

# First-Year Seminar @ UW Colleges

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Engaging Students in the First Year Initiative

# First-Year Seminar (LEC 100)

- The First-Year Seminar will help students develop a sense of responsibility for their own education and learning, introduce students to the skills necessary for academic and life success, provide students with an understanding of their membership in an academic community, instill in students an appreciation for a liberal arts education and a joy for learning, and develop a capacity for self-reflection and improvement. Because these achievements are best realized within an intellectually substantive context, **each seminar instructor will incorporate a subject of inquiry of his or her choice for students to explore as they develop strategies for academic success.**

# Course Goals

- To promote active learning as well as student involvement and responsibility in the learning process.
- To assist students in the development of life management skills.
- To engage students on the campus.

# Benefits of First-Year Seminar

## ● Students

- Higher grades
- Higher persistence rate
- Sense of community
  - With other students
  - With instructor
- Navigate campus resources
- Transferable elective credit

## ● Instructors

- New way to interact with students
- Opportunity to teach outside regular disciplinary curriculum
- Can enhance regular professional work
- Stipend (\$1200 for teaching one section of LEC 100)

# Course Configurations

- **Linked**
  - Students take a particular section of First-Year Seminar in conjunction with another class or group of classes. The First-Year Seminar content is directly related to the content of the other class(es).
- **Stand-alone**
  - Students can take a section of First-Year Seminar regardless of what other classes they're taking.

# Linked Classes

- Linked with one class
  - Students must be concurrently enrolled in a course or in a specific course section in order to enroll in the First-Year Seminar section.
- Cluster model (learning community)
  - The First-Year Seminar course is part of a cluster of classes which enrolls the same group of students in all related courses. The First-Year Seminar may serve as a linking course for IS credit.



# Stand-alone Classes

- Target particular audiences
- Address specific needs
- Support career or major exploration
- Respond to campus initiatives

# Examples of Syllabi

- Linked

- Harris
- Hoeft/Chick
- Ahrenhoerster et al
- Whitaker
- Malay/Schneider

- Stand-alone

- Seals
- Stalder/Taylor
- Gonya
- Zillgitt
- Beck

- Other

- Tharp/Lee
- Dresser

# Developing a Program

- Identify campus needs
  - ESFY-related committee
    - Student affairs perspective
    - Academic perspective
    - Student perspective
  - External surveys and research
    - Foundations of Excellence
    - Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)
    - Equity Scorecard

# Developing a Program (cont.)

- Campus-specific initiatives
  - Common reading
  - TRIO program
  - Honors program
- Draw on faculty and staff interest
  - What are you passionate about in your field?
  - What have students expressed in interest in?
  - What would have interested you as a first-year student?

# Example of a Program

- Sources of Information
  - Personal experience
  - Noel Levitz
  - Admissions data (top 5 majors)
  - First-Year Initiative Survey<sup>®</sup>
  - Foundations of Excellence<sup>®</sup>

## Example of a Program (cont.)

- Goals:
  - Provide opportunities for students to develop and explore their own goals and concerns, especially in relation to careers
  - Connect students with other campus initiatives (e.g., service-learning, common campus reading, student organizations and activities, etc.)
  - Develop new learning communities
  - Provide supplemental instruction or other support for courses with high DFWI rates
  - Help all students be more successful

# Promoting First-Year Seminar

- Campus-wide effort
  - What do you want this course to do or be for your students? How can you communicate this to your students?
- Posters
- Brochures
- Summer Registration program
- Website

















