

THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

THE FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE

A MODEL FOR
THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT:
A STIMULUS FOR DISCUSSION

DRAFT

ENROLLMENT
MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
STUDENT SATISFACTION
AND SUCCESS COMMITTEE
2008

THE FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE

BACKGROUND

During 2007-2008, events transpired to raise interest in the development of a First Year Experience Model at UVM. At their January retreat, The Senior Leadership overwhelmingly agreed that the development of a First Year Experience Model should be one of UVM's new key strategic initiatives. The University Planning Council articulated this goal in the new strategic plan: "Give every first and senior year undergraduate the opportunity to take courses and engage in co-curricular activities that facilitate successful transitions into and out of college life" (University of Vermont Strategic Plan 2009-2013: Sustaining the Advance).

The literature on first-year experience programs shows that successful models provide a sense of belonging at the institution, support the transition to college, and promote critical thinking. "Research on the effects of first-year programs points overwhelmingly to their positive impact on students including: comfort level and quality of interaction with professors, adjustment to the college experience, self-discipline and motivation, spiritual lives, moral and social values, and multicultural understanding." (Upcraft et al, 2005, p. 182)

The Strategic Enrollment Management Council's subcommittee on Student Success and Satisfaction (focusing on long-term strategies) was charged with developing a proposal and corresponding recommendations. Several UVM reports (Final Report on FYSE, 1995; Barefoot Consultant Report, 2000) had been written about this topic in the past by leaders both internal and external to the university. The rich information and critical thought previously provided were significant contributions to the best thinking about the First Year Experience at UVM. With the literature and more current information, they serve as the basis for this report.

VISION AND GOALS

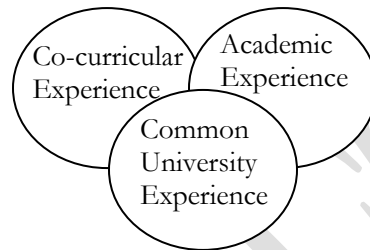
The vision and purpose of a first-year experience model at UVM is to create a holistic experience for first-year students that optimize their ability to transition to college, succeed academically and fully engage in the University and surrounding communities. Retaining first-year students into their second year is a primary, measureable outcome with the specific objective in 2008 being an increase from 85.5% to 90% in five years. For purposes of clarity, we define the first year as the time period between when a student is first admitted into the University until the end of that academic year. We do not include transfer students in this definition since their admittance date can vary widely and orientation experience is also different than the typical first-time first year student. We also have inventoried those activities that begin at Admitted Student Visits until the end of the first year. The Strategic Enrollment Council will be providing a comprehensive inventory of those activities that occur between admittance and Admitted Student Visits.

Based upon the research that encourages a holistic approach to the first-year experience, current efforts/initiatives at UVM have been categorized into academic, co-curricular, and common

university experiences. This set of experiences serve as a framework to accurately describe and inventory current efforts and gaps in the first-year experience of UVM students.

CURRENT EFFORTS

UVM's first year activities can be organized in three basic themes that at some points may intersect. These are illustrated in the diagram below. Each theme (Common University Experience, Academic Experience, Co-curricular Experience) is described, each with goals, objectives and highlights of an inventory.. Corresponding charts, found in the appendices, give greater breadth and depth to each theme as they attempt to capture the breadth of first year students' experiences.



Common University Experience

We define the Common University Experiences as those events that are either required or highly encouraged for all first year students to attend. These events attempt to convey what it means to be a successful student at The University of Vermont.

The overarching goal: Students are introduced to the mission, values, community, and signatures of excellence UVM uniquely offers. Students consider themselves active members of a proud, unique UVM community committed to shared values and expectations, both academic and behavioral. Students believe that they matter.

Specific objectives: Student should...

- Be welcomed into the University Community
- Receive an introduction to institutional values such as Our Common Ground
- Understand expectations for college level coursework and behavior
- Receive advising about courses and basic resources (housing, activities, major choice, career development, etc.)
- Understand the significant academic and co-curricular aspects of UVM
- Become engaged in campus life; participate actively
- Begin to establish connections with key faculty and staff
- Develop a sense of belonging

Highlights of Inventory (See Appendix A)

- Most initiatives take place prior to enrollment or in the early part of the first year
- Some events are collaborative efforts between student affairs and academic affairs; the majority are solely co-curricular in nature

Academic Experience

We define the Academic Experience as those elements of the first-year that occur in a course, with faculty, and/or focus on curricular and scholarly work. First year students experience these elements based on the structure and size of their school or college.

The overarching goal: Students become intellectually excited and engaged in the intellectual community and begin to explore major and career options.

Specific objectives: Students should...

- Become familiar with content taught in their respective school/college
- Develop foundational skill set of critical thinking, writing, reading, oral communication, and self-reflection
- Develop positive working relationship with academic advisor and peers
- Receive assistance in identifying learning needs and referrals to campus services
- Explore major and career interests and how they relate

Highlights of Inventory (See Appendix B)

- Academic activities aimed at first year students take three major forms: 1) introductory courses, 2) advising, and 3) upper-class student outreach
- There is little consistency among introductory courses in either structure or content
- There is a growing interest in the use of mid-term warning letters, but they remain optional at this time except in CAS

Co-Curricular Experience

We define the co-curricular experience as those opportunities that are offered specifically to first-year students so that they may receive academic support outside of the classroom, become aware of the variety of resources the campus offers, and actively engage in the social life of the university and local community. Unlike the Common University Experiences, the Co-Curricular Experiences are optional; students can choose among them based upon their identities, abilities and interests.

The overarching goal: Students' academic and social experiences interconnect in a seamless experience. Students become actively involved in the campus/community and receive specific support networks and information about resources that best meet their needs. Students see themselves as active participants and leaders responsible for the standards of our community.

Specific objectives include: Co-curricular experiences should...

- Augment and enhance academic learning
- Provide engagement opportunities in order to build community
- Offer leadership development opportunities
- Meet social and cultural needs of a diverse population
- Encourage safe and healthy recreational activity and lifestyles
- Engage in experiential opportunities to explore interests and options, and to build career-related competencies

Highlights of Inventory (See Appendix C)

- Co-curricular initiatives fall into three primary areas: academic support (19 initiatives), social/involvement support (20 initiatives), and resource support (5 initiatives).
- Most of these initiatives target specific populations (such as students at risk) and support small segments of students.

- Most of these initiatives are driven by the Division of Student and Campus Life and the Diversity and Equity unit, although there are several examples of partnerships with academic affairs.

BENCHMARKING DATA

Essential Institutional Components (See Appendix D)

A review of the research has found key institutional components that must first be in place to achieve successful first-year programs. Appendix D outlines twelve critical components to creating and sustaining successful first-year experience models (Upcraft, et al, 2005). Outlined below is the most recent summary of what is considered to be institutional “best practices” (Troxel & Cutright, 2008, p. viii):

- Programs are integrated into a larger institutional philosophy and strategy rather than singular, isolated “silver bullets”
- There is a consistent presence of explicit, measurable, and a priori goals for programs
- There is a campus-wide approach to the establishment of objectives, program design, instructional and developmental strategies, and assessment
- Evaluation of programs in an ongoing commitment
- Administration provides visible clear leadership for instituting a first-year program

Programmatic Best Practices (See Appendix E)

A distinct set of best practices has been compiled through a survey of select institutions well-known for the success of their first-year students and corresponding programs (Upcraft, et al, 2005). The six best practices include:

- Early identification of risk
- First-Year Advising
- Learning Communities
- First-Year Seminars
- Student-Faculty Interaction
- Civic Engagement and Service-Learning

Appendix E describes each best practice and provides the guiding principle, critical components, and the model institutions known for doing it well.

Peers and Aspirant Institutions

Data was collected from a select group of peers and aspirant institutions in order to determine how well UVM compares in terms of implementing best practices and other targeted FYE programs.

Appendix F shows the overall results of this comparison.

GAP ANALYSIS

External Gap Analysis

UVM compared to set of national best practices:

- Implementation of early identification system is sporadic among UVM schools and colleges
- Unlike other institutions where professional advisors predominate, the vast majority of First Year students at UVM are advised solely by faculty
- The recent introduction of Residential Learning Communities is a positive step for UVM, but less than 20% of all FTFY students are involved. Nationally, multiple models and greater participation levels are standard
- UVM has no common First Year Seminar that offers consistent transition support, skill-building, or content; many are introductory courses for the discipline and have no common goals or learning outcomes
- Student-faculty interaction outside of the classroom mainly exists via the Residential Learning Communities or Living/Learning Communities, but is not well-integrated beyond those programs
- Fewer introductory courses integrate service-learning into the curriculum. Those that do offer comparatively smaller or simpler projects

UVM compared nationally to peer/aspirant institutions.....

Three elements clearly stand out as gaps in the first year experience when comparing UVM to our peers and aspirants:

- UVM is one of the few institutions that does not have a FYE seminar (whether it be required or optional) that focuses on transition,
- UVM does not have a coordinated approach for its First-Year Experience Model. Seven of the eleven peer/aspirant institutions surveyed have a centralized office that is responsible for integrating programs and resources to provide a more cohesive understanding and definition of the First Year Experience and increase collaboration between student affairs and academic affairs
- UVM does not offer coordinated or wide-spread peer mentoring opportunities. Nine of the eleven institutions surveyed offer some type of peer mentoring opportunity for first-year students

Internal Gap Analysis

Gaps in the University Common Experience

- All of the Common University experiences are frontloaded to the beginning of the academic year. In the absence of mid-year or end-of-year experiences, students create their own (e.g., Naked Bike Ride, 4/20)
- There is a paucity of shared intellectual experiences (e.g., core curriculum)

Gaps in the Academic Experience

- There is a lack of consensus regarding what an FTFY academic course should entail, which is reflected in inconsistent content, structures, and learning outcomes of introductory courses
 - Limited focus on health or diversity in course content
 - Some are discipline-based; others include first year transition topics
- There are significant differences regarding direction setting/career planning among the schools and colleges. Some begin these conversations with first year students and integrate well with Career Services and academic advising, while in other schools and colleges, it remains a peripheral or unaddressed topic
- There are few reward/training systems for faculty who advise FTFY students, and the decentralized model makes it difficult to standardize/assess effectiveness
- Mode and frequency of faculty-centered academic advising varies widely. There is an absence of full-time advisors, and structured and visible support systems for undecided students
- Mid-term warning letters are used inconsistently which causes confusion for students

Gaps in the Co-Curricular Experience

- There isn't one place that first-year students can visit to learn about all of the many resources that are available to them
- There is no coordinated communication strategy to inform first year students about the potential opportunities for academic or co-curricular experiences that support their success
- Efforts to enhance students' financial literacy are inconsistent and sparse
- In some cases co-curricular programs (e.g. Trek, SESP) could support more students if they had more funding, but in many cases only a small number of students seem to take advantage of initiatives

RECOMMENDATIONS

The University of Vermont's First Year Experience Model must be:

- core to the institutional mission and priorities
- evidenced by university-wide structure, coordination and continuity
- more closely aligned with national best practices
- evidenced by staff/faculty FTE commitment
- supported by strategic resource allocation (FTEs, base-funded operations and programs)
- regularly reviewed and evaluated

In order to achieve these objectives, initial recommendations include:

1. Create a First-Year Experience Center. This Center would provide integrated coordination and branding of the academic, co-curricular and common experiences (including FYE seminar coordination, website, live chat service, student guide to academic units, etc.), creating coherence among experiences throughout the entire year.
2. Convene a Working Group to identify consistent learning objectives, content and skill building that focuses on the transition into college, addresses the gaps identified above, and is informed by institutional mission and values.

3. Based upon the outcome of the Working Group (stated above), develop a curriculum for a First Year seminar across the schools and colleges which may mean modifying current introductory courses and/or how distribution requirements are met.
4. Career exploration should be solidly integrated into the First Year Experience (FY Seminar, advisor training, etc). In addition, a university-wide, structured support system needs to be developed for all undecided students.
5. Implement a coordinated training with consistent learning objectives for professional staff and faculty who advise first year students to include reflections about purpose, connections between majors and career options, and civic learning and engagement.

Appendix A: Common University Experiences

EXPERIENCE	TYPE	REQUIRED/ ENCOURAGED	TIME OF YEAR	COORDINATING OFFICE
Admitted Student Visit	Academic/ Co-curricular	Highly Encouraged	April (prior to enroll)	Admissions
June Orientation	Academic/ Co-curricular	Required	June (prior to enroll)	Orientation
Summer Reading Program	Academic/ Co-curricular	Required	June-August	Orientation
Convocation	Academic/ Co-curricular	Required	August	President's Office
Move-in Weekend Programs	Co-curricular	Required	August	Orientation
Induction	Co-curricular	Required	August	Orientation
Week of Welcome	Co-curricular	Highly Encouraged	First 10 days of classes	Student Life
Activities Fair	Co-curricular	Highly Encouraged	2 nd week of classes	Student Life
Cat's Tale	Co-curricular	NA	August	Orientation
Class of 200x E-Newsletter		Highly Encouraged	Periodically throughout year	Orientation/Class Council

Admitted Student Visit – One-day introduction to campus, including a campus tour, classroom experience, CatCard ID registration and housing tour.

June Orientation – Two-day in-depth introduction to campus, including academic expectations and curriculum planning, course registration, housing and dining selection, educational programs on safety, healthy choices, diversity, and involvement.

Summer Reading Program – Required reading introduced at June Orientation, planned in conjunction with Convocation speaker.

Convocation – Formal welcome to new students hosted by the President and Provost, highlighting an address related to the summer reading assignment.

Move-in Weekend Programs – Educational programs that address safety, healthy life choices, institutional values and expectations, adjusting to college life, and how to access campus/community support and resources. Social and recreational opportunities offer non-alcoholic alternatives exploring campus and community.

Twilight Induction Ceremony – Candlelight ritual conducted by the President the evening before classes begin. Students pledge to uphold UVM community values and receive their Class Pin.

Week of Welcome – Social and educational events throughout the first (roughly) 10 days of classes. Exposes new students to campus highlights, services and avenues for social, cultural and health-related involvement, and reinforces campus community.

Activities Festival – Involvement program including over 125 campus clubs and organizations, UVM offices and community agencies that advertise and recruit members, educate about services and provide resources.

Cat's Tale Guidebook –A publication written by students for students, with advice and strategic information. It is also a planner. These are distributed to every student upon residence hall check in.

Class of 200X Listserv – Used by Orientation to communicate important reminders (drop/add, housing requests, etc) and peer advice. Used by Class Council to communicate upcoming events and opportunities.

Appendix B: Academic Experience

	ARTS & SCIENCES	ENGINEERING & MATH	AGRICULTURE & LIFE SCIENCES	BUSINESS	RUBENSTEIN ENV. & NATURAL RESOURCES	NURSING & HEALTH SCIENCES	EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES	HONORS COLLEGE
FY Course	Yes	Yes (2)	Yes (2)	Yes	Yes (3)	Yes	Yes	Yes w/Plenary
Structure								
Name	Teacher Advisor Program	CE003 Intro to Civil & Environ. Engineering ME/EE001 First Yr Design Exp.	001 Communica-tions 002 Info Tech	FTFY Course	Race/Culture in NR6 NR1 & NR2	Challenges for New Health Students	First Year Seminar	HCOL 95
Credits	3	2 each	3 each	1	2-4	1	1-3 each	3
Size	15-20	90-125		240 in small groups	15-150	225	25	21 in 8 sections
Interdisciplinary	Yes	No		N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
% Enrolled	85%	95%	100%	90%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Content								
Writing/Oral Study/Reflection	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Career Development/Sense of Purpose		X	X	X	X	X		
Civic Engagement/Community Service		X	X		X		X	
Health						X		X
Diversity			X		X	X	X	X
Environment		X			X	X	X	X
Campus Resources	X		X	X		X	X	
1 st Year Advising								
Who Advises	2 faculty/student by (major & TA)	student services + 1 faculty	faculty by major	2 student services staff	First year faculty advisors	faculty by major	faculty (not by major)	faculty by unit
Required Meeting	X	X	X	X	X	X		Depends upon unit

Group Advising	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Mid-Term Warning Letters	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional; Highly encouraged	Optional	Optional	Depends on unit HC follows up
Advisor Training	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A
Academic Trial Support	X	X		X	X			X
Upper-class Mentor/Student Outreach			X	X	X Informal		X (start 08-09)	X
Other					First year advisors meet students at Orientation	Ropes Course	August Newsletter Stud Serv website	In-house staff and faculty supplement primary advisors

Appendix C: Co-Curricular Experiences *

PROGRAM/ACTIVITY/ RESOURCE	TYPE OF SUPPORT: ACADEMIC SOCIAL/ INVOLVEMENT RESOURCE	SPONSOR	TIME OF YEAR	FTFY OR INCLUSIVE	PARTICIPATION, INTENDED AUDIENCE, PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND WEB LINK
ACADEMIC SUPPORT/ ENRICHMENT INITIATIVES					
Summer Enrichment Scholarship Program (SESP)	Academic Social Resource	ALANA Student Center	Summer	FTFY Only	17 participants (33 applied) Students from various ethnic, racial, and multi-racial backgrounds, first-generation college-bound students and students from families with limited income. http://www.uvm.edu/~asc/?Page=programsactivities/sesp/sesp.html&SM=submenu2.html
TRiO/Student Support Services	Academic	Academic Support Programs	Academic Year	Inclusive	115 FY participants (550 eligible) 110 upper-level participants (1550 eligible) First-generation, limited income students who may or may not have a disability. http://www.uvm.edu/~trio/
Life Skills Program for First- Year Athletes	Academic Resource	Athletics	Fall Semester	FTFY Only	140 participants (140 eligible) All first-year student athletes. http://www.uvm.edu/~sportspr/?Page=athsasvcs.html&SM=athletesmenu.html

Study Tables for First-Year Athletes	Academic	Athletics	Academic Year	FTFY Only	80-90 participants Expected of first-year student athletes.
ACCESS Education Course (EDSS 010)	Academic Resource	ACCESS	Fall and Spring	FTFY Only	20 participants (150-200 eligible) First-time, first-year students utilizing ACCESS. http://www.uvm.edu/~access/?Page=edss10.html
College Transition Course (EDHI 55)	Academic Resource	Student Life	Fall Semester	FTFY Only	30 participants (2,400 eligible) All first-time, first-year students.
TRiO Workshops (Overview of TRiO; Study Abroad; How to Talk with Professors; Successful Student Panel; Prep for Finals.)	Academic	Academic Support Programs	Academic Year	FTFY Only	116 participants (550 eligible) First-generation, limited income students who may or may not have a disability. http://www.uvm.edu/~trio/
Honors College Plenary Lectures	Academic	Honors College	Academic Year	FTFY HC Students	Weekly lecture series required of all FTFY Honors College students.
Honors College Library Research Sessions	Academic	Honors College	Fall Semester	FTFY HC Students	Three sessions provided by faculty from the Bailey-Howe Library.
Arts Initiative Residential Learning Community (RLC)	Academic Social	RLC Living/Learning Res Life	Academic Year	Inclusive	49 FTFY participants, 66 upper-level participants (Capacity: 120) http://www.uvm.edu/~rlc/?Page=airlc/overview.html&SM=airlc/airlc_sm.html
Global Village Residential Learning Community (RLC)	Academic Social	RLC Living/Learning Res Life	Academic Year	Inclusive	90 FTFY participants, 132 upper-level participants (Capacity 240) Cultural and linguistic residential learning community. http://www.uvm.edu/~rlc/?Page=gvrhc/overview.html&SM=gvrhc/gvrhc_sm.html
GreenHouse Residential Learning Community (RLC)	Academic Social	RLC Res Life			120 FTFY participants, 120 upper-level participants (Capacity: 240) Environmental residential learning community. http://www.uvm.edu/~ghrlc/

Health & Wellness Residential Learning Community (RLC)	Academic Social	RLC Res Life	Academic Year	Inclusive	31 FTFY participants, 39 upper-level participants. (Capacity: 80) http://www.uvm.edu/~rlc/?Page=hwrlc/overview.html&SM=hwrlc/hwrlc_sm.html
Integrated Humanities Program (IHP)	Academic	Living/Learning CAS	Academic Year	FTFY Only	30 FTFY participants. (Capacity: 30) Year-long, interdisciplinary teacher-advisor program for FTFY students in College of Arts and Sciences only. Live together in the Living/Learning Center. http://www.uvm.edu/artsandsciences/tap/?Page=fullyearprog/ihp.html&SM=fullyearprog/tapfysub.html
Integrated Social Sciences Program (ISSP)	Academic	Living/Learning CAS	Academic Year	FTFY Only	30 FTFY participants. (Capacity: 30) Year-long, interdisciplinary teacher-advisor program for FTFY students in College of Arts and Sciences only. Live together in the Living/Learning Center. http://www.uvm.edu/artsandsciences/tap/?Page=fullyearprog/issp.html&SM=fullyearprog/tapfysub.html
Integrated Study of Earth and Environment Program (ISEE)	Academic	GreenHouse RLC CAS	Academic Year	FTFY Only	20 FTFY participants. (Capacity: 20) Year-long, interdisciplinary teacher-advisor program for FTFY students in College of Arts and Sciences only. Live together in the GreenHouse Residential Learning Community. http://www.uvm.edu/artsandsciences/tap/?Page=fullyearprog/isee.html&SM=fullyearprog/tapfysub.html
Canada House Residential TAP	Academic	Global Village RLC CAS	Academic Year	FTFY Only	12 FTFY participants. (Capacity: 18) Residentially-based teacher-advisor program course for FTFY students in College of Arts and Sciences only. Live together in the Global Village Residential Learning Community. http://www.uvm.edu/~rlc/gvrlc/CanadaHouseBrochure.pdf

Wright Start Program	Academic Social Resource	Residential Life			6 FTFY participants. (Capacity: 45) Special interest housing option whose goal is to create a supportive educational and social environment for incoming first year students while simultaneously promoting academic excellence, diversity & social justice, leadership, and service. http://www.uvm.edu/~rlweb/students/living_on_campus/wright.pdf
Community Service Scholars Program	Academic, Social Resource	CUPS	Academic Year	FTFY Only	10 FTFY participants, 33 upper-level participants. Vermont students who have shown a dedication to community service in high school receive a scholarship to attend UVM. http://www.uvm.edu/~cssp/
National Society of Collegiate Scholars	Academic Social	Student Life	Academic Year	FTFY & SOPH	175 new FTFY participants each year. http://www.nscs.org
Priority Registration	Academic	Various			TRiO students, ACCESS students, Honors College, athletes, scholarship recipients, others?
SOCIAL/ INVOLVEMENT INITIATIVES					
Honors College Welcoming Event at Quarry Hill	Social	Honors College	Beginning of Fall Semester	All Honors College Students	
Honors College “Pizza with the Dean”	Social Resource	Honors College	Academic Year	HC Students	Dean of the Honors College meets with groups of 10 – 12 students each week.

CASTLE Community	Social Resource	Res Life Career Services	Academic Year	Inclusive	<p>3 FTFY participants, 3 upper-level participants. (Capacity: 15)</p> <p>A special interest housing community in Converse Hall focused on empowering students to imagine, explore, and prepare for life after college.</p> <p>http://www.uvm.edu/~rlweb/students/living_on_campus/castle.pdf</p>
Kosher Cottages	Social	Res Life	Academic Year	Inclusive	<p>0 FTFY participants, 2 upper-level participants. (Capacity: 16)</p> <p>A special interest housing option in the Trinity Cottages for students who wish to practice Kosher in an informal "home" kitchen environment.</p> <p>http://www.uvm.edu/~rlweb/students/living_on_campus/hillel.pdf</p>
Music Program	Social	Res Life	Academic Year	Inclusive	<p>33 FTFY participants, 22 upper-level participants. (Capacity: 55)</p> <p>A special interest housing option in Wilks Hall designed for musicians and music enthusiasts who are interested in belonging to a community that values and appreciates music.</p> <p>http://www.uvm.edu/~rlweb/students/living_on_campus/music.pdf</p>
Quiet Lifestyle Housing	Social	Res Life	Academic Year	Inclusive	<p>30 FTFY participants, 10 upper-level participants. (Capacity: 40)</p> <p>This floor offer residents a living environment with expanded quiet hours. Residents of the quiet lifestyle community are expected to refrain from noise-producing activities that extend beyond their room or suite. This community has been established with an emphasis on enhancing the study environment and is designed for individuals willing to show extra courtesy and respect for an atmosphere conducive to quiet and study.</p> <p>http://www.uvm.edu/~rlweb/students/living_on_campus/quiet_lifestyle.pdf</p>

Rainbow Cottages	Social	Res Life	Academic Year	Inclusive	<p>4 FTFY participants, 6 upper-level participants. (Capacity: 10)</p> <p>The Rainbow Cottages consist of two small cottage style buildings that serve as a comfortable housing alternative for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning students and their allies.</p> <p>http://www.uvm.edu/~rlweb/students/living_on_campus/rainbow.pdf</p>
Substance and Alcohol Free Environment (S.A.F.E.) Program	Social Resource	Res Life	Academic Year	Inclusive	<p>4 FTFY participants (18 applied), 28 upper-level participants. (Capacity: 32)</p> <p>S.A.F.E. participants commit to substance- (including tobacco) and alcohol-free lifestyles, both on and off campus, for the entire academic year. The program's emphasis on community creates a tight-knit environment and friendly atmosphere. Residents can also take part in community service projects, such as the annual Redstone Hall Haunted House, to promote substance and alcohol free lifestyles.</p> <p>http://www.uvm.edu/~rlweb/students/living_on_campus/safe.pdf</p>
Slade Environmental Co-op	Social	Res Life	Academic Year	Upper-level only.	<p>FTFY students not eligible. 24 upper-level participants. (Capacity: 24)</p> <p>Slade residents practice a low consumption lifestyle, including reduction and recycling of waste through composting and re-use. Residents buy and cook their own food, and much of their food comes from their own garden, greenhouse and orchard. Residents take part in meetings, cook crews, and working in the garden and greenhouse.</p> <p>http://www.uvm.edu/~rlweb/students/living_on_campus/slade.pdf</p>

Living/Learning Center Programs (exclusive of Arts Initiative RLC and Global Village RLC).	Social	Living/Learning	Academic Year	Inclusive	<p>81 FTFY participants, 122 upper-level students, and 21 unprogrammed students. (Capacity: 222)</p> <p>18 residentially based programs that focus on a particular academic, cultural, avocational or service interest. Students live together in suites in the Living/Learning Center and participate in educational, cultural and social activities throughout the year.</p> <p>http://www.uvm.edu/llcenter</p>
ALANA Peer Mentoring Program	Social	ALANA Student Center	Academic Year		ALANA Students
TREK	Social	Student Life	Summer	FTFY Only	<p>212 FTFY participants (80 on waiting list; 2,400 eligible to apply.) Capacity: 212</p> <p>TREK is an intense small group experience involving outdoor adventure, leadership development, and community service. It brings new students to Vermont before the Opening Weekend orientation, and builds strong bonds between group members.</p> <p>http://www.uvm.edu/~slife/?Page=trek.html&SM=trek_menu.html</p>
Week of Welcome	Social	Student Life	Fall Opening	Inclusive	<p>A diverse array of program offerings held during the first week of school in the fall semester to welcome members of the UVM community to campus.</p> <p>http://www.uvm.edu/bored/special.php</p>
First Year Frenzy	Social	Living/Learning	Fall Semester	FTFY Only	<p>100 FTFY participants (250 eligible)</p> <p>An informal barbecue and “battle of the bands” designed to welcome FTFY students in the Living/Learning Center and help them get to know each other.</p>

Emerging Leaders	Social	Student Life	Fall	FTFY Only	18 FTFY participants. A leadership education and development program designed to provide new UVM students with the building blocks to become successful, active campus and community leaders. The focus of the program is to help students explore the values, emotions, and motivations that will guide them as campus leaders. http://www.uvm.edu/~slife/?Page=leadership.html&SM=leadership_menu.html
Involvement Survey	Social	Student Life	Summer	FTFY Only	677 FTFY participants (2,400 eligible to participate.) An on-line survey by which FTFY students can express interest in a variety of campus clubs and organizations, including academic/research, religious/spiritual, outdoor and adventure, Greek, athletic, community service, cultural, media/entertainment, and special interest organizations. http://www.uvm.edu/studentleaders/involvement/
First Year Class Council	Social		Academic year	FTFY Only	5 FTFY participants (officers). (Capacity: 5)
ALANA Student Center Family Picnic	Social	ALANA Student Center	Fall	Inclusive	~350 participants.
Women's Center Welcome BBQ	Social	Women's Center	Fall	Inclusive	~100 participants.
LGBTQA Services Family Picnic	Social	LGBTQA Services	Fall	Inclusive	~100 participants.
Activities Fest	Social Resource	Student Life	Fall	Inclusive	~2,000 participants
RESOURCE INITIATIVES					
Summer Enrichment Scholarship Program (SESP) Job Program	Resource	ALANA Student Center	Summer	FTFY Only	17 SESP Participants

Orientation for new work-study students	Resource	Career Services	Fall Opening	FTFY Only	145 FTFY participants, 1600 eligible to participate.
First Year SGA Seats	Resource		Academic Year	FTFY Only	5 seats for FTFY Students
Various Websites (Bored, orientation, FY chat)	Resource	Various			
Think-Care-Act Program	Resource			Inclusive	All students
Honors College Peer Mentoring and Student Mentoring programs	Resource	Honors College	Ongoing		

*Not intended to be a *complete* listing of all co-curricular activities that take place at UVM.

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Appendix D:

This “action agenda” provides the foundation necessary on any campus wishing to create or enhance the first year program (Upcraft, et al, 2005).

1. Place a high priority on the first year among competing institutional priorities and accept a significant share of responsibility for first year student achievement.
 - “Historically, the dominant culture of higher education has been to hold students primarily, if not exclusively, responsible for sinking or swimming. Hence, this acceptance by institutions for a portion of the responsibility for the fate of first-year students is truly exceptional.” (p. 381)
2. Leadership, operating on multiple levels, is essential to the achievement of excellence.
 - All institutions emphasize that while the vision was spearheaded by an individual, the reality came to fruition due to cross-disciplinary, university wide collaboration.” (p. 382)
3. “Excellence flourishes in a culture that encourages idea generation, pilot projects, and experimentation.
 - Each of the campuses can be characterized as a place where the overriding culture not only accepts innovation as part of the status quo but also rewards risk takers.” (p. 383)
4. “Excellence in the first year is achieved through efforts designed for all or for a critical mass of first year students.
 - An unresolved debate among college and university educators revolves around whether certain first year courses or programs should be required or optional, and in this group of thirteen institutions, excellence has been achieved through both means.
5. “Assessment is an essential component of moving toward and sustaining excellence.
 - First year assessment is a shared activity between the Office of Institutional Research and Planning in the Division of Academic Affairs and the Office of Student Life and Learning Research in the Division of Student Development. Findings from both units provide a comprehensive picture of holistic student achievement and development.” (p. 385)
6. “Of the campuses that achieve first-year excellence, a common characteristic is clarity of institutional identity and mission and a concomitant respect for students.
 - These colleges and universities are well grounded in the reality of the here and now – the changing characteristics of college students that result in a highly diverse, and often unevenly prepared, student population. They therefore spend their time learning to serve these diverse students rather than bemoaning the absence of a formerly homogenous student body.” (pp. 386-387)
7. ”Excellence in the first year relies on the direct involvement of an institution’s faculty.
 - Among these thirteen campuses we discovered that the key to faculty support is faculty ownership. First-year initiatives in which faculty members have had a major role at the point of conception and initial implementation are more likely to be sustained.” (p.388)
8. “Excellence in the first year requires attention to pedagogy in first-year courses.

- All the institutions offer targeted faculty development activities to prepare faculty to teach in special first-year programs such as learning communities and first-year seminars.” (p. 388)
9. “First-year excellence necessitates both creative acquisition and judicious use of financial resources.
 - ...many of the initiatives detailed here were generated with new money rather than a reallocation of existing institutional resources. The sources for this funding were federal, state, local and private grants.” (p. 389)
 10. “A central component of excellence is a steady outward gaze – the willingness to learn from and share with others.
 - Institutional leaders search for external benchmarks against which to measure their own achievements through occasional visits to and frequent interaction with other campuses...”(p.390)
 11. “Excellence rests on an intentional first year curriculum and on supportive curricular structures.
 - Whether defined as a core curriculum or general education distribution requirements, these campuses as a group have focused on desired learning objectives in the first year that are realized through specific courses.” (p. 391)
 12. “Excellence thrives in an environment where divisional walls are down.
 - ...the first year provides a unique opportunity to bring together various campus constituent groups, all with an important role to play in entering student success.” (p. 392)

Appendix E:

Best Practices	Critical Components	Model Institutions
Early Identification of Risk		
<p>“Effective retention programs are first and foremost committed to the education for all, not just some, of their students... “ (Upcraft et al, 2005, p. 45).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm Grade Reporting • Attendance Policy 39% of institutions have a policy 	<p>Northern Arizona University</p> <p>University of South Carolina -Early Intervention Initiative (EII) - Monitors attendance</p>
First Year Student Advising		
<p>“Beal and Noel’s research (1980) found that first-year students who use academic advising services persist at higher rates than students who do not use the services” (Upcraft et al, 2005, p. 43).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty Preparation, Interaction, and the Reward Structure • Academic Advising and Major Selection <p>(Mandate face-to-face adviser-advisee contact at 75% of institutions)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An advising program mission statement to guide the advising activities 2. A specific individual designated by the institution to direct or coordinate advising activities 3. A systematic training program for all advisers 4. Recognition and reward for exemplary advising, and 5. Publicize career services as resource for counseling on major choice for undecided students 	<p>Bridgewater State College - 5 minimum advising contacts with detailed schedules</p> <p>Indiana Wesleyan University -Focuses on pre-declared students</p> <p>University of Colorado-Boulder</p> <p>University of Michigan</p> <p>Dartmouth College</p>

Learning Communities		
<p>Tinto and Goodsell (1993) found that cluster benefits to students include retention, decreased withdrawals, better grades, and more positive perceptions about college (Upcraft et al, 2005).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 or more linked courses that co-enroll a single cohort of students (found at 37% of 4yr institutions) • Partner with other units • Utilize faculty, staff, student leaders • Link in-class to out-of-class experiences • Student collaboration • Faculty collaboration • Curricular coordination • Shared setting • Interactive pedagogy 	<p>University of Michigan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Michigan Community Scholars Program (MCSP) <p>Slippery Rock University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Combine FY seminar with LLC <p>Wagner College</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three tiered <p>Wright State University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taught by peer instructors <p>University of Connecticut</p> <p>University of Michigan</p> <p>Dartmouth College</p>
First Year Seminars		
<p>“The overwhelming majority of first-year seminar research has shown that these courses positively affect retention, grade point average, number of credit hours attempted and completed, graduation rates, student involvement in campus activities, and student attitudes and perceptions of higher education, as well as faculty development and methods of instruction (Barefoot, 1993; Barefoot et al, 1998 as cited in Upcraft et al, 2005, p. 288).”</p> <p>FY Seminars Offered at 80% of 4 year institutions (Upcraft et</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful FY Seminars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are offered for academic credit - Are centered in the first-year curriculum - Involve both faculty and student affairs professionals in program design and instruction - Include instructor training and development as an integral part of the program - Compensate or otherwise reward instructors for teaching the seminar - Involve upper-level students in seminar delivery - Include ways of assessing their effectiveness and disseminating these assessments to the campus communities - Aim to assist students in academic and social development and in their 	<p>Concordia University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Common learning outcomes <p>Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taught by instructional team <p>Miami University-Oxford</p> <p>University of Connecticut</p> <p>University of Rhode Island</p> <p>University of Michigan</p> <p>Boston College</p> <p>Cornell University</p> <p>Dartmouth College</p>

<p>al, 2005, p. 56).</p>	<p>transition to college</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Challenge students to consider the connections between academic and co-curricular experience and future plans <p>Subjects include: Study skills, Time management, Campus resources, Career exploration and decisions, Critical thinking, Student life, and civic engagement</p>	
<p>Student-Faculty Interaction</p>		
<p>“In their review of the research on the relationship of faculty-student interactions to student persistence, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) concluded that “freshmen to sophomore persistence was positively and significantly related to total amount of student-faculty non classroom contact with faculty and particularly to frequency of interactions with faculty to discuss intellectual matter (Upcraft et al, 2005, p. 38).”</p>	<p>Provide out-of-class interactions</p>	<p>Gallaudet University -Connection and out-of-class engagement</p> <p>University of Georgia -Learning communities</p> <p>Western Illinois University - Faculty incorporate 3 activities into class</p>
<p>Civic Engagement and Service Learning</p>		
<p>Persistence: “There is substantial evidence that when first-year students participate in the services and programs designed to enhance their success, they are more likely to persist (Kulik, Kulik, & Schwab, 1983). These activities include the classroom, first-year seminars, orientation, residence halls, learning communities, academic advising, service-learning, Supplemental Instruction, developmental education, other support services, and selected combination of these.” (Upcraft et al, 2005, p. 41)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intentionally connect the in-class and out-of-class spheres of students’ lives. Tie academic and social experiences together - Civic engagement is created through problem-based and service-learning (get them involved earlier will result in deeper awareness and commitment to civic engagement). 	<p>Georgia State University - Increase involvement with downtown community/increase retention</p> <p>Millersville University - Holistic Living and leaning community</p>

FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE FEATURES	Early Identification	1 st Year Advising	Learning Community First Year Halls	First Year Seminar Transition	Faculty/Student Interaction	Service/Research Project	Integrated FYE Office	Convocation	Common Reading	Retreat	First Year Lecture Series	Outdoor Leadership Experience	Peer Mentorship Opportunity	Leadership Council/Opportunity
PEER INSTITUTIONS														
Boston College	No	Pro-Staff	Both	Yes	Retreat, seminars, live-in	Yes	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Dartmouth College	Mid-Term Grades	Pro-Staff	Learning Commun.	No	Advisor Tutoring	Optional Research Project	X	X	X	X		X		X
Miami University-Oxford	Mid-Term Grades	Pro-Staff	Learning Commun.	Yes, Optional	Learning Commun. Socials Orient.	No		X	X			X		X
University of Connecticut	Mid-Term Grades	Pro-Staff	Both	Yes, Optional	Yes No detail	No	X						X	X
University of Rhode Island	Mid-Term Grades	Pro-Staff & Faculty	Both	Yes Required	Review sessions	Yes Part of Seminar	X						X	
University of New Hampshire Main Campus	Mid-Term Grades	Pro-Staff & Faculty	Both	Yes Optional	Advisor Tutoring	No	X			X			X	X
Tufts University	No	Faculty	Both	No	Advisor Tutoring	Varies by program		X	X			X	X	
University of Maine	All on-line	Pro-Staff & Faculty	Both	No	Dinners Programs	No	X	X		X	X	X	X	X

ASPIRATIONAL INSTITUTIONS														
Michigan Ann-Arbor	No	Pro-Staff & Faculty	Both	Yes On Writing	Mentor Program Tutoring	Both Optional	X	X					X	X
Colorado-Boulder	Mid-Term Grades	Pro-Staff	Both	Yes, Optional	Advisor Tutoring	Service Learning Optional		X				X	X	X
Virginia-Main Campus	Only Athlete	Pro-Staff & Faculty	Both	Yes Optional	Seminars Programs Orient.	No		X				X	X	X
UVM	Mid-Term Grades By College	Faculty	Both	No	Orient. RLC's	Both Optional		X	X			X		X

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