The point of retention efforts is not merely that individuals be kept in college. Education, the social and intellectual development of individuals, rather than just their continued presence on campus should be the goal of retention efforts.

Vincent Tinto, 1993
The First Year Experience at Ohio University -
Where are We Now, Where are We Going?

AGENDA

- 1. Welcome and Introductions - Lora Clapp
- 3. How We Assess the First-Year (FY) Experience - Mike Williford and Joni Wadley
- 4. Role of Learning Communities - Wendy Merb-Brown
- 5. College First-Year Reports - Assistant Dean or College Representative
- 6. Other First-Year Activity Reports
- 7. Where Do We Go From Here? - Open discussion
Enhance Faculty Development related to First Year Teaching (p 6)

Approve an FYE Philosophy Statement (p 8)

Implement an FYE Assessment Plan (p 8)

Develop and deploy a web-based student handbook (p 9)

Grow Learning Communities (p 11)

Continue to implement strategies to reduce high risk drinking (p 11)
Expand attrition intervention programs (p 11)

Increase the availability of Supplemental Instruction (p 11)

Expand the Common Reading Program (p 12)

Enhance coordination of communication to admitted students and families (p 12)

Identify incoming First Generation (FG) Students (p 15)

Create a Diversity Clearinghouse of diversity programs available on campus (p 17)

[A “Green” designation means either that the item is complete or that significant progress has occurred and positive momentum continues]
Appoint a Director or Office of First Year Student Success (p 7)

Assess Academic Advising and Review Alternatives (p 7)

Establish campus wide consensus that FYE is foundational part of university identity (p 8)

Define the term "At Risk" related to student retention; develop targeted programs (p 8)

Develop an Academic Honesty Program (p 9)

Increase the number of African American, Latino American, Asian American, and Native American Alumni and Visiting Professionals on Campus (p 10)
Fund the Majors Fair with Base Funding (p 12)

Incorporate Learning Goals & Outcomes on Tier 1 & 2 Course Syllabi (p 13)

Implement a mandatory exit interview for students departing prior to graduation (p 14)

Require Individual Advising of First Year Students (p 14)

Raise Faculty Visibility at Precollege/Summer Orientation (p 14)
Develop a central point of contact to respond to parent/family issues (p 15)

Incorporate First Year program funding into base budgets and create tracking and aggregation ability (p 15)

Ensure the new SIS system can create a "Student Success Profile" (p 15)

Increase awareness of campus community expectations (p 16)

[A “Yellow” designation means that some progress has been made on this item, but work remains]
Improve campus environment for High Achieving Women Students (p 9)

Create a campus wide first-year student website (p 10)

Design a Faculty Reward Structure for First Year Teaching, Advising & Research (p13)

Create a "Foundations Tier" to supplement the existing General Education Tiers (p 13)

Increase small size first year classes (p 13)

Distribute "A Family Guide to Academic Advising" to parents and family members attending Summer Orientation (p 16)

Create a Diversity Requirement as part of the first year experience (p 17)

[A “Red” designation means that this item remains largely unchanged since the task force report was written]
Learning Community Programs
LCs at Ohio University

Fall, 1999 – PILOT Two communities, 40 students

2000-01 – Six communities, 93 students

2001-02 – Nine communities, 148 students

2002-03 – Ten communities, 140 students

2003-04 – Fourteen communities, 239 students

Fall 2004 – Sixteen communities, 279 students

Fall 2005 – 38 communities, 638 participants

Fall 2006 – 57 communities, 1026 participants

Fall 2007 – 115 communities, 1925 participants

Fall 2008 – 142 communities, 2177 participants
LC retention, overall

![Graph showing LC retention, overall. The graph displays data from 2003 to 2007. The red line represents participants, and the yellow line represents non-participants. The overall trend shows a slight decrease in retention over the years.](image-url)
LC GPA, overall

![Graph showing GPA trends for participants and non-participants from 2003 to 2007.](image)
Why did you participate in a learning community? (marked all that applied)

- Required of my college: 36%
- Parents told me to: 24%
- College advisor recommended it: 21%
- Housing/residence hall placement: 13%
- For the classes: 13%
- Make friends/meet people: 13%
- Study groups: 7%
LC evaluation results, cont.
(n 1737, strongly agreed/agreed)

- Being in a learning community helped me to meet other students 91.7%
- I have gotten to know the students within my LC 89.8%
- My LC experience has been a rewarding one 82.2%
- I am glad that I participated in a learning community 81.9%
- Being in a learning community has been a positive experience 87.3%
- Being in a learning community has helped me understand resources and services on campus 87.2%
- I have participated in out-of-class activities with my LC 84.7%
- I sat with my fellow LC members in our linked courses 83.9%
- I have studied for classes with other members of my LC 74.6%
- I would recommend a learning community to an incoming first-year student 84.4%
College-specific data

- Last college enrolled vs. entry college
- Movement into/out of colleges
- UNC model
  - Before required, probation rates 15% after fall, now under 9% for two years
  - Retention increased from 72% to 79%
What’s next?

- Targeted growth
- Greater emphasis on peer mentor and instructor roles
- “Enhancements”
College First-Year Reports

Visit [http://www.ohio.edu/fye](http://www.ohio.edu/fye) to view college summaries.
What category best suits you?

A. Student Affairs
B. Academic support
C. Academic college office
D. Faculty
How long have you worked at Ohio University?

A. Less than 5 years
B. 6 to 10 years
C. 11 to 15 years
D. 16 to 20 years
E. 21 to 25 years
F. Forever (I can’t count that high!)
College First-Year Reports

Visit http://www.ohio.edu/fye to view college summaries.
My college requires advisors to meet first-year students...

A. Every quarter – they can’t get their DARS without a one-on-one meeting
B. Every quarter – in a group setting
C. Fall quarter only, students must see an advisor – after that, it varies
D. Every quarter, students can get their DARS on a faculty members’ door
E. I don’t work in an academic college
College First-Year Reports

Visit http://www.ohio.edu/fye to view college summaries.
When programming for first-year students, we should target

A. Our best applicants! Our energies are focused on retaining and working with top students.

B. Our worst students! We need to bring-up those who aren’t meeting their potential.

C. Our “average” students! They have the potential to be great.

D. All students – although that stretches our resources, we have to do for all!
College First-Year Reports

Visit http://www.ohio.edu/fye to view college summaries.
Where shall we, as people interested in FYE, focus our energies?

A. Resources are limited so we should work on our current practices to make them better

B. If we don’t plan for several years ahead, we might not be prepared
Visit http://www.ohio.edu/fye to view college summaries.
What is the number of first-year students at Ohio University (according to IR’s website)?

A. 3964  
B. 3971  
C. 3985  
D. 4050  
E. 4115
College First-Year Reports

Visit http://www.ohio.edu/fye to view college summaries.
What instrument is used to by IR to measure student engagement?

A. CIRP  
B. NSSE  
C. SRI  
D. FIS  
E. YFYC  
F. Facebook
College First-Year Reports

Visit [http://www.ohio.edu/fye](http://www.ohio.edu/fye) to view college summaries.
Do you have a Facebook profile?

A. Yes, and I am on regularly
B. Yes, but I try to limit my time on it
C. Yes, but only to check on students
D. No, that is for students only
E. What's Facebook?
College First-Year Reports

Visit http://www.ohio.edu/fye to view college summaries.
What is the overall percentage of first-year students on academic probation after the Fall, 2008?

A. 8.5  
B. 9.7  
C. 10.1  
D. 11.3  
E. 14.2
College First-Year Reports

Visit http://www.ohio.edu/fye to view college summaries.
How do you typically correspond with your FY students?

A. Appointments (face-to-face)
B. Telephone
C. E-mail
D. Letter (snail mail)
E. Text messaging
Visit http://www.ohio.edu/fye to view college summaries.
Are you satisfied with your unit’s efforts with first year students?

A. Yes, we are doing all we can
B. Yes, we could do more but don’t have the resources
C. No, we can never do enough
D. No, we are not trying hard enough
E. We don’t know – looks like we need greater assessment!
University College Learning Communities and UC 115

[The inside story . . .]
“Before”

- Fall 2006: University College had 1099 entering first year students (including transfer students under 30 credit hours)
- Students self selected into four different first year experiences
  - 26% took UC 115 as part of a UC LC
  - 45% did not take UC 115 or a UC LC
  - 1% did a LC, but without UC 115
  - 28% took UC 115 as a stand-alone class
“After”

- Fall 2007: University College had 1062 entering first year students (including transfer students under 30 credit hours)
- Vast majority of students had one common experience
  - 88% took UC 115 as part of a UC LC
  - 9% did not take UC 115 or a UC LC (mostly transfers)
  - 2% did a LC, but without UC 115
  - 1% took UC 115 as a stand-alone class
Changes to UC 115 that occurred along with shift to requiring LCs

- Limited the class to “undecided” students only
- Revised syllabus, assignments, learning outcomes
- Adopted a new textbook
- Began paying instructors
- Enhanced instructor support:
  - Two day summer workshop, improved Instructors Manual, Blackboard site, other resources
- Improved course evaluations instruments for students and instructors
### Effect of Change on Fall Quarter First Year Student Probation Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th># of Students on Probation</th>
<th>University College Probation Rate</th>
<th>University Wide Probation Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2006</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2007</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Effect of Change on GPA and Retention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LC/no UC 115</th>
<th>LC &amp; UC 115</th>
<th>UC 115 Alone</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2006</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>1099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2007</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>932</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>1062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cum GPA Fall 06</strong></td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cum GPA Fall 07</strong></td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Retention Fall 06 to Fall 07</strong></td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Retention Fall 07 to Fall 08</strong></td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Campus Wide Retention
UC 115 Instructor also serving as Academic Advisor

- Fall 2007 cohort: Instructor and Advisor is same person: retention rate = 82%
- Fall 2007 cohort: Instructor and Advisor are different: retention rate = 78%
- For Fall 2008, we increased the number of students in teaching/advising sections from 30% to 60%
Summary of Advantages of Requiring Learning Communities with UC 115 for Undecided First Year Students

- Enhanced Academic Success (higher GPA’s, lower probation)
- Increased student commitment to OHIO (higher retention)
- Improved student engagement in some areas (per 2008 NSSE)
- Increased speed and confidence of students in choosing a major (fewer sophomores in UNC)
- Happier parents: they see we have a structure & plan in place to receive their student
- Smoother running Summer Orientation: students pick a Learning Community and 1 or 2 other classes and are done
Allen Student Help Center

We offer:
- Guidance for students who are academically lost or who are struggling with multiple concerns and aren't sure whom to ask
- Walk-in study skills assistance
- Academic success workshops
- Walk-in or appointment-based services
Where do we go from here?