University College First Year Student Summary 2009-2010

1. After much discussion, University College decided in Fall Quarter 2007 to require all incoming first year students to join a University College Learning Community (UC LC). Our goals were to:
   - Enhance the academic success of our first year students
   - Increase student commitment to Ohio University
   - Create a more intentional and consistent first year experience
   - Ensure that all of our students are well supported during their transition to the university community
   - Assist our students in declaring a major in a timely manner

Students beginning in winter and spring quarters are also required to enroll in either a UC LC or in UC 115, both models include an instructor and peer mentor. In Fall 2008, we required all new transfer students with fewer than 30 credit hours to enroll in a UC LC. This fall, we developed a policy regarding students who drop their UC 115 or 190 course, although the number of students who do this is minuscule.

2. After reviewing the retention and advising literature and several Institutional Research assessment documents, the college developed a model in which the UC 115 instructor also serves as students’ academic advisor. In Fall 2009, 66% of UC students were advised by an individual instructing their UC 115 course. Students remain with that academic advisor for the entire first year. Advisors who are also instructors report richer relationships with their students and more opportunities to help students. Our goal is to increase to 75% in Fall 2010.

   • All first-year and new transfer students are required to meet with their advisors at least once a quarter for their first year on campus. Students who relocate from a regional campus are required to meet with their advisor during their first quarter on the Athens campus.

   • University College has a Transfer/Relocate Student Peer Mentor PACE position funded for 2009-10. The goal is to provide opportunities for new transfer and relocating students to become connected to the university community, something previous transfer and relocate students surveyed said was difficult to do. The mentor has provided guidance for a redesigned “Relocating to the Athens Campus” Website, which is currently in production. The mentor also meets with transfer students who are on probation to provide support and guidance beyond that given by the students’ advisors.

3. The college’s FYE committee and its Director of Communication worked together to develop new materials for prospective and newly admitted students. Each piece of presentation now includes the college’s slogan, “Laying the Foundation for Student Success.” Also, borrowing from the College of Education and the College of Arts and Sciences, the FYE committee designed a new advisor/advising piece to be used at orientation.
4. In June 2009, we held the “Sophomore Send-Off” an event designed to reunite students with their learning community peers, instructors, and peer mentors. At the event we celebrate students’ achievements in their first-year and welcomed them back for their sophomore year. This spring, we hope to pilot a college-wide service learning project.

5. Working with the Coordinator of Placement Testing, Greg Oberlin, the FYE committee proposed a new method for placement test registration. This has streamlined how students take the math placement exam. The Director of Communication, Tanya Barnett, also developed a new placement page, which brings together information about all the different placement/exemption exams students may take. This will be live soon, once all departments have reviewed the page.

6. Beginning in summer quarter 2007, the Summer Transition Program (STP) was designed for students who are conditionally admitted to the university to begin in summer quarter. Students are required to attend 1st summer session and enroll in specific Tier 1 and Tier 2 courses, as well as UC 110 and UC 190. Of the 21 students who began in summer 2009, 17 are currently enrolled and 13 are in good academic standing.