

FYE Town Hall Meeting #1 (Faculty/Staff)

Date: Tuesday, April 10, 2012
12:30-1:30 p.m., Capitol Rooms
Individuals Present: approx. 40 members

MINUTES

Introductions of FYE Team (Nancy Parsons)
Thank You to FYE Review Committee Members
FYE Overview (Katrina Daytner)

FYE Charge #1 – Clarify and revise as necessary the goals of FYE

- Andy Borst overview - New FYE goals are better able to be assessed in the future, comprehensive approach to creating them as a committee
- Is the current FYE failing? If so, what metrics were used to assess this and how do we know what/how is it not working, and also what does success look like and how will they be assessed?
 - Collected data from FYE classes in fall 2011, less than 50% return rate, those numbers are not given directly in the report online currently, but that data was used as a basis for all the sub-committee reports and the committee's work
 - Reviewed the program to look at all aspects, rather than looking at it as a failure, but just to look at the current program and ascertain what we can do better in the future
- Can those reports be released?
 - Final report will include all of these materials
 - Some staff feel that it would be helpful to see what kind of data was utilized by the committee and help them better understand how we will assess the new program in the future and how the decisions were made
- Can you differentiate between the Guiding Principles, Assumptions, Goals, etc.? (suggestion that these are a bit "murky" and could have been clearer to make it easier to see what is going on in this area; more concise)
 - Guiding Principles were helped to craft the Goals
 - Free-flowing discussions to categorize the groups of outcomes determined through post-it note activity to brainstorm what we want FYE students to learn
 - Our Goals are broader overarching goals rather than specific objectives
- Is goal #6 the most important goal?
 - This was not a previous goal, so this is an addition to the new goals and is different from what we currently looked at in terms of goals; it is very important and deserves attention with our new goals
- Can retention can be measured? Can FYE have an impact on retention? What percentage of retention is responsible from FYE? Other aspects of human development will account for retention, so how will we know that FYE is actually doing anything?

- You cannot place FYE to be fully accountable for retention, but it helps with their adjustment to university which leads them to be likely to stay for their second year here
- How do you know whether or not FYE achieved its goal?
 - Through our learning objectives outlined, and through future assessment and looking at our goals in order to better revise them
- Some faculty would like a one-sentence description that students and parents can fully understand what FYE does.
 - This currently (and previously) exists – “to help students transition into WIU”
 - Our goals are consistent with what is happening throughout the country, as well as the National Resource Center

FYE Goal #2 – Examine and select FYE components to meet the goals of FYE

- Common Reading
 - Recommendation that we eliminate this from overwhelming data that majority of students are not reading it, nor are faculty assigning it
 - Comment: Not saying that we should keep this specific aspects, but also important to recognize that we have a “reading crisis” on our campus (undergrads and grad students) – anything we can do to support a reading culture would be great, and we need to acknowledge that there is a reading and writing problem on campus
- Peer Mentors
 - How would this work to fit students with the faculty members and the topic of the FYE course? → need to address the FYE course type first before addressing this question, returned to this after source discussion
 - Have peer mentors in the transition course, and potentially give options for the FYE GenEd professors to have Peer Mentors as well
 - Transition course would be more standardized so the Peer Mentors would be in that class most likely, over the GenEd
 - Could potentially have connections with UHDS to utilize PMs

FYE Goal #3 – Recommendations regarding the appropriate content for FYE courses

- Nancy outlined basic 2 models being proposed
 - 1-credit transition course (1x week for 16 weeks)
 - 1-credit transition course *plus* a smaller GenEd/Pre-professional course that is also FYE in that discipline to apply the skills learned in Transition Course
 - Individuals teaching these courses would go through training before teaching
 - Open to the possibility to increasing some freshman courses as other intro courses to become FYE (rather than currently right now only 3-credits are able to be FYE)
- Approximately ½ of the GenEd FYE courses will be gone under this new model – does this mean there will be an increase in class size in other areas? Will there be a decrease in instructors teaching?
 - Some of those faculty may be teaching the transition courses then
 - Course size may be altered in the future as well, some may go from 90 down to 50 in order to keep the faculty ACE load similar
- Will instructors now have to teach 3 transition courses to make up for this?

- Provost's Office has said there will be no reduction in faculty
- Differences in Unit A and Unit B faculty and the implications for these changes – decrease in Unit B positions?
 - Those positions are part of the departments, not FYE, but are expected to continue to fulfill demand for FYE
- Why does the current program not work?
 - Because of the overwhelming inconsistency in the way the program is working now and the components of the program (ie. some faculty not even talking about the transition aspects)
- Why are we changing the entire program if it is just an issue with what is being taught in the classes, not necessarily the structure of the program?
 - We will have a common syllabus for the FYE Transition Course, same textbook used for each class
 - Training used to be pretty extensive in the past, but it is currently not
 - Used to have GH299 as an add-on, but goals were not clear between classes
 - Some used to see the FYE course as *the* FYE program, but it is really part of a larger program
 - There is no “common experience” currently, even within the same department sometimes!
- Concern for losing the ability to help students learn how to write in a smaller class, which may be lost if faculty are not teaching as many of those FYE smaller classes
 - Proposed model is a more comprehensive approach to FYE
 - 1-credit hour class will be supported by the GenEd FYE smaller class, so that they are apply those skills within that discipline
 - Faculty will have the ability to teach the transition course if they would like, and also to further those skills within the discipline courses
 - Current program missing the requirement for students to get those basic skills
 - FYE Residence Seminars are overcrowded and UHDS cannot be the only members of the overall FYE program to be doing these parts of what we want students to learn; we want this to be part of the Transition course now to have a consistent experience
- Has the decision already been made about not having a Spring course?
 - All are recommendations that will be given to the Provost for decisions to be made, based on the work of the Review Committee and all reports, surveys, etc.
 - These minutes are being taken and will note concerns from the group here today
- There are a lot of students that need to take GenEd courses
 - WIU reluctant to hire brand new tenure track faculty – we need to be hiring professors more than we are currently in order to invest more in General Education
- Today's incoming students have more need than ever for a transition course. Have we thought about still doing a Fall and Spring FYE, and adding the transition course?
 - We looked at Fall vs Spring differences and many students and faculty noted that the Spring course was not as useful as the Fall because they already feel they have “transitioned” to WIU → key is to help them from the start of their college journey and focus on this aspect of transition
- What about students who are incoming in the Spring semester?

- We will offer the new course for those students in the Spring semester
- Will TAs be teaching some of these classes? Will they be taking a course on how to teach these classes? What kind of oversight will be provided? How many will we use?
 - One option is to use TAs, natural connection to College Student Personnel program due to their knowledge base on transition issues, potentially as a practicum experience
 - Not currently certain how many faculty members are going to volunteer to teach an transitions course, therefore we brought up the idea of TAs in the recommendations as another options to look at
- Work load concerns – Unit A and Unit B workloads flowing somewhere else?
- Do you anticipate seeing people having an ACE added on top of their “3-3’s” to teach the transition course?
 - We all should be engaging in the kinds of practices about writing and reading to provide these opportunities to staff and faculty
 - There are things we can do to have opportunities for work load opportunities
- Concerns if TAs or grad students will be teaching these courses but have not be fully trained in teaching
- We may have some faculty and staff who may jump at these chances
- This committee is trying to put forward a comprehensive commitment to our students’ success
- Did the Fall/Spring surveys focus on the academic transition? Concern for members in the room focusing on the social aspect only, not academics
- Concerned for the make-up of the transition course
 - Ex. Listening: how can we teach this in one hour in the transition course?
 - All of these are parts of the GenEds already, how can we cram it into this 1-credit course?
- Can we academically, with integrity, accomplish the goals of teaching all of these topics fully?
 - WIU is very unique by having 2 FYE GenEd courses
 - The topics chosen have been selected because of the vast majority of FYE courses across the country, and the development of FYE through the National Resource Center
 - Typical topics used in other schools, still to be looked at further by the committee next year before implementation
 - FYE is not the “magic pill” to fix all retention issues, all writing issues, etc. but instead to provide a basis for starting a repetitive component and consistent message across all FYE courses, so that all members of the university know specifically what is being taught in the transition course, and how those other areas can help become part of the comprehensive approach and further those skills taught in the transition course
- Concern for short-changing students by giving the message that students are going to learn these skills in one week only
- Perhaps we need to go back to the 2 FYE classes across the year, and just adding and 1 class to focus on the transition issues in the Fall only
 - Strong encouragement to re-look at the proposal and to consider keeping it the same but adding a transition course in the fall only
- How can we teach all of these things in 1 course?

- Again, we are only starting the students on their educational journey
- Students will not have all the skills they need within one year, otherwise why wouldn't students just graduate after 1 year of college?
- The FYE program sets them up for continued success in those areas
- Concern for the language used in the document
 - Could be "student will be better prepared to ___", rather than "student will ___"
- Opportunities for faculty to work with student services or other professionals?
 - Colleague Clusters proposed
 - Groups of staff, faculty, etc. to work together to put forward the concept of transition success from various standpoints

FYE Charge #4 – Recommendations regarding the use of advisors/tutors for FYE students

- How many new advisors will you anticipate needing to be hired for this?
 - Current advising loads already over the top (case loads of 700+ students)
 - We would need to hire substantially more advisors across the board
 - How can you depend on volunteer advising?
 - Strong concern for advising recommendations put forth from the report, some feel this is going to be a major problem
 - Increased in workload should be ACE'd if it is assigned
 - Mentoring will not make up for the advising load
 - Compensation not seen as PAA points by some advisors
 - De-professionalizing what advisors do with this mentoring component
 - Grads as advisors may not be the best option, some in the room are not comfortable with this due to concern that they do not have enough experience in advising
- Concern for commuter first year students at WIU as well
- Transfer students another area to look at in the future – how can we support them with their transition?

Adjourned at 1:55pm