Achieving Institutional Effectiveness:
Fulfilling Our Promise to All Our Students

Campus Compact for New Hampshire
Academic Affairs Workshop
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Overview of the Day

- Review the promise and shortfalls of higher education
- Explore factors contributing to institutional effectiveness
- Discuss how first-year outcomes contribute to overall institutional effectiveness
- Review high impact programs and initiatives for first-year students
- Investigate methods for assessing first-year outcomes



INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

THE PROMISE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Our Changing Institutions

The Key to Opportunity?



The Ivory Tower?



American Higher Education

What is the purpose of American higher education?

- Private benefit: to educate the mind?
- Public benefit: to advance society?
- ***Public and private benefit: To generate and disseminate new knowledge for the purpose of fulfilling the American Dream***

The Promise of Higher Education

- The desire to fulfill this dream has been expressed by increased enrollment and participation among underrepresented groups
- Higher education opens the door to many personal and societal benefits that promote educational, socioeconomic, and quality of life gains

The Promise of Higher Education

According to the College Board…

- Correlation exists between higher levels of education and higher earnings for all racial/ ethnic groups and for both men and women.
- The median earnings of bachelor's degree recipients working full-time year-round in 2008 were $55,700, $21,900 more than the median earnings of high school graduates.

The Promise of Higher Education

According to the College Board…

- The income gap between high school graduates and college graduates has increased significantly over time.
- The earnings benefit to the average college graduate is high enough for graduates to recoup both the cost of full tuition and fees and earnings forgone during the college years in a relatively short period of time.

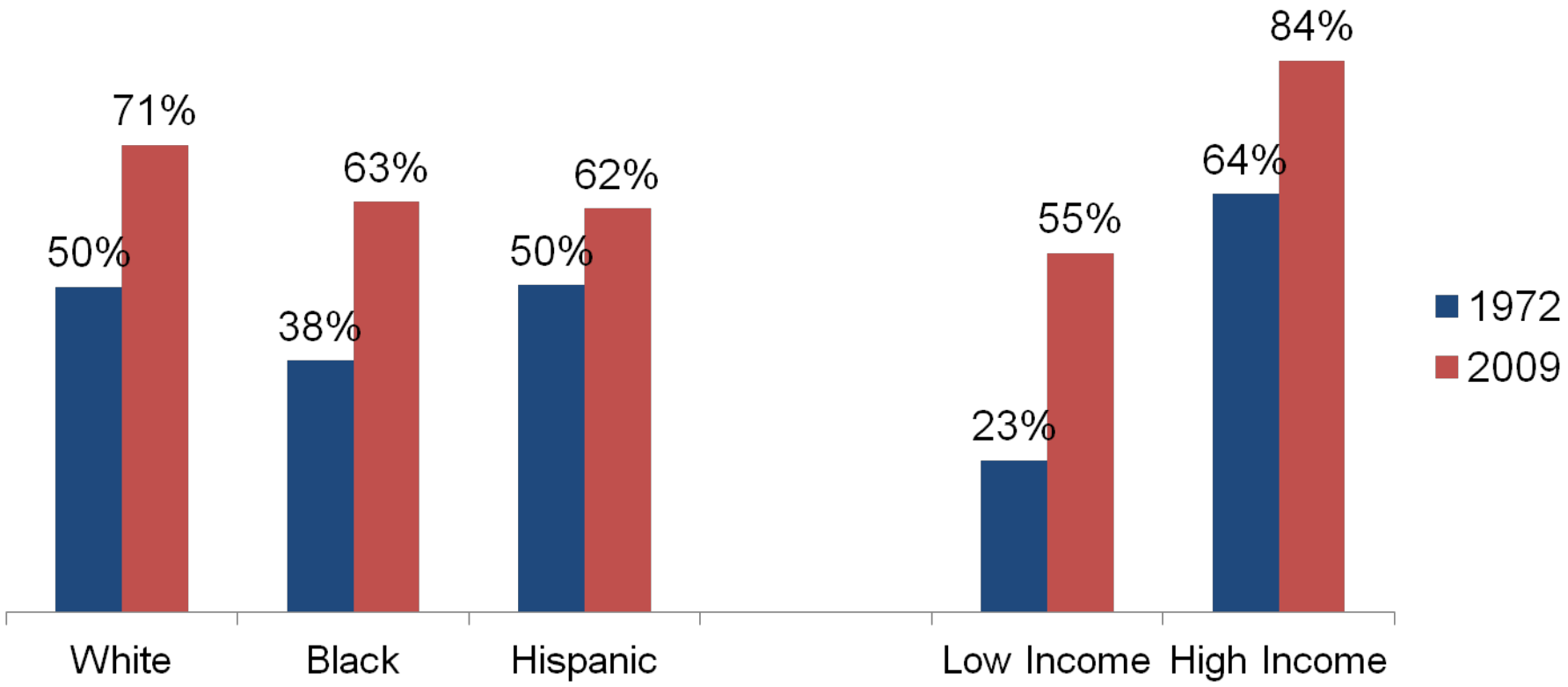
The Promise of Higher Education

According to the College Board….

- From 2007 to 2008, inflation-adjusted median earnings increased for females and males ages 25 to 34 with a bachelor's degree or higher, but declined or remained constant for all other education groups.

Pursuit of the Promise
On the Rise for All Students

Percentage of high school graduates immediately enrolling in college, 1972-2009



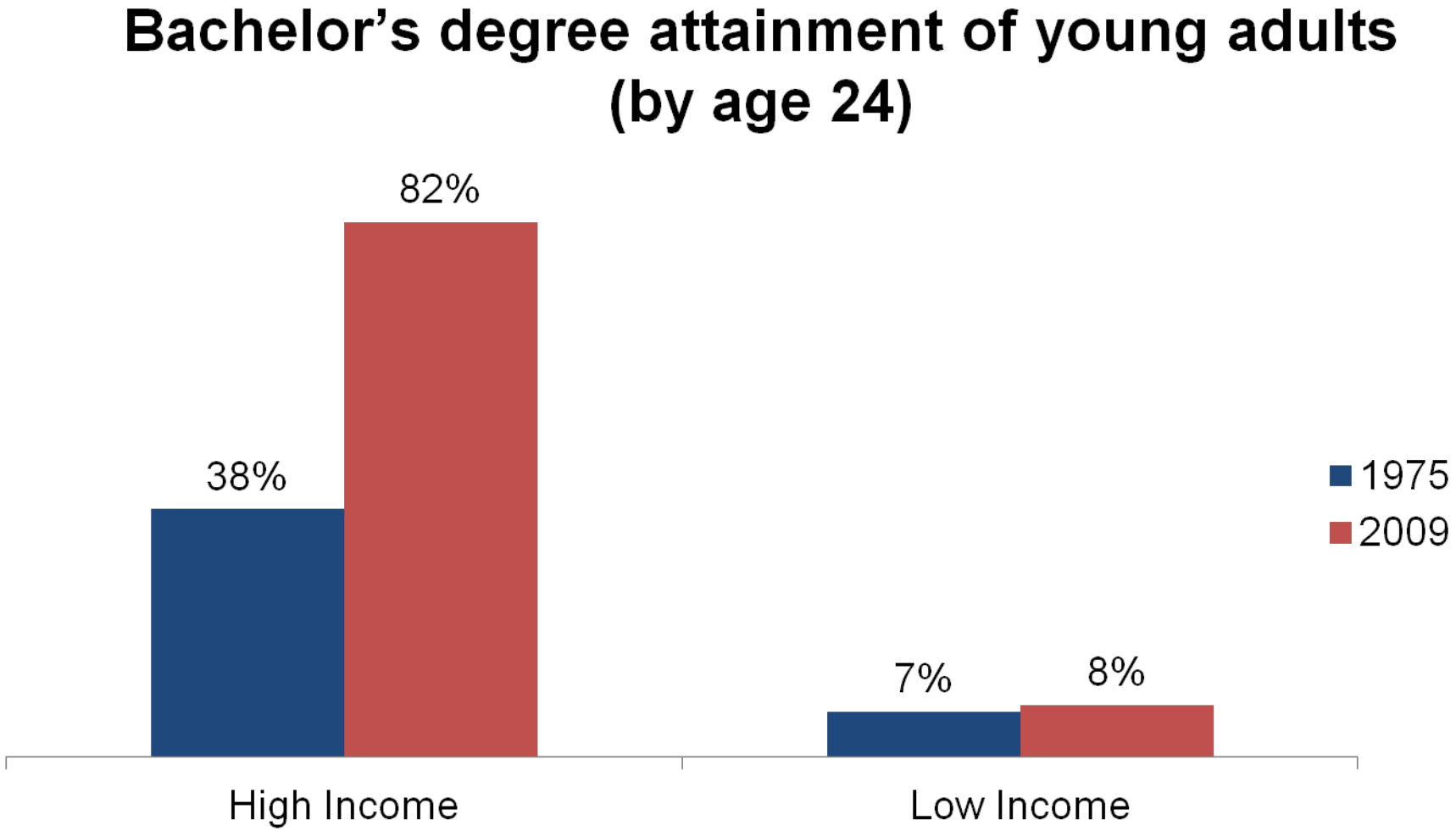
Source: NCES, Condition of Education (2010) and Condition of Education (2011), The Education Trust, 2010

Pursuit of the Promise
On the Rise for All Students

- Nationwide, students of color comprise about 32% of postsecondary enrollment
- Approximately 20% of the 2009 entering first-time full-time freshmen were first generation students
- About 80% of community college students were first-generation students
- Enrollment of people 25 and over rose by 13% from 1995 to 2006 and is expected to rise 19% from 2007 to 2017

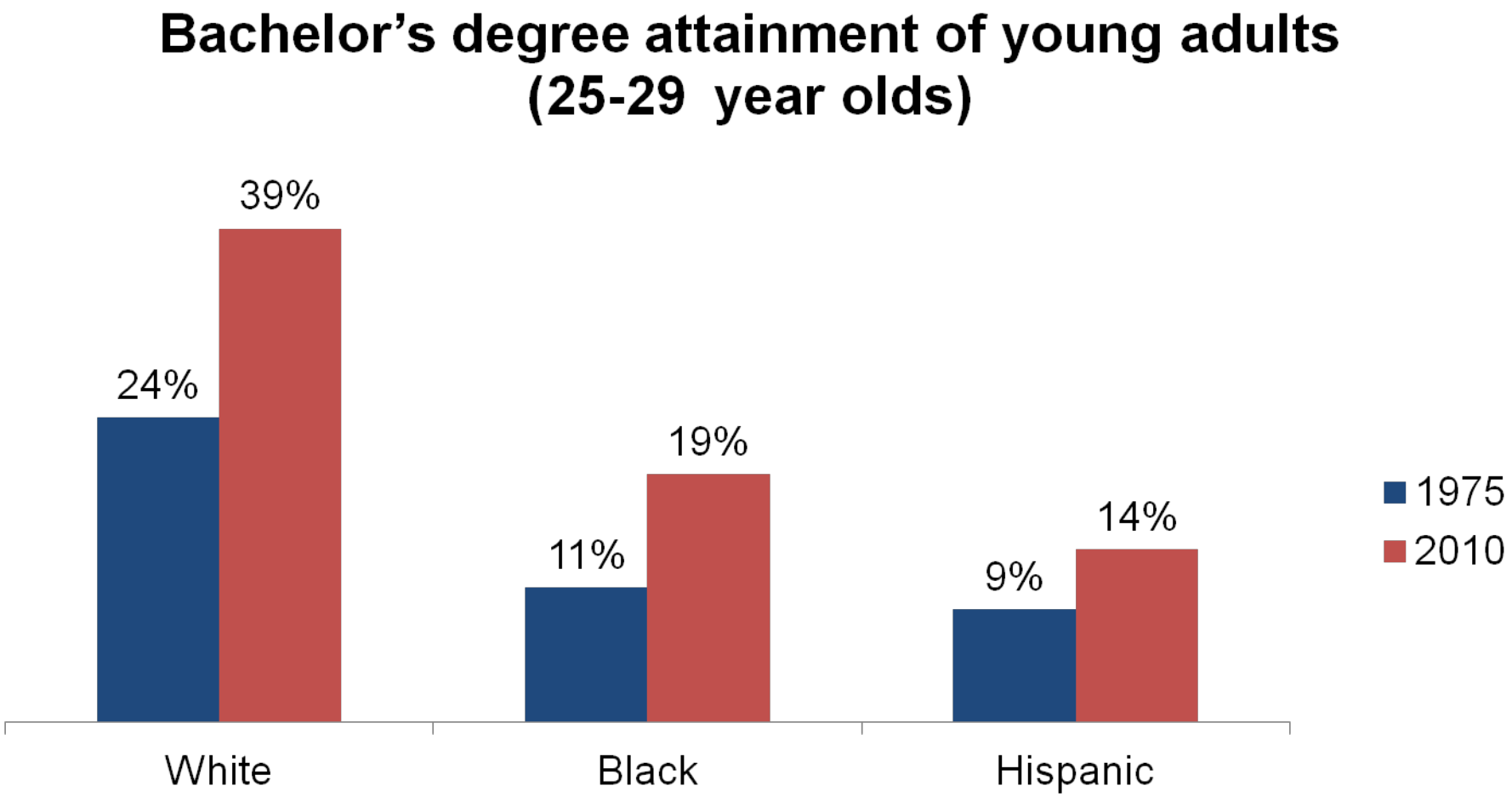
Source: HERI, 2009, NCES, 2004, NCES 2007, NCES, 2009

Outcome Gaps Exist Based on Income



Source: Postsecondary Education Opportunity (2010), "Bachelor's Degree Attainment by Age 24 by Family Income, Quartiles" 1970 to 2009., The Education Trust, 2010

Outcome Gaps Exist Based on Race



Source: NCES, Condition of Education (2010) and U.S. Census Bureau, Educational Attainment in the United States (2010); The Education Trust (2010)

Attempts to Narrow the Gaps

- Although institutions have become more diverse over the last 30 years, nationwide student success outcomes have not improved despite initiatives and interventions.
- The percentage of students enrolled in four-year public colleges who earn a degree within 5 years of entry has declined over the years. In 2010, the percentage was 43.4%; in 1989 the percentage was 48.2%.

Source: ACT (2010)

Fulfilling the Promise to Our Students

- Our institutional effectiveness is determined largely by our outcomes
- The gaps in attainment indicate our need to rethink our approaches to increase the likelihood for all students to achieve outcomes that are equally high and reflective of our institutional goals

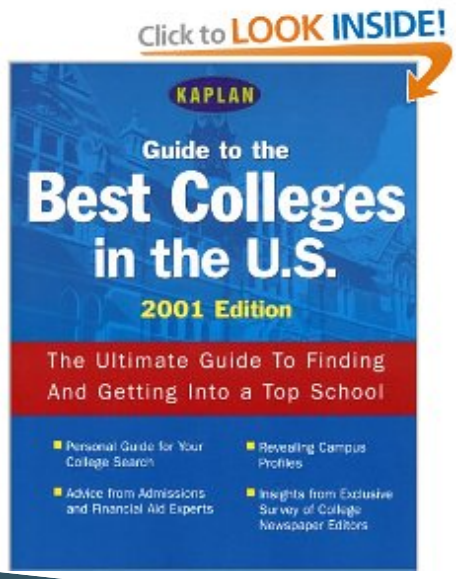


INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

WHAT DOES IT *REALLY* MEAN??

What Makes an Institution Effective?











Institutional Effectiveness

How well an institution fulfills its purpose

- Are the institutional operations reflective of its vision and philosophy?
- Does the institution accomplish its mission?
- Does the institution strive to meet its goals and objectives?
- Are these goals and objectives aspirational?
- Are there self-assessment processes in place?
- Are the data being used for continuous improvement?

Source: Sullivan & Wilds (2001)

Institutional Effectiveness

The linchpin of institutional effectiveness is academic effectiveness



- How effective is the institution in promoting student learning and generating new knowledge?
- What improvements have been made in instruction, methodology, technology?
- Faculty involvement is critical to these efforts so their buy-in is essential

Source: Sullivan & Wilds (2001)

Institutional Effectiveness

Institutional effectiveness is determined more by outcomes rather than inputs

- Looking for the value-added
- The degree to which outcomes are achieved are considered regardless of the characteristics of the students entering the institution

Institutional Effectiveness

Student Outcomes

- To what level did they perform while enrolled?
- What did they achieve after they graduated?
- Examples of performance measures:
  - Retention and graduation rates?
  - Transfer rates for 2-year institutions?
  - Employability upon graduation?
  - Graduate school enrollment?

Institutional Effectiveness

When it comes to institutional effectiveness accrediting agents look for evidence that:

- the institution has in place measures for the achievement of student outcomes
- improvements have been in curriculum and instruction as a result of these findings

Source: Sullivan & Wilds (2001)

Institutional Effectiveness

When it comes to institutional effectiveness accrediting agents look for evidence that:

- administrative and academic support services evaluate their units according to the institutional plan or mission, document their results, and execute improvement plans as needed

Source: Sullivan & Wilds (2001)

Institutional Effectiveness



- In what we say we do & what we really do
- In what we discover we need to improve and what we actually improve
- In the performance of our various student subpopulations
- In how we deal with these when it comes to first-year outcomes

The Monetary Cost of Attrition at Four-Year Institutions

During the years between 2003 and 2008:

- States appropriated almost $6.2 billion to colleges and universities to help pay for the education of students who did not return for a second year.
- States gave over $1.4 billion and the federal government over $1.5 billion in grants to students who did not return for a second year

Source: Schneider, M. (2010)

Return on Investment from Investing in the First Year

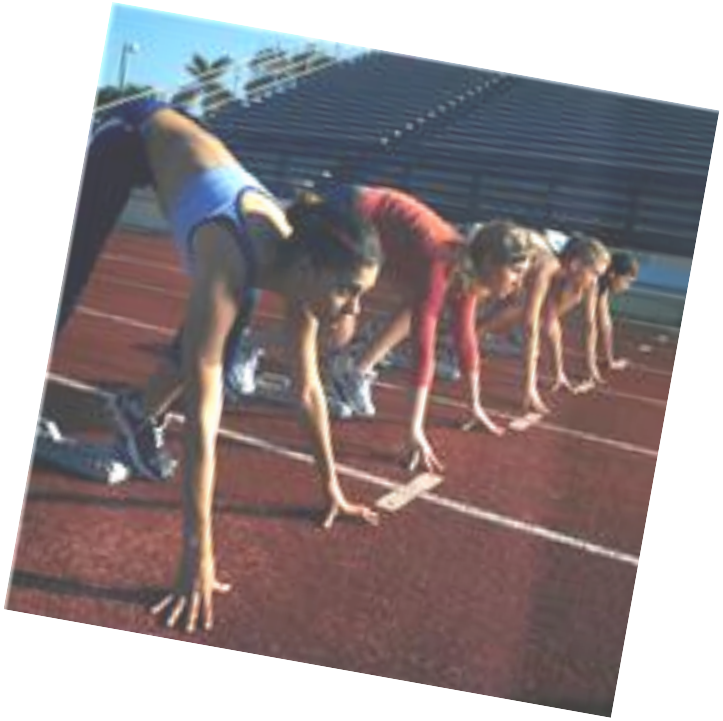
- Front-loading services in the first year is a costly investment for institutions
- Often these programs are cut when budgets are tightened, a costly decision
- More expensive for institutions to recruit new students than to invest in retaining and developing them

Return on Investment from Investing in the First Year

Investing in the first-year contributes to:

- Improved student outcomes
- Increased student satisfaction
- Increased institutional revenue
- Increased global competitiveness
- Fulfilled institutional promises
- Achieved student dreams

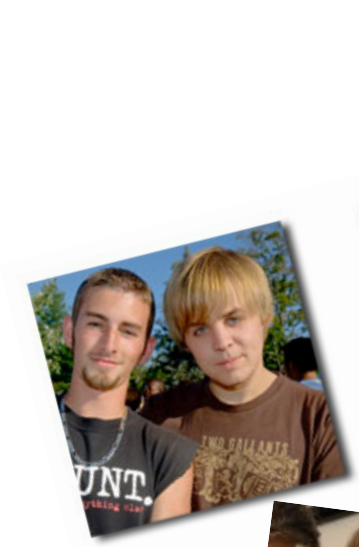




INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

IT ALL STARTS AT THE BEGINNING

Who Are New Hampshire's First-Year Students?















Who Are New Hampshire's Students?

In 2007:

- 28% of the first-year students were 25 years-old or older (nontraditional students)

In 2008:

- 55% of the first-time first-year students attending a New Hampshire institution were state residents
- 24% were from New England
- Remaining 11% came from all other states and Guam

In 2011:

- 58% female; 42% male
- 71% full-time
- 10% students of color

Source: New Hampshire Postsecondary Education Commission (2010); The Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac (2011)

Our First-Year Students Have Diverse Backgrounds

- Dual enrollment while in high school
- Work-life and/or military experience
- First-generation students
- Immigrants
- Rural, suburban, urban residents
- Various/multiple ethnic and racial backgrounds
- Of families with long traditions of college-going
- Transfer students
- GED recipients
- Home-schooled experiences
- etc., etc.,

What We Know About the First Year of College

- Period during an undergraduate student's college experience when the greatest gains are made in academic, personal, and social development
- Upcraft, Gardner, and Barefoot (2005) identified such areas of development



Source: Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005

What We Know About the First Year of College

Developing intellectual & academic competence

- Learn how to learn, particularly in a higher educational setting
  - Develop skills in critical thinking, technological, reflective, problem solving, computational, reading, and writing
- Begin to appreciate what it means to be an educated person
  - Consider the moral, ethical, and cultural implications of what they learn
  - Appreciate aesthetics

Source: Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005

What We Know About the First Year of College

Gains in the first-year, con't

Establishing & maintaining interpersonal relationships

- Develop a network on campus to overcome their anxieties and establish a support system
- Identify the types of relationships are beneficial to them whether they are residents, commuters, traditional or nontraditional students
- Effectively use online social networks

Source: Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005

What We Know About the First Year of College

Gains in the first-year, con't

Exploring identity development

- Begin to answer the question, "Who am I?"
  - Work toward establishing a sense of certainty for themselves
  - Explore gender, sexual orientation, race, disability, etc.
  - Confusion in these areas can lead to problems in their academic, social, and personal dimensions

Source: Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005

What We Know About the First Year of College

Gains in the first-year, con't

Deciding on a career

- Work toward confirming their career goals or exploring those that might be best suited to them
- Clarify for themselves:
  - Major interest
  - Skills and abilities
  - Values



Source: Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005

What We Know About the First Year of College

Gains in the first-year, con't

Maintaining health and wellness

- Begin to learn to lead healthy lives and to effectively deal with stress
  - Manage multiple commitments, both in and out of the classroom
  - Behaviors related to nutrition, sexual activity, substance use, exercise, and physical routines

Source: Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005

What We Know About the First Year of College

Gains in the first-year, con't

Considering faith & the spiritual dimensions of life

- Begin to explore and internalize what they believe and value
  - Explore their place in the universe
  - Reconsider or reaffirm their religious and spiritual beliefs

Source: Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005

What We Know About the First Year of College

Gains in the first-year, con't

Developing multicultural awareness

- Learn about and begin to relate to those of different backgrounds
- Begin to develop an appreciation for the similarities and differences of various groups
  - Cultures, races, ethnicities, nationalities, faiths
  - Sexual orientation
  - Gender
  - Physical and mental abilities
  - Age

Source: Upcraft, M.L., Gardner, J.N., & Barefoot, B.O. (2005)

What We Know About the First Year of College

Gains in the first-year, con't

Campus Compact *for New Hampshire*

Developing civic responsibility

- Begin to become responsible citizens outside of the collegiate environment
- Appreciate the value of community-based volunteer work and charitable activities
- Develop an understanding of the importance of their contributions to the democratic society in which they live

Source: Upcraft, M.L., Gardner, J.N., & Barefoot, B.O. (2005)

Start with the End in Mind

Regardless of where they begin on their postsecondary journey, we want students to achieve:



- **Institutional goals**
  - ✓ Engagement
  - ✓ Retention
  - ✓ Graduation
- **Gains in their learning and development**
  - ✓ Learning outcomes
  - ✓ Achievement of standards

Start with the End in Mind

Employability

- Employers seek the best talent, regardless of major
- Well-rounded education (liberal arts & field specific)

21st Century Competencies

- Lifelong learners
- Effective communication (orally & in writing)
- Collaborative, team players
- Culturally competent
- Adaptive
- Analytic problem solvers
- Project management skills

Source: Gardner, P. (2011); Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc. (2007)

High Impact Educational Practices

- High impact educational practices promote student gains in the first-year, and beyond, particularly for students of color and those who are less academically prepared
- No “one size fits all” approach, depends on the learners and the institution



Source: Kuh, G., (2008)

High Impact Educational Practices

According to Kuh, these practices are impactful because they:

- Promote deep learning since they require an investment of time and energy
- Require the use of active learning strategies, reflective activities, and integrated learning
- Involve substantive interaction with faculty and peers

Source: Kuh, G., (2008)

High Impact Educational Practices

According to Kuh, these practices are impactful because they:

- Relay a message to students that they are capable of high level work
- Cultivate environments in which students encounter and interact with diverse perspectives
- Create a loop of accountability and feedback
- Are the result of campus-wide collaborations

Source: Kuh, G., 2008

High Impact Educational Practices

- **First-year seminars & experiences**
- Common educational experiences
- **Learning communities**
- Writing-intensive courses
- Collaborative assignments & projects
- Undergraduate research
- **Diversity/global learning**
- **Service-learning, Community-based learning**
- Internships
- Capstone courses & projects

Source: Kuh, G., 2008

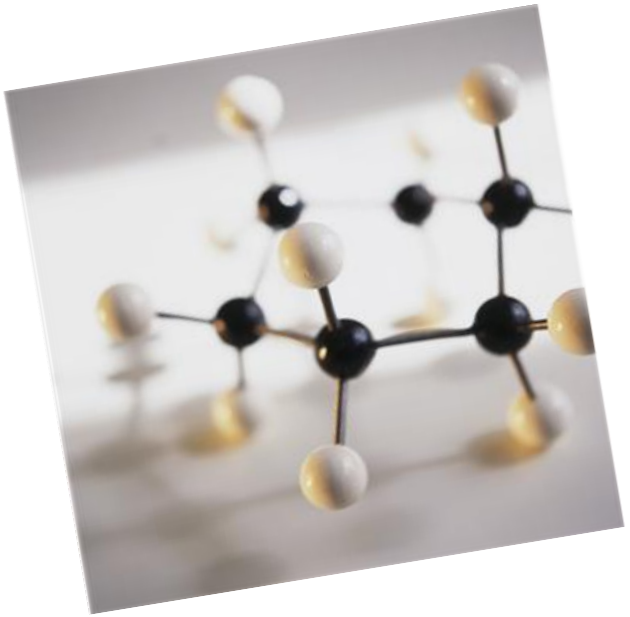
What's in Your First-Year "Gumbo"?

- Yes, they're all gumbo, but what's in them & how good are they?
- How were they prepared?
- Were they tasted and appropriately seasoned?
- These answers are more important than just having gumbo on your menu



What Other Ingredients Are Needed?

- **High Impact Initiatives are also critical elements:**
  - Intrusive and appreciative advising services that include campus-wide early monitoring initiatives
  - Peer programs (advisors, orientation leaders, mentors, etc.)



ACHIEVING INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

ELEMENTS OF HIGH IMPACT FIRST-YEAR PROGRAMS

High Impact First-Year Programs

- **Vary in organizational structure and design**
  - What matters is how well they perform not that they operate on a campus
- **Determined by needs and culture of the campus**
  - Centralized or decentralized?
  - Academic Affairs or Student Affairs?
  - Administrative oversight or by task force?

First-Year Seminars

- Courses that address the first-year transition and support learning and development
- Create “safe” learning environments in which challenges and new experiences can be explored
- Instructor becomes a resource and peers form a support network
- Can best fulfill their mission when the curriculum does not become lost within an a content or major introductory course

First-Year Seminars

Vary in structure and design:

- Vary from 0-3 credits
- Partial semester, full first semester, full year
- Elective, General Education, graduation requirement, embedded in core course
- Linked to Learning Communities or stand alone
- Holistic, academic, or student development focus
- Taught by faculty, and/or student affairs professionals, and/or adjuncts
- Instructors teach as volunteers, as part of duties, or as overload duties with or without compensation

First-Year Seminars

Are most successful when they:



- Are offered for credit
- Focus on the first-year transition
- Involve both faculty and student affairs professionals in program design and instruction
- Instructor professional development is included as an integral part of the program

Source: Hunter, M.S. & Linder, C.W., (2005)

First-Year Seminars

Are most successful when they:

- 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 community

Source: Hunter, M.S. & Linder, C.W., (2005)

What We Know About the Impact of the First-Year Seminar

30 Years of Research Has Proven:

"In short, the weight of evidence indicates that FYS participation has statistically significant, and substantial, positive effects on a student's successful transition to college and the likelihood of persistence into the second year as well as on academic performance while in college and on a considerable array of other college experiences known to be related directly and indirectly to bachelor's degree completion" (pp.400-401 & 402-403).

Source: Pascarella and Terenzini, (2005)

Learning Communities

- Learning Communities link the first-year seminar with content courses, or developmental courses
- Often include the first semester writing course and/or gateway courses
- Vary from blocked course model to integrated thematic communities, including service-learning



Learning Communities

- Help first-year students forge curricular and social connections
- Break down the larger campus into smaller communities
- Are connected to residential experiences on many campuses
- Promote student-faculty and student-student relationships
- Create learning environments in which students are encouraged to think critically and identify the interrelatedness of the material of the linked courses

Learning Communities

Are most successful when:

- The linked courses are active learning environments
- Curriculum development and instruction are based on inter-disciplinarity or co-disciplinarity
- Faculty are provided with, and rewarded for, their participation in professional development programs that help them continuously refine their pedagogy

Source: MacGregor, J. & Smith, B.L. (2005); Zhao, C.M. & Kuh, G.D. (2004)

Learning Communities

Are most successful when:

- The institution's rewards system recognizes faculty participation (teaching and development program)
- They involve both faculty and student affairs professionals in program design and instruction
- The program is regularly assessed and the data inform enhancements and revisions

Source: MacGregor, J. & Smith, B.L. (2005); Zhao, C.M. & Kuh, G.D. (2004)

What We Know About the Impact of Learning Communities

Compared to nonparticipants, Learning Community participants have higher rates of:



- retention
- persistence
- achievement
- engagement
- intellectual development
- social development
- appreciation for diverse perspectives
- overall satisfaction with their college experience

These outcomes often persist *longitudinally*

Source: Laufgraben, J.L. (2005); Zhao, C.M. & Kuh, G.D. (2004)

Diversity/Global Learning Initiatives

- Often a topic in the first-year seminar
- Also a common learning community or living learning community theme
- Gains in intellectual and social development related to diversity occur largely as a result of the in- and out-of-classroom experiences that first-year students have on campus
- Powerful opportunities for learning when these experiences are processed with students and used as “teachable moments”

Diversity/Global Learning Initiatives

- During their first year of college students often encounter greater levels of diversity than they have previously (backgrounds and perspectives).These experiences contribute to their growth and development
- When our brains encounter something unfamiliar we must stretch beyond our “mental comfort zone” and work to understand by comparing and contrasting what we already know
- Therefore, when we experience social interactions that differ radically from our previous interactions we achieve gains in learning and cognitive development

Source: Acredolo, C. & O’Connor, J. (1991); Nagda, B.R., Gurin, P. & Johnson, S.M. (2005); Piaget, J. (1985);

Diversity/Global Learning Initiatives

Are most successful when:

- They are not addressed solely by isolated events, rather, when they are addressed as important outcomes to be achieved through intentional planning and implementation
- They are woven through the curricular and co-curricular facets of the institution
- They involve both faculty and student affairs professionals in program design and implementation

Diversity/Global Learning Initiatives



Are most successful when:

- They have a positive impact on the campus by creating an inclusive and welcoming environment
- They are supported by upper, mid, and lower levels of the institution
- Their focus is on helping students become culturally competent individuals who can effectively communicate and relate to those of different backgrounds

What We Know About the Impact of Diversity/Global Learning Initiatives

In an AASCU study, employers indicated that colleges should place more emphasis on the following areas in order for graduates to be better prepared to contribute to the global economy:

- Teamwork skills and the ability to collaborate with others in diverse group settings (76%)
- Global issues and developments and their implications for the future (72%)
- A sense of integrity and ethics (56%)
- Cultural values and traditions in America and other countries (53%)

Source: Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., (2007)

What We Know About the Impact of Diversity/Global Learning Initiatives

Students who experience the highest level of exposure to different dimensions of diversity (e.g., interactions and friendships with peers of a different race) report the greatest gains in:

- **Thinking complexity**: the ability to think about all parts and all sides of an issue
- **Reflective thinking**: the ability to think deeply
- **Critical thinking**: the ability to think logically

Source: Gurin, P. (1999); Kitchener,K. et al., (2000); Pascarella, E.T., et al., (2001)

Service-Learning & Community-based Learning Programs

- Credit-bearing common experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets a community's needs
- The experiences typically connect to a specific course, freshmen seminar, or learning community
- Reflection is a key activity to students gaining an understanding of course content, the service experience, and of themselves
- Experiences promote civic engagement and responsibility, as well as leadership

Source: Zlotkowski, E. (2005); Bringle, R.G. & Hatcher, J.A. (1996)

Service-Learning & Community-based Learning Programs

Why in the first-year?

- Late adolescence/early adulthood is a period for testing out future adult behaviors
- Civic engagement in a course setting forces students to make contact outside of their youth culture
- The experiential learning goes beyond job training and focuses on life-learning
- Requiring service-learning sends a message to students that such work is valued by the institution and is characteristic of those who are members of a involved citizenry

Source: Gardner, J. (2008)

Service-learning & Community-based Learning in the First Year

Integrate service activity and pedagogy into:

- Freshmen Seminar
- Theme-based Learning Communities
- Residence hall programming
- General education courses
- First-year writing courses
- First-year common experience introduced during orientation, welcome week, common read, and other high impact initiatives

Service-Learning & Community-based Learning Programs

These programs are most successful when:



- They are rooted in an academic curriculum and serve as a bridge the co-curricular to create holistic learning experiences
- They are clearly distinguished from volunteer work or community service
- Faculty are supported by an administrative unit that oversees the logistics involved in connecting to the community experiences

Service-Learning & Community-based Learning Programs

These programs are most successful when:

- Students reflect on the experiences they have both in and out of the classroom
- Faculty are provided with, and rewarded for, their participation in professional development opportunities
- They scaffold first-year students' learning, building one experiential learning experience upon another
- Clear academic criteria for the selection of service placement

What We Know About the Impact of Service-Learning & Community-based Learning Programs

- Create opportunities for students to have high levels of faculty and peer interactions
- Through their civic contributions and reflective assignments, students achieve personal and intellectual growth
- Increase students' knowledge of the "real world" issues and how they relate to their lives
- Higher levels of engagement contribute to the internalization of active learning strategies, persistence, and retention

Source: Steffes, J.S. (2004)

Intrusive & Appreciative Advising



Intrusive Advising:

An approach that involves proactive and intentional contact with students in order to foster their motivation, increase their skills, and promote their persistence and retention

Appreciative Advising:

The intentional collaborative practice of asking positive, open-ended questions that help students optimize their educational experiences and achieve their dreams, goals, and potentials

Source: Bloom, J. L., Hutson, B. L., & He, Y. (2008).;Upcraft, M.L., & Kramer, G. (1995)

Intrusive & Appreciative Advising

- First-year students are unfamiliar with how to negotiate their way through the University
- Many first-year students have not yet acquired the life skills to manage all that is demanded of them
- First-generation and nontraditional students have even less familiarity with college-going and often enter the institution without the tacit knowledge of how to navigate the institutional culture of higher education

Intrusive Advising

- Student contact with a significant individual at the institution is a critical factor to persistence and retention
- Advisors use “pre-emptive strikes”
- Outreach and support are provided continuously, and particularly in anticipation of when students are in greatest need

Appreciative Advising

- Six-phase model in which advisors work with their advisees to promote the development and fulfillment of students' goals and dreams
- Reciprocal approach where both the student and advisor benefit and learn
- Advisor builds relationship with students to engage them in exploring their options and capitalizing on their strengths
- Advisors are sensitive to students' needs

What We Know About the Impact of Intrusive & Appreciative Advising

- Combining these approaches allow advisors to help students through the “bumps” of their transition while helping them develop autonomy
- Initiatives such as early monitoring and academic recovery programs that operate from a positive empowering philosophy tend to be more effective than those that are punitive
- Approaches such as these help students develop life-long learning skills are transferable to other aspects of their lives

Peer Programs

- Peer programs vary in structure and nature
- These initiatives help to establish a relationship whereby an experienced student provides support & guidance to another student
- Peer programs assist students' socialization into the academic culture and optimize their learning experience by providing emotional & moral support

Source: McLean, M. (2004), Terrion, J.L. & Leonard , D.(2007), Terrion, J.L. & Philion, R. (2008)

Peer Programs

Peers can be instrumental to first-year programs in a number of ways:

- Peer Mentors
- Peer Counselors
- Resident Advisors
- Peer Leaders
- Peer Instructors
- Peer Tutors
- Orientation Leaders
- Peer Advisors



Peers in Action

- Facilitating discussions in first-year seminars and Orientation
- Helping students form social connections in a first-year residence hall
- Providing support as tutors or academic coaches
- Holding regular mentor meetings with students and connecting them to resources
- Providing basic academic advising as a peer advisor

What We Know About the Impact of Peer Programs

- Relationships with peer leaders/mentors promote first-year students' connection to campus
- Peer programs encourage help-seeking among first-year students because they find peer leaders/mentors to be more relatable than professional staff or faculty
- They are win-win initiatives since they also promote the success of the peer leaders/mentors
- These outcomes promote engagement, persistence, retention, and leadership development among the students and the peers

ACHIEVING INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Program Assessment

Remember the five "P" rule:

Poor

Planning

Produces

Poor

Performance

Program Assessment

- Does not focus on individual students, but on program outcomes
- Emphasizes what and how a program is contributing to student learning and growth
- Woven into and informs the strategic planning process
- To be most effective, the strategic plan and assessment plan need to be integrated and developed concurrently

Program Assessment Must-Haves

Three must-haves:



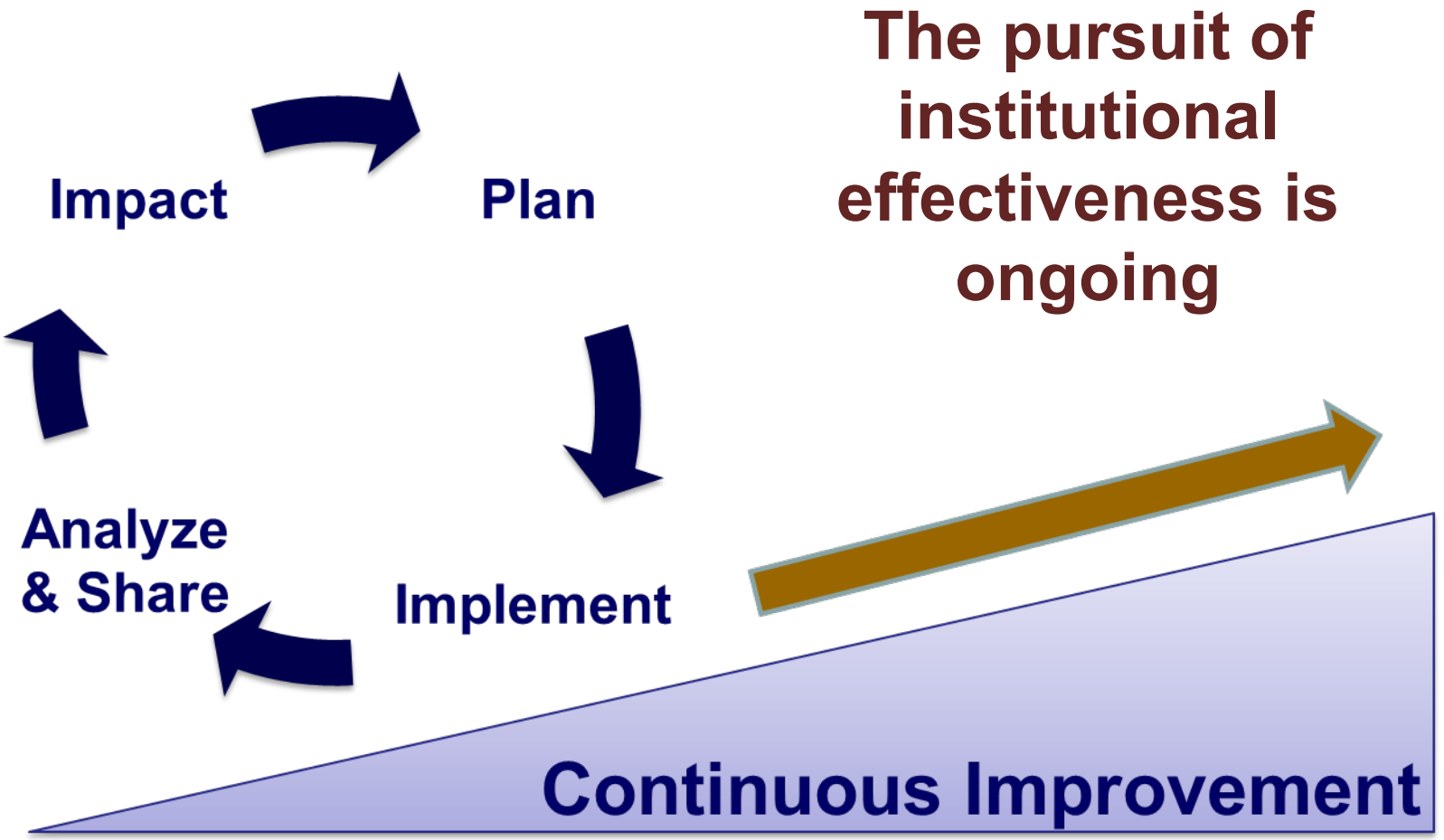
1. **Leadership**: with commitment to the first-year program
2. **Communication**: to encourage buy-in and promote involvement from necessary players
3. **Ongoing attention**: since assessment can't be a one-time thing.

Program Assessment

Effective program assessment answers these questions:

- What are you trying to do?
- How well are you doing it?
- How can you improve what you are doing?
- What and how does your program contribute to the development and growth of students?
- How can student learning be improved?

The Assessment Plan Cycle

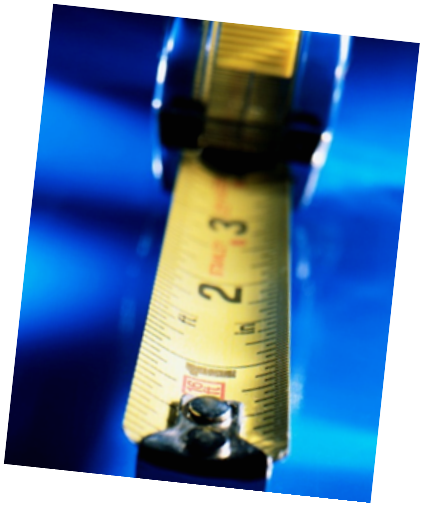


Adapted from the UCF Academic Program Assessment Handbook, 2005

Writing Program Outcomes for the First-Year Program

Use the A-M-A Approach

- **A**mbitious
- **M**easurable
- **A**ttainable



- Ongoing assessment helps us benchmark, so we know where we are and can gauge our targets
- If 18% of your first-year students were on academic probation last fall, should you aspire for a 9% rate by the following fall?

Measuring Program Outcomes for the First-Year Program

- Inventory what assessment tools exist
- Identify and list all available information on the program
- Determine if these sources will suffice in obtaining the needed evidence
- Identify what other information is needed and the way in which the data will be collected

Assessment Methods (decisions, decisions, decisions…)

Surveys

- Attitudes and opinions, values, experiences, expectations, needs

Tests

- One part of a fully developed assessment plan.
- Commonly used in association with cognitive goals
- Measure student achievement with respect to a common body of knowledge associated with a discipline or practice

Assessment Methods (decisions, decisions, decisions…)

Performance Based Measures

- Uses student activities, rather than tests or surveys, to assess skills and knowledge.
- Such activities that are used to evaluate students can be used as a whole to holistically evaluate a course or initiative.
- Portfolios, common writing assignments, skits, films, etc

Assessment Methods (decisions, decisions, decisions…)

Institutional Data

- Mined from the institutional database
- Contains information on student academic progress, demographics, and admissions data
- GPA, credit hours, SAT scores high school GPA, major, race, etc.



Select First-Year Program Assessment Targets

Key Performance Indicators:

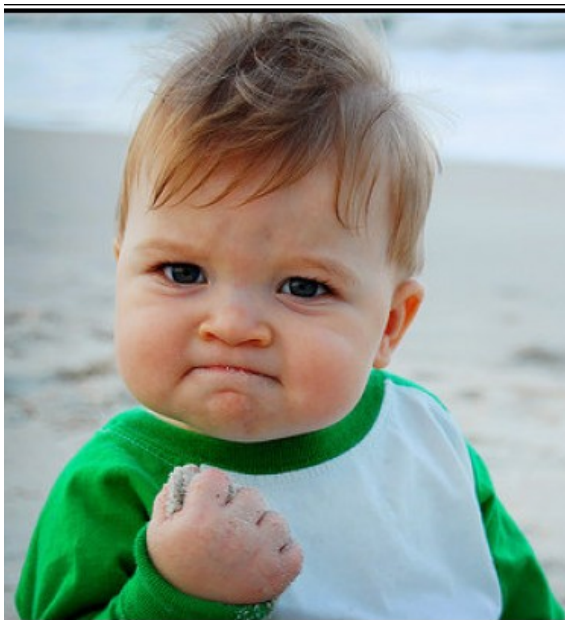
- Used to set realistic targets
- Need to know the degree to which the results indicate that the program is meeting its goals
- Determine program impact using benchmarks and comparisons
- Newly measured outcomes can serve as baselines for next year's targets

Select First-Year Program Assessment Methods

- From the inventoried assessments select those most appropriate to measure the identified targets
- Multimodal (at least 2 different types of assessments)
- Quantitative and/or qualitative?
- Home-grown or established instruments?
- Do the selected methods align with the goals? (ex: a qualitative method for a quantitative goal?)

Outcomes & Measures Perfect Together

- Integrate the intended outcomes with the success measures as they are being established
- The success measures are the targets for the first-year program outcomes
- Use baselines to determine the degree to which the first-year program outcomes were met



Learning Outcome & Measures Example

WHO

INTERVENTION

First-year students who participate in the academic advising workshop will be able to identify the General Education courses required for their major for the coming semester.

DO, KNOW, VALUE

Learning Outcome & Measures Example

TARGET GROUP

TARGET

All first-year students who participate in the academic advising workshop will score at a level of "proficient" or higher on the rubric that assesses the knowledge they gained as a result of their participation.

TYPE OF MEASURE

Analyzing the Results

- What do the data tell about the performance outcomes of first-year students?
- How significant are they?



- Summarize the results to be interpretable to others and so they are interpreted in the proper context
- Help constituents make meaning of the results so that they can be used for continuous first-year program improvement

Using Assessment Outcomes to Advocate for First-Year Programs

- Share the results with stakeholders and identify for them changes needed to the program
- Be sure to show how the outcomes have resulted in a return on investment
- Secure buy-in for changes (consider stakeholders, culture, supporters)
- Work on buy-in at 3 levels: grassroots, mid-level, and upper levels of administration

Keep the Continuous Improvement Cycle Rolling

- Revisit your strategic plan – does it need to be tweaked?
- Involve and collaborate with all stakeholders since campus-wide efforts are more effective & sustainable
- Develop a timeline for implementation and assessment
- Execute it and once that's done, do it all over again



Final Thoughts on the Importance of Assessment to First-Year Programs

- It's expensive to front-load so the institution expects a return on its investment
- Show that the investment cost the institution less than does first-year attrition
  - https://www.noellevitz.com/student-retention-solutions/retention-revenue-estimator
  - Noel-Levitz has online retention revenue estimator tools for 2-year and 4-year institutions as well as an ROI estimator for specific initiatives
- ***Be preemptive with your data***
- Is it accountability or *responsibility*?

Thank You!

Dr. Michele Campagna
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