



NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

The Trusted Expert and Internationally Recognized Leader
for all Postsecondary Student Transitions

National Research and Trends on The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition

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Overview

- Talk a bit about:
 - Definitional parameters
 - Background of FYE, SIT, & National Resource Center
 - National Research and Trends
 - Current challenges & looking ahead
- Data Sources from the National Resource Center
 - 2012-2013 National Survey of First-Year Seminars
 - 2011 National Survey of Senior Capstone Experiences
 - 2008 National Survey of Sophomore-Year Initiatives
 - *Journal of the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition*
- Other data (JNGI, AAC&U, CERI, & ACT)

Introduction

DEFINITIONS AND BACKGROUND

Let's be sure to begin at the beginning...



Before we get too far down the path...

- When does “the first-year experience” begin?
- Our answer is complicated by the highly integrated nature of the educational system.
 - Early outreach
 - Community relationships
 - Transfer students (lateral, reverse, “swirling”)
 - Dual enrollment programs
 - Admissions

...and...

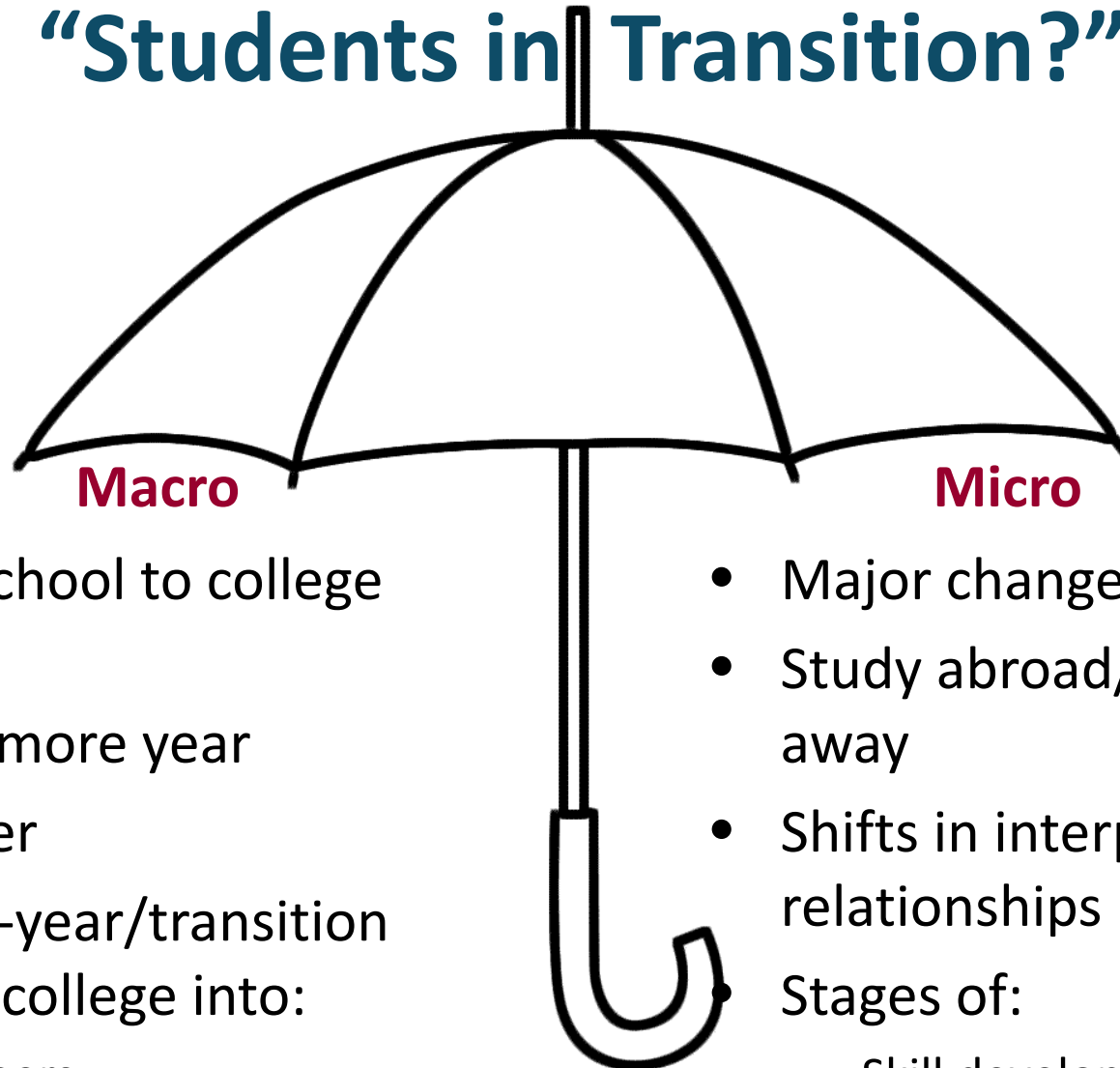
- What do we mean when we say “first-year experience”?
 - Comprehensive
 - Intentional
 - Integrated
 - Flexible
 - Systemic
 - Organizationally horizontal
 - Student centered

FYE: A Working Definition

“The first-year experience is not a single program or initiative, but rather an intentional combination of academic and co-curricular efforts within and across postsecondary institutions.”

(Koch & Gardner, 2006)

“Students in Transition?”



- High school to college (FYE)
- Sophomore year
- Transfer
- Senior-year/transition out of college into:
 - Careers
 - Graduate school

- Major change
 - Study abroad/study away
 - Shifts in interpersonal relationships
- Stages of:
- Skill development
 - Identity

FYE&SIT: Foundations and Beginnings



- Student activism and a riot at the University of South Carolina in Spring 1970
- University 101 was created by President Thomas Jones
- Strong social justice undertones
- Teach students to “love” the university



FYE&SIT: A History

1982: First "National Conference on the Freshman Seminar/ Freshman Orientation Course Concept" held at USC



1986 -1999: John N. Gardner, served as executive director of the National Resource Center

1989: *Journal of The Freshman Year Experience* introduced

1991: Center name changed to the National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience

1994: Website created
First-Year Experience listserv (FYE-List) established

1980

1990

1983: Annual conference series on The Freshman Year Experience begins

1986: National Center for the Study of The Freshman Year Experience established

First "International Conference on The First-Year Experience" held in the UK

1988: First monograph and FYE newsletter published

First National Survey on Freshman Seminar Programs conducted

First Canadian-American Conference on The First-Year Experience held in Toronto

1990: National campaign to recognize Outstanding Freshman Advocates begins

1993: First Conference on the Senior-Year Experience



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FYE&SIT: A History

1997: Senior Year Experience listserv (SYE-List) established



Stuart Hunter becomes the second Director of the National Resource Center

1999: Transfer Year Experience listserv (TYE-List) established
Center founder, John Gardner, retires and named Senior Fellow

2001: Joint international conference held with Pacific Rim Conference on the First Year in Higher Education

2004: Sophomore Year listserv (SOPH-List) established

2006: 25th Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience

2000

1995: First National Conference on Students in Transition

Assisted Queensland University of Technology in launching Pacific Rim Conference on the First Year in Higher Education

1998: Center name changes to National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition

2000: First Year Assessment listserv (FYA-list) established

2003: Launch of an electronic newsletter, *E-Source for College Transitions*

2005: Establishment of Paul P. Fidler Research Grant
First National Survey of Sophomore-Year Initiatives conducted



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FYE&SIT: A History



2008: 2nd National Survey of Sophomore-Year Initiatives conducted

Jennifer R. Keup becomes the third Director of the National Resource Center

National Resource Center receives 2008 ASHE Special Merit Award



2010: Launch of online courses
National Award for Excellence in Teaching First-Year Seminars established

National Resource Center awarded a Spencer grant to study the impact of first-year seminars on student outcomes

2012: 25th International Conference on The First-Year Experience

Administration of the 9th National Survey of First-Year Seminars

Release of the five-volume book series, *The First-Year Seminar: Designing, Implementing, and Assessing Courses to Support Student Learning and Success*

2010

2014

2007: Annual First-Year Experience Conference
Undergraduate Student Fellowships established
Stuart Hunter named Executive Director of University 101 Programs and the National Resource Center

2009: Graduate Student Transitions listserv (GRAD-List) established
Helping Sophomores Succeed: Understanding and Improving the Second-Year Experience published with Jossey-Bass
Launch of *The Toolbox*, an online professional development newsletter

2011: 30th Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience

2013: Administration of the 2nd National Survey of Peer Leaders

25th Volume of the *Journal of the First-Year Experience & Student in Transition* published



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National Resource Center: Mission

“Building upon its **history of excellence** as the **founder and leader of the first-year experience movement**, the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition serves education professionals by **supporting and advancing efforts to improve student learning and transitions into and through higher education.**”

National Resource Center: Core Commitments

- The importance of student transitions
- Connection between research and practice
- Inclusion
- Collaboration
- Lifelong learning

National Resource Center:

Areas of Activity

- Conferences & Continuing Education
 - Conferences
 - Institutes
 - Online courses
- Publications
 - Scholarly practice books
 - *Journal of The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition*
 - Research Reports
 - Guides

National Resource Center:

Areas of Activity

- Research, Grants, & Assessment
 - Clearinghouse
 - Original research
 - Grants
- Online resources
 - Listservs
 - Social media
 - Interactive databases

National Research & Trends

TODAY'S COLLEGE STUDENTS

**What are words you would use
to describe today's college
students?**



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youthentitled
 selfishlucky
 TechSavvy
 spoiled
 young
 ok
 learning
 future
 self-absorbed
 kids
 generation
 time new
 dreamers
 unemployment
 disrespectful
 children

Beloit College Mindset

- “They are the sharing generation, having shown tendencies to share everything.”
- “Having a ‘chat’ has seldom involved talking.”
- “Thanks to Megan’s Law and Amber Alerts, parents have always had community support in keeping children safe.”
- “With GPS, they have never needed directions to get someplace, just an address.”
- “They have never really needed to go to their friend’s house so they could study together.”
- Their parents’ car CD player is so embarrassing.”

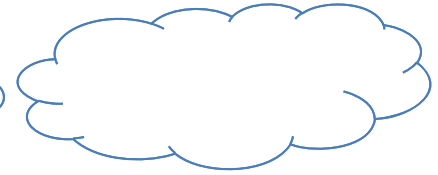
Legacy of “No Child Left Behind”

- Students arrive to HS with **little instruction in subjects** that aren't tested
- “Most tests being used consist primarily or solely of **multiple choice** items.” Thus students arriving in HS **lack “experience and knowledge about how to do the kinds of writing** that are expected at higher levels of education.”
- Grading rubrics are often concerned with **content and not argument**, which “works against development of the kinds of writing that would be expected in a true college-level course.”

Not as Homogeneous as this Suggests

- Adult learners
- Veterans
- Transfers and “swirlers”
- Diversity along race, ethnicity, national origin, and first-language
- Working and financially needy students
- Physical, emotional, and learning ability levels
- Gender balance
- Academic preparation
- **Others?**

Food for Thought ...



- “Educators need to identify how their programs, policies, and pedagogies capitalize on the multiple perspectives that...college students bring with them—perspectives that contribute to the total campus environment.” *(Keup, 2008)*
- Balance between acknowledging the individual student and forging a community culture
- How to remain flexible for personality profile of the next generation



April 4 - 6, 2014
University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina

Institute for the Success of Student Veterans

The First-Year Experience Monograph Series No. 34

Fulfilling the Promise of the COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Increasing First-Year Student Engagement and Success

Thomas Brown, Margaret C. King, and Patricia Stanley, Editors

The First-Year Experience Monograph Series No. 34

TRANSFER STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
 Building Foundations for Policies, Programs, and Services That Foster Student Success

Mark Allen Poisel and Sonya Joseph, Editors

National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience® & Students in Transition
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 2011

Institute on

July 25-27, 2014
 Asheville, North Carolina

FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

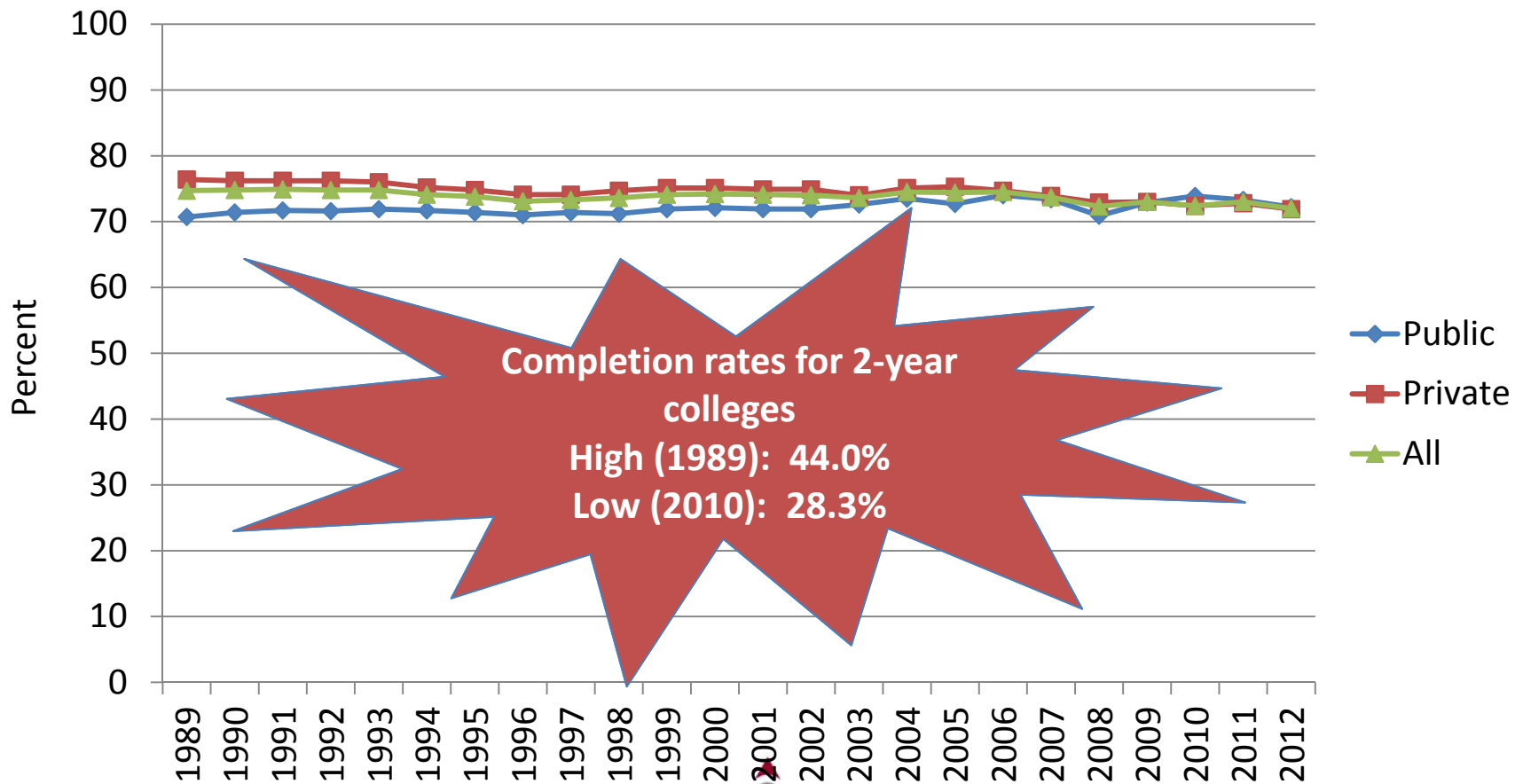
BOOK SERIES ON SPECIAL POPULATIONS

The National Resource Center is **currently accepting proposals for book-length manuscripts examining the transition experiences of college student populations that have been historically underserved or given limited consideration** in the design of higher education contexts. Each volume will explore the experiences of a specific population in depth **and draw on the theoretical, research, and practice literature to critically examine some of the fundamental assumptions underlying student success initiatives** in higher education with **an eye toward reshaping campus culture, policies, and practices** to support the learning and development of the population under study.

National Research & Trends

RETENTION AGENDA

National First-to-Second-Year Retention Rates at Four-Year Colleges



And yet, we are still invested...

- The word “retention” was found **95** times in the program for the 32nd Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience
 - **59** times in the program for the 25th Annual International Conference on the First-Year Experience
- Metric that is required for reporting
- Goal to “**increase the proportion of Americans with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60% by the year 2025**” –*Lumina Foundation*
- Income and employment options are directly related to level of education

Common Goal of Undergraduate Initiatives

Goal of “improved retention/graduation rates”	Percent
First-year seminars	89
Early alert warning systems	89
Learning communities	83
Orientation	82
Bridge programs	75
Undergraduate research	49
Service-learning	31

A National Study



Enhancing Student Success and Retention

Throughout Undergraduate Education



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Retention was not the primary purpose for the renaissance of the first-year seminar and other student success initiatives for the first year.



Persistence

- Persistence: [verb] “to continue steadfastly or firmly in some state, purpose, course of action, or the like, **especially in spite of opposition, remonstrance**, etc.”
- Questions:
 - Should this be the primary goal?
 - Does this actually measure progress?
 - Does it actually limit the scope of our thinking and work with the FYE&SIT?
 - Does it have a “shelf-life”?

Beyond Retention: Theory



“While many [theories] have seen the role of first-year and transition programs as solely focused on retaining the student, these programs should have a greater influence on setting the tone for what it means to be an educated individual and the responsibilities that come with gaining a postsecondary education.”

(Torres & LePeau, 2013)





Beyond Retention: Methods

“Student persistence, or retention to the sophomore year, and academic achievement...are common measures [and] are of great importance as metrics for student success [but] learning outcomes desirable for all college students, such as written and oral communication, information literacy, problem solving, civic engagement, and intercultural and global understanding are also worthy of study.”

(Kinzie, 2013)





Beyond Retention: Practice

“The almost singular focus on retention and graduation rates as...student success is inadequate, [there must be] a revised definition grounded in student learning outcomes.”

“Definitions of student success must include not only retention and graduation rates, but also a wide range of student learning and developmental outcomes.”

(Reason & Gansemer-Topf, 2013)



National Research and Trends

STUDENT OUTCOMES

TO WHAT END?



“Excuse me,” said Alice, “how do I get out of here?”

“That depends a great deal on where you want to end up” said the cat.

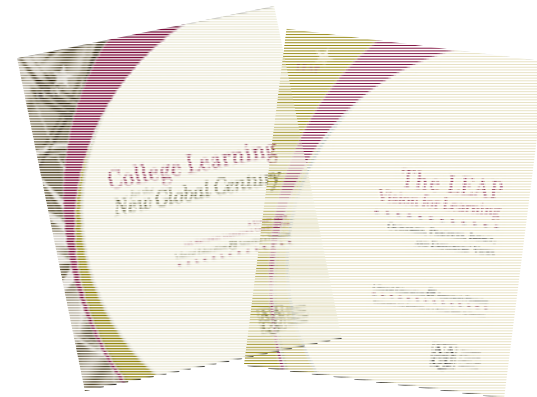
“I don’t care where I end up,” said Alice, “I just want out!”

“Well,” said the cat, “if it doesn’t matter where you end up, it doesn’t matter which road you take.”

Carroll, 1865

21st Century: Learning Outcomes

- Knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world
- Intellectual and practical skills
- Personal and social responsibility
- Integrative learning



Metacompetencies for Employability

- Build & sustain working professional relationships
- Analyze, evaluate, and interpret data from various sources
- Engage in continuous learning
- Oral communication and persuasion
- Project planning and management



Gardner, 2009

Metacompetencies for Employability

- Ability to create new knowledge
- Understand the impact of company practices in a global setting
- Build a successful team
- Coach, mentor, & develop others
- Initiative



Gardner, 2010

Domains for FYE Outcomes

- Retention
- Academic skills/experiences
- Campus connection
- Interpersonal skills
- Personal development
- Civic engagement/democratic citizenship
- Employability

Examples of FYE Outcomes

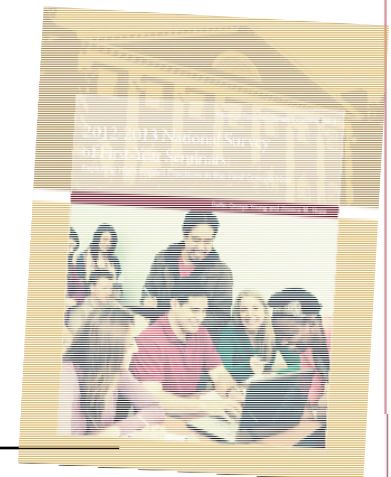
- Retention
 - Persistence to the second year
 - Graduation rates
- Academic skills/experiences
 - Analytical & critical thinking skills
 - Development of educational career goals
 - Declaring a major
 - Knowledge integration & application
 - Academic engagement
 - Academic achievement
 - Cognitive complexity
 - Study skills
 - Introduction to a discipline
- Campus connection
 - Knowledge of university requirements
 - Ability to identify, seek, & use organizational resources
 - Connection to campus community
 - Understanding history & traditions
 - Involvement in cocurricular activities
 - Satisfaction with student experience
- Interpersonal skills
 - Conflict resolution
 - Written & oral communication skills
 - Development of a social support network
 - Multicultural competence

Examples of FYE Outcomes

- Personal development
 - Time management
 - Identity exploration & development
 - Values clarification
 - Practical competence
 - Life management skills
 - Physical health
 - Emotional wellness
 - Moral and ethical development
 - Leadership skills
- Civic engagement/democratic citizenship
 - Participation in service
 - Engagement in philanthropy
 - Political awareness/engagement
 - Political activism/social advocacy
 - Community involvement
- Employability
 - Analyzing a problem from various sources
 - Innovation and creation of new knowledge
 - Providing direction through interpersonal persuasion
 - Ability to integrate ideas and information
 - Applying knowledge to a real-world setting
 - Ability to coach and mentor others
 - Project planning and management
 - Engage in continuous learning
 - Desirability as a candidate
 - Initiative
 - Ethical decision-making
 - Professionalism
 - Ability to build a team
- Others?



Objectives for First-Year Seminars	Percentage
Develop a connection with the institution	44.9
Provide orientation to campus resources & services	37.8
Develop academic skills	36.3
Develop critical thinking skills	23.3
Create common first-year experience	21.6
Develop study skills	20.0
Self-exploration or personal development	17.0
Develop support network or friendships	14.5
Improve second-year return rates	14.5
Increase student-faculty interaction	12.4
Develop writing skills	11.6



Objectives for Senior Capstones

Percentage

Critical thinking/analytical skills	42.2
Ability to conduct research	27.6
Career preparation	25.0
Professional development	23.5
Proficiency written communication	22.8
Ability to perform independently	18.7
Appreciation of the discipline	17.5
Proficiency oral communication	14.9

