

- Class size (33%; n=59)
- Lack of knowledge about LAC (e.g., objectives/purpose of courses) (17%; n=30)
- Maturity levels/preparedness of first year students (16%; n=29)
Variables Affecting Willingness to Teach First Year Courses

Specific items that could be used to increase willingness:

- Incentives (10%; n=18) (Includes recognition, pay, etc.)
- Teaching Assistants for large sections (9%; n=15)
- Modification of course load (8%; n=15)
- Enhanced technology (7%; n=12)
Variables Affecting Willingness to Teach First Year Courses

- Some faculty are willing to teach first year courses with some modifications or changes.
- Some faculty members seem unwilling to teach first year students even if conditions are ideal (e.g., because of current course load).
Themes: What should students learn in their first year of college?

- UNI Information: 44%
- Academic Skills: 37%
- Individual Development: 19%
Learn in First Year: Individual Development (44%; n=248)

- Personal responsibility/Time Management (n=103)
- Relational Development/Social Skills (n=30)
- Personal Development (n=85)
- Relationship Development/Social Skills (n=30)
Learn in First Year: Academic Skills (37%; n=204)

- Study habits (n=50)
- Ethics (n=13)
- Math Skills (n=10)
- Writing Skills (n=49)
- Critical Thinking Skills (n=58)
- Reading Skills (n=15)
- Problem Solving (n=9)
Learn in First Year: UNI Information (19%; n=104)

- LAC (n=42)
- Major (n=23)
- Use Resources on Campus (n=23)
- Community Involvement (n=16)
Teaching First Year Classes: Writing Activities (23%; n=183)

- Research Project (n=49)
- Writing (n=55)
- Reflections (n=53)
- Journals (n=26)
Teaching First Year Classes: Application Assignments (20%; n=165)

- Problem Based (n=68)
- Case Study (n=29)
- Simulation (n=26)
- Role Plays (n=27)
- Service Learning (n=15)
Teaching First Year Classes: Skill Based Assignments (30%; n=247)

- Demonstrations (n=41)
- Presentations (n=63)
- Skills Practice (n=44)
- Group Projects (n=84)
- Labs (n=15)
Teaching First Year Classes: Visual Activities (10%; n=77)

- Video (n=15)
- Viewing (n=21)
- Film analysis (n=41)
Teaching First Year Classes: Additional Categories

- Class Discussion (15%; n=120)
- Portfolios (2%; n=20)
UNI Weaknesses

- Existing Programs: 30%
- Communication Issues: 29%
- Lack of Coordination: 22%
- Academic Issues: 19%
Weaknesses: Existing Programs & Services (30%; n=98)

- Lack of strong advising (n=26) – inconsistent across programs
- Advising isn’t personal (n=6)
- More diversity (n=14)
- Poor Orientation Program (n=12)
- Recruitment and retention of minority students (n= 9)
- Low budget for international programs (n=5)
- Limited Resources (n=8)
- Need more tutors (n=5)
- Need more student social activities (n=13)
Weaknesses: Lack of coordination/lack of programs (19%; n=61)

- Should have first-year seminar (n=29)
- Need learning communities (n=5)
- Need to focus on loans and financial aspects of college (n=7)
- Limited help with transition issues (n=8)
- No continuity throughout the university (n=2)
- No academic track (n=10)
Weaknesses: Curriculum & Academic Issues (22%; n=71)

- LAC courses not current and up to date (n=9)
- LAC is not seen as relevant to students (n=8)
- Lack of LAC courses for freshmen (n=2)
- Large class sizes (n=13)
- Not enough classes for registration (n=7)
- Not enough focus on student responsibilities (including studying habits) (n=17)
- Low focus on essential skills (reading, writing, mathematics) (n=15)
Weaknesses: Communication Issues (29%; n=96)

- Poor Communication between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs (n=63)
- Faulty Awareness (n=24)
- UNI has more of high school appeal (image) (n=5)
- Promote education programs (n=4)
Items Needed to Better Prepare Faculty

- 22%: Number in First Year Courses
- 19%: First Year Only Classes
- 9%: Small Classes
- 6%: Time
- 4%: Seminars
- 3%: Forum
- 3%: Mentors
- 4%: Teaching Assistant
- 2%: Student Preparedness
- 8%: Faculty Development
- 1%: LAC faculty
Items Needed to Better Prepare Faculty

- LAC faculty: 3
- Faculty Development: 9
- Student Preparedness: 6
- First Year Only Classes: 8
- Time: 6
- Smaller Classes: 12
- Teaching Assistant: 41
- Mentors: 19
- Seminars: 40
- Forum: 46
- Number in First Year Courses: 17
Making FOE a Priority at UNI

- These findings will be sent to the committee in early January.
“General” Comments

- Wide range of topics covered (n=134 responses)
- Difficult to code
- Comments coded as positive or negative
- Thirty four percent (n=45) of the comments talked about positive things happening at UNI for first year students
- Thirty seven percent (n=50) of the comments talked about areas where UNI needed to improve
- Twenty-nine percent (n=39) of respondents indicated they had not contact with first year students
“General” Comments: Strengths

- Efforts made by faculty & staff
- Focus on learning
“General” Comments: Weaknesses

- Students feel disconnected to faculty
- Students need more knowledge/awareness about opportunities and programs
- Students lack study skills
- Inappropriate course selection
- Students have poor time management skills
- Large class size makes interaction difficult
- Transition from small town to large campus
Overall Conclusions: Strengths

- Faculty and Staff seem open to implementing first-year initiatives as a result of FoE.
- The desire for faculty and staff development regarding the first year is high.
- Current first-year faculty are using a wide variety of instructional strategies.
- There is a strong, shared perception of the value and existence of UNI as a student centered campus.
Concern with “non-academic” aspects (maturity, responsibility, etc.) of first-year students is consistently expressed by respondents.

There appears to be a need for more effective communication about the first year to students, faculty & staff.

The need for resources, organizational structures, and increased coordination is a clear concern.

The ability to provide smaller classes for the first year cuts across current concerns, as well as incentives.
Limitations

- Time constraints
- Some data was difficult to code as “outsiders” (e.g. “general comments” and “barriers” questions) and so inter-coder reliability was lower.
Open for Questions