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Kimberly Grimes Frazier

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ABSTRACT

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE COLLABORATION AMONG ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND STUDENT AFFAIRS AT PUBLIC STATE UNIVERSITY

by

Kimberly Grimes Frazier

February 2003 was the inauguration of the Foundations of Excellence project with an open invitation to chief academic officers at approximately 900 of both the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the Council for Independent Colleges (CIC) member institutions. The Policy Center on the First Year of College, under the direction of the Executive Director, John N. Gardner, invited the various campuses to develop standards and guidelines for the first year, which were termed as Foundational Dimensions or simply Dimensions. As a result, over 200 member institutions agreed to participate in the project by establishing campus-wide task forces to look at the initial list of six Dimensions developed by the Policy Center and Penn State research partners. These Dimensions were designed to be essential characteristics of institutional effectiveness in promoting the learning and success of every first-year student.

This is a case study of one of the founding institutions of the Foundations of Excellence endeavor, Public State University (PSU). In particular, this study utilizes the Foundations of Excellence Dimensions Statements as a basis to assess Public State University's first-year experience collaboration efforts. Furthermore, this research is specifically grounded in the 2nd Dimensions Statement of the Foundations of Excellence,

looking at what the Public State University first-year experience program looks like through academic affairs and student affairs collaborative partnerships. This study specifically examines PSU's established partnerships within the First Year Orientation and Advising Committee (FYOAC) and the University College Advisory Council (UCAC) and determines what participants mean by collaboration.

Through the use of a rubric, the analysis of the data resulted in a significant finding in reference to collaboration literature. The findings indicated that the literature on academic and student affairs collaboration should include information on institutional culture and investigate whether the underpinnings of institutional culture are actually social systems that are inextricably tied to their external environments, which in turn have a direct impact on foundational benchmarks on collaboration for First-Year Experience programs. Implications of this study's results are addressed, limitations of this study are discussed, and recommendations for future research are given.

# FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE COLLABORATION AMONG ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND STDUENT AFFAIRS

by

Kimberly G. Frazier

A Dissertation

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Degree of
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in
the Department of Educational Policy Studies
in
the College of Education
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Atlanta, GA
2007

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Kimberly G. Frazier
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# DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this educational accomplishment in the loving memory of my Uncle Henry Williams Jr., Uncle Billy Williams, Aunt Sarah V. Jenkins and my wonderful grandparents, Gladys Mozelle Grimes, Lucile Everett Williams and particularly Henry Williams, who continuously inquired about my education and proudly smiled at the thought of literacy and would smile even brighter to see his name written here.

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Thank you all, know that I love you very much and I accomplished this educational milestone standing on your shoulders. I can only hope that I have done the Grimes, William and Frazier names proud.

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# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, colleges and universities have paid substantial attention to the student's first-year experience, defined by Gardner (2004) as the totality of the first year of college. Barefoot (2004) asserts that the attention to the first year of college is due to changes in student demographics, concerns about first and second year retention rates, and the understanding that the first year of college presents a rare opportunity to engage students in intentional learning behaviors. As a result, a large majority of American colleges and universities are offering first-year initiatives focused on helping new students make successful transitions from high school to college. In the same vein, there is a profusion of higher education literature in support of student transition, described as best practices in a variety of first-year programs. However, Barefoot (2004) states that although there is interest in first-year efforts, campuses have lacked systematic standards, or satisfying definitions for, first-year excellence that go beyond a single best practice program. In essence, Barefoot (2004) suggests that there should be a broader description of a college or university's total approach to first year experiences, particularly while academic affairs and student affairs divisions, for the purpose of assessment, are hungry for models of excellence and for approaches to produce higher levels of student learning and persistence during the first year.

The concern, however, according to Barefoot (2004) is that administrators and faculty members are reluctant to support standards or to evaluate themselves against

external benchmarks. Therefore, in an attempt to meet the need for a valid measurement or instrument of excellence, the Policy Center on the First Year of College instituted a two-year pilot program to define and substantiate first-year program standards and to provide institutions with a blueprint and process for assessing the first-year experience, as well as a model for first-year excellence. In order to effectively carry out this program, the Policy Center received funding from the Atlantic Philanthropies and Lumina Foundation for Education. The joint project is entitled "Foundations of Excellence in the First College Year" and is a collaborative effort between the Policy Center, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), the Council for Independent Colleges (CIC), and Pennsylvania State University's Center for the Study of Higher Education (Barefoot, 2004).

*Foundation of Excellence Project Specifics*

February 2003 was the inauguration of the Foundations of Excellence project with an open invitation to chief academic officers from approximately 900 of both AASCU and CIC member institutions. The Policy Center, under the direction of John Gardner, Executive Director, invited the various campuses to develop standards and guidelines for the first year, which were termed as Foundational Dimensions" or more simply, "Dimensions." As a result, over 200 member institutions agreed to participate in the project by establishing campus-wide task forces to look at the initial list of six Dimensions developed by the Policy Center and Penn State research partners. These Foundational Dimensions statements were designed to be essential characteristics of institutional effectiveness in promoting the learning and success of every first-year

student, with content and academic skill building, higher-order cognitive skill development, psychosocial development, and success in degree completion deemed as the primary areas of content (Barefoot, 2004).

Once developed, the Dimensions statements were edited by each institution's task force, whereby suggested statements were added and anything seeming to be irrelevant was deleted. Ultimately, representatives of AASCU and CIC institutions agreed on eight common Dimensions (Barefoot, 2004).

*Figure 1*. Foundations of Excellence Dimensions Statements.

1) approach the first year in ways that are intentional and based on a philosophy or rationale of the first year that informs relevant institutional policies and practices;
2) create organization structures and policies that provide a comprehensive integrated and coordinated approach to the first year;
3) facilitate appropriate recruitment, admissions and student transitions through policies and practices that are intentional and aligned with institutional mission;
4) elevate the first year to a high priority for faculty;
5) serve all first-year students according to their varied needs;
6) engage students both in and out of the classroom in order to develop attitudes, behaviors, and skills consistent with outcomes of higher education and the institution's philosophy and mission;
7) ensure that all first-year students experience diverse ideas, worldviews, and people as a means of enhancing their learning and preparing them to become members of pluralistic communities;
8) conduct assessment and maintain associations with other institutions and relevant professional organizations in order to achieve ongoing first-year improvement (Barefoot, 2004, p6).

Consequently, the Policy Center staff selected 12 AASCU and 12 CIC campuses, from the larger group of 219, to pilot a process for using these Dimensions statements as a means for assessing the first year of college. These 24 colleges and universities, known as "founding institutions," participated in an intensive yearlong assessment project to look at their campus's achievement of each Dimension (Barefoot, 2004).

*Summary*

In an effort to create a standard of measurement for first-year student programs, the Policy Center on the First Year of College instituted the "Foundations of Excellence in the First College Year," a joint project between the center, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, the Council for Independent Colleges, and Pennsylvania State University's Center for the Study of Higher Education. Since the project's inception in 2003, eight Dimensions were established as essential first-year student success characteristics for institutional benchmarking.

*Significance of the Study*

Schroeder (1998,) suggests that one of the most challenging trends confronting higher education is the idea of collaboration with business. For example, "Collaborate or die…" a Business Week headline sponsored by the J. D. Edwards Company, introduced an article that stated that in this economy, collaboration is the key to profitability (Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot & Associates, 2005). Perhaps as business links collaboration with profitability, so must higher education link collaboration with student success - yielding a more profitable first-year learning environment for students, and as a by-product yielding profitable retention rates for colleges and universities. The Business Week headline might appear to be harsh and alarming, however, the literature reports that higher education has come to realize that student success is dependant upon crossing organizational boundaries and can best be addressed through collaborative partnerships between academic affairs and student affairs (Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot & Associates).

By focusing on improving the first-year experience of students, faculty members and student affairs staff members can come together to co-create a seamless learning environment that integrates activities in order to increase student satisfaction and ensure the vitality of colleges and universities (Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot & Associates, 2005).

The act of shifting paradigms, in this case, patterns deeply rooted in assumptions about specific areas of expertise and thought processes, is often threatening because it challenges norms or standards and requires fundamental changes in behavior. Therefore, to implement effective First-Year Experience programs, academic affairs and student affairs must overcome their initial resistance and build collaborative partnerships that are based on trust, openness, and an appreciation for diverse views. Furthermore, academic and student affairs administrators must articulate the benefits of collaboration, as well as be consistent with their expectations and rewards for collaboration (Kuh & Banta, 2000).

This study shows how participants collaborate and examine the nature of their shared activities and services in order to achieve effectiveness for the first-year experience, thereby creating seamless and supporting learning environments for in and out of class encounters (Kuh, 1997). Furthermore, this research sheds light on how the University in the study substantiates its position as a Foundations of Excellence institution for its First-Year Experience Program. Additionally, this study adds pertinent information to the literature of higher education on collaborative partnerships and to the literature gathered by the National Resource Center for First-Year Experience and Students in Transitions. This research brings awareness of best practices useful to institutions of higher education as they respond to first-year issues that can lead to increase retention and graduation outcomes as institutions form academic and student

affairs partnerships. Finally, this study is also about not just realizing the importance of cross-functional collaborations, but understanding that collaborative partnerships cannot be forced, although they can be facilitated (Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot & Associates, 2005).

*Purpose of the Study*

This is a case study of one of the "founding institutions" of the Foundations of Excellence endeavor, Public State University (PSU). In particular, this study utilizes commentary literature, and documentation offered by people who are prominent in the field, but the documents are not necessarily based on research and scholarship, on collaboration. Furthermore, because of my current experience as an academician and former student affairs administrator, as well as bearing in mind Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot & Associates' (2005) position that colleges and universities should offer intentional partnerships to challenge and support interventions for first-year success inside and outside the classroom, this research is specifically grounded in the Foundations of Excellence 2nd Dimensions Statement. This Dimension looks at "organization structures and policies that provide a comprehensive integrated and coordinated approach to the first year" (p.8). Therefore, this research observes PSU's First-Year Experience program through academic affairs and student affairs collaborative lenses. Furthermore, this study specifically examines Public State University's established committees that are engaged in collaboration, the First-Year Advising and Orientation Committee (FYOAC) and the University College Advisory Council (UCAC) (Foundations of Excellence Report, 2004)

In the paraphrased words of Lincoln (2004) this case study looks at what is at work rather than simply what works, revealing the structures, policies, and behaviors which attempt to align with Public State University's first-year efforts. The outcome of such investigation is intended to enhance the ability of Public State University and like institutions to scrutinize "organization structures and policies that provide a comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated approach to the first year experience" (Barefoot, 2004, p.6). Moreover, the findings of this research will hopefully assist institutions of higher education in identifying intentional academic and student affairs collaborations in order to ensure a seamless experience for all undergraduate students – a student experience that is based on the expert use and exposure of centralized, lucid and logically organized first-year services at their disposal.

*Research Question*

By obtaining answers through observation, active listening, and interviewing, this study examines a first-year experience program at a university identified as a school of excellence for first-year programs. This study specifically observes the committee work of two ongoing academic and student affairs collaborations – the First-Year Advising and Orientation Committee and the University College Advisory Council and asks the following overarching research question: what do academic and student affairs committee collaborations look like in a First-Year Program of Excellence as highlighted in U.S. News and World Report, one of the premier magazines for America's University and College rankings, particularly for first-year students and parents. Furthermore,

several questions within a rubric, to be discussed later, grounded in academic and student affairs collaboration literature, are used for interviews and observations.

*Summary*

The purpose of this study is to identify what academic and student affairs collaborations look like within a First-Year Experience Program of Excellence by specifically examining academic and student affairs committee collaborations. The following two committees were observed: The First-Year Advising and Orientation Committee (FYOAC) and the University College Council (UCAC). Furthermore, several questions within a rubric, grounded in academic and student affairs collaboration literature, were utilized to guide interviews and observations. The rubric will be discussed in chapter 3. The premise of this study is rooted in a joint project entitled "Foundations of Excellence in the First College Year" and more specifically, utilizes the second Dimensions Statement of the Foundations of Excellence guidelines for benchmarking Public State University's First-Year program.

# CHAPTER 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW

To better understand the First-Year Experience partnerships between academic affairs and students affairs, I conducted a thorough review of the literature and organized it into three sections. The first review of literature provides a historical perspective of the first-year experience, including first-year seminars and learning communities, and the rationale for the First-Year Experience existence in higher education. Because the impetus of this study rest with collaboration, the second section reviews collaboration and the various collaborations within a first-year experience, detailing the divergent views that exist with internal and external collaborations, as well as strategies, obstacles, and opportunities for academic and student affairs collaboration. Last, the third section reviews literature on Public State University as a "founding institution" of AASCU Foundational Dimensions. This section is divided into two parts; the first is a history of Public State University in order to provide some background information on the institution type, successes, and growth. The second part highlights the central First-Year Experience academic and student affairs partnerships as noted by the Foundations Task Force. The second part is also a review of the perceived collaborative partnerships aligned with the 2nd Foundational Dimensions Statement that rest on following Foundations of Excellence assumptions:

1) The academic mission of an institution is preeminent;

2) The first college year is central to the achievement of an institution's mission and lays the foundation on which undergraduate education is built;
3) Systematic evidence provides validation of the Dimensions; and
4) Collectively, the Dimensions constitute an ideal for improving not only the first college year, but also the entire undergraduate experience (Foundations of Excellence Report, 2004, p.6).

*First-Year Experience Background*

Nevitt Sanford, a clinical psychologist and professor of psychology at Stanford University, wrote The American College (1962), and his overriding theme dealt with the challenges and support systems of the first year of college. He contended that in order for first-year students to persist, they must be challenged with educational experiences that foster learning and personal development; however, there must be a balance between the two. Therefore, first-year students must be supported by a campus climate that helps students learn and develop. When balance is maintained, students are positioned to succeed.

Prior to Sanford's 1962 work, very little had been written concerning college student success and first year experience, and Sanford's efforts now serves as a framework for institutional attempts to help students succeed. Furthermore, Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot & Associates (2005) state that Sanford's concepts provide colleges and universities with the vehicle to help first-year students make a successful transition to college by assisting with intellectual competencies, interpersonal relationships, identity with self among others, career counseling, health and wellness, spirituality, diversity, and civic responsibility, all fundamental initiatives of the First-Year Experience and often core components of first-year Seminars and Learning Communities.

*The First-Year Seminar*

The First-Year Seminar is centered on the expectations of the particular institution, and most importantly concerned with the individual needs of its entering college student. Furthermore, seminar student enrollment usually consists of no more than 25 students. By definition, a seminar is a small discussion-based course in which students and their instructors dialogue and exchange ideas and information (Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot & Associates (2005). Thus, the seminar provides opportunities for a positive correlation between student learning and engagement in the academic process. The seminar also allows for building upon the skills and characteristics students bring with them to college, through lectures, activities and class discussion on such issues as high school grades, admission test scores, race, ethnicity, religious preference, income, and reasons for attending college. In addition, the seminar allows students to build on the various elements within the college environment, such as size and type of institution, the socioeconomic status of peers and their values and attitudes, as well as a student's place of residence, major, and level of student involvement (Astin, 1991).

In essence, the first-year seminar is a programmatic and curricular approach to student transition and persistence based on rigorous academic courses offering orientation efforts that continue beyond the opening of school. The seminar is the core of academic and student affairs integration, as it examines institutional fit and encourages student involvement in the curricular and co-curricular (Hunter & Linder, 2003). The First-Year Seminar affords the opportunity for colleges and universities to provide an experience that both challenges and supports first-year students in making successful transitions and

reaching their educational goals (Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot & Associates, 2005). Gordon and Grites (1984) discuss the use of freshmen seminars to respond to an increasingly diverse student body through a common reading experience, workshops, and themed communities while Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot & Associates, (2005) add to our knowledge about how students learn and develop and how collegiate environments, including Freshmen Experience programs, affect students by assisting them in their connections with faculty, campus resources, and peer relationships.

In 1983 the University of South Carolina presented its first annual national conference on the Freshmen-Year Experience. As of 1990, two thousand institutions of higher education offered credit or noncredit freshmen seminar courses – which suggest that such courses and programs are no longer the exception to undergraduate education but now the standard (Gardner, 2004). Furthermore, first-year seminars are essential to faculty development, as faculty members support one another and collaborate in attempts to make course connections or read familiar text through different disciplinary lens (Love, 1999). Gabelnick, MacGregor, and Smith (1990) further argue that faculty members feel a sense of novelty and motivation about their teaching experience within a seminar, in addition to being excited to have participatory students - students that are integrated into the learning process of the curricular and engaged in co-curricular activities.

*Learning Communities*

More and more colleges and universities, at least 75% of research institutions, 40% of Carnegie-classified master and research institutions, 20% of two-year degree

granting institutions, and 18% of baccalaureate colleges are exploring and/or implementing first-year learning communities in which cluster or linked courses are organized around curricular themes and first-year seminars. Learning communities enroll a common cohort of students, generally first-year, and create a more connected curriculum that promotes classroom and campus community (Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot & Associates, 2005).

Learning communities are also richly grounded in early twentieth century efforts as in the cases of John Dewey, and Alexander Meiklejohn's Experimental College at the University Wisconsin (Shapiro & Levine, 1999). Dewey, an advocate for learning environments, asserted that they exist due to cooperative and collaborative approaches to learning, while linking that notion to the definition of education as an ongoing process of reorganization, reconstruction, and transformation, much like the premise behind the Policy Center's Foundations of Excellence. In the same vein, for Meiklejohn, learning communities could be viewed as an alternative to what he concluded in his original address at Amherst College to be a fragmented and incoherent general education curriculum (Meiklejohn, 1912). Learning communities pull together the conflicting aims of university instruction in regard to what is taught versus the ideals of the professor. Meiklejohn argues that administrative decisions that are made in terms of what is taught at the university level are for practical means – knowledge pays, therefore students come to not get an education but to get a job. Knowledge is good not only in and of itself, but also in the enrichment and enhancement of our values and experiences – learning communities exemplify both, through career development, personal development,

leadership development, and study skills opportunities combined with core curriculum courses (Pascarella, & Terenzini, 1991).

Furthering the scholarly foundation of learning communities is Astin's theory of early integration, which submits that learning communities are significant to student success and learning because they offer frequent student to faculty interaction, and frequent student to student interaction (Astin, 1993). As students integrate into campus and interact with faculty and peers, they form lasting connections that support and enhance the student's academic success. Learning communities are also intended to offer practical life applications to practical life situations. They offer consistent feedback and ultimately student persistence and learning that stems from collaborative academic and student affairs approaches to curriculum (Ewell, 1997). Students enter college not as empty pitchers waiting to be filled with knowledge; they enter college with their own unique concepts, personalities, and learning styles. Thus, according to Ewell learning communities are perfect environments in which students can reflect, ponder, challenge, and possibly rethink that which they have learned.

In summary, learning communities can be described as having five characteristics, (1) student collaboration, (2) faculty collaboration, (3) curricular coordination, (4) shared setting, and (5) interactive pedagogy (Goodsell, Love & Tokuno, 1999). Learning communities are environments where academic content is taught from interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary perspectives and with such an interactive pedagogy, campuses are now creating learning communities and placing them at the center of their First-Year Experience programs (Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot & Associates, 2005).

*Collaboration*

As institutions have become more complex, and enrollment has doubled since 1920 following Meiklejohn's address at Amherst College, higher education has attempted to address its complex issues through specialization, thus creating an organization that has become increasingly fragmented. In recent years many campuses have been characterized as disconnected and segregated from any common intuitional mission, guidelines, purpose, or values (Schroeder, 1998). Thus, colleges and universities are becoming organized anarchies with unclear goals, problematic technology, and unpredictable participants that are loosely coupled with authority (Cohen & March, 1974). Schroeder asserted that it is now the norm for divisions within colleges and universities to be quite autonomous, with academic affairs and student affairs having different priorities and expectations. This specialization has led to increased compartmentalization resulting in faculty members, staff members, and administrators working in "functional silos" or "mine shafts" (Schroeder, p. 2). Although working in such conditions is often effective at promoting interaction within functional teams, these silos are barriers to interaction between academic affairs and student affairs. Thus, collaborative partnerships between units are now essential to the success of higher education, more specifically the first-year experience, as well as essential to bridging the historical gap between academic affairs and student affairs (Schroeder).

Schroeder argues that there are a variety of factors that can prohibit effective collaboration, such as

> fundamental cultural differences between faculty and student affairs professionals in terms of personality styles, educational preparation, values, and purposes; the historical separation of the formal curriculum from the informal co-curriculum; a prevailing view that the role of student affairs is ancillary, supplementary or

> complementary to the academic mission of the institution; competing assumptions about what constitutes effective undergraduate learning; and, different institutional expectations and rewards for academic faculty and student affairs professionals (Schroeder, 1998, p. 2).

Schroeder (1998) argues that if these obstacles continue to perpetuate and uphold the disparity between academic affairs and student affairs, then it is not surprising that collaborative initiatives are rarely pursued (Schroeder, 1998).

According to Schetlin (1969), student affairs' myths have led to uncooperative working relationships between faculty members and student affairs staff. Such myths include 1) faculty members not being concerned about their students, 2) the student affairs profession being derived out of the need to fill the rift between faculty and students, and 3) the student affairs philosophy is and can only be appreciated by student affairs staff rather than faculty members. Schetlin indicated that the early period of student affairs work and faculty-student relations consisted primarily of riots, rebellions, and hostility between faculty and students. However, after the Civil War, instead of faculty members becoming more interested in research and scholarship and less connected with students, teachers and teacher-administrators introduced a new pedagogy known as the Student Affairs Point of View - a teaching method introduced and practiced by teachers in the classroom and by administrators, originally teachers themselves, outside the classroom.

This new pedagogy was the start of a progressive movement grounded in the development of the whole student, paying particular interest to the intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual development of students. Schetlin (1969) argues that perhaps the historical student affairs' myths began and then perpetuated because the basic

origin of the student affairs profession was never clearly identified, acknowledged, or recognized. Thus, the incorrect perceptions and lack of knowledge about each other's jobs, the alienating and confusing jargon, the increased specialization, and the financial competition between academic affairs and student affairs has lead to misunderstandings between faculty and staff members (Knefelkamp, 1991; Kuh et al; 1994; Love & Love, 1995). Higher education, however, is in the midst of a dramatic and profound change. Reform of undergraduate education is a priority for most colleges and universities; therefore the need for integration of academic and student affairs, the collaboration between them as an attempt to create a seamless learning environment rather than a separate one, is now a focus of higher education (Schroeder, 1998).

According to the Joint Task Force report (1998) of the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE), the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), people collaborate when a task or charge is too big, too urgent and demanding, or requires too much knowledge for one person or group to do alone. The Joint Report offers another reason for collaboration and that is to deepen student learning, which it defines as a social activity with modeling as one of the most powerful learning tools. As participants in organizations dedicated to learning, colleges and universities have a responsibility to model for students how to work together on behalf of a shared mission and to learn from one another. Hence, those in higher education are making the case that only when everyone on campus – particularly academic affairs and student affairs staff – shares the responsibility for student learning will we be able to make significant progress in improving it (*A Joint Report*).

Although there is substantial interest in forging collaborative partnerships among academic affairs and student affairs, a major challenge, according to Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot & Associates (2005) is actually defining the nature of partnerships vs. collaboration. In examining this research, I find it necessary to clarify and define terms due to the common language vs. scholarly language used and that appears to dominate the discussion on collaboration; therefore, I will begin with Webster's New World Dictionary (1983) definition of partnership - a player on the same team or one of two or more persons owning jointly. In addition, partnership can be defined as an ally or a person associated with another in some common activity (American Heritage Dictionary, 1983). Stein & Short (2001) state that collaboration is often viewed as more of a long term venture and involves a considerable amount of shared decision making and risk taking. Collaboration also involves commitment, investment on the part of the collaborators, and more often than not, requires philosophical agreement from all participants on goals and objectives. Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot & Associates (2005) view collaboration as an essential attribute of partnerships, particularly as partnerships play such a vital role in establishing a solid first-year experience program. Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot & Associates argue that no one division, individually, can create such an integrated, coherent experience, thus, collaboration is critical in building alliances between academic and student affairs so that organizational processes can be properly coupled and aligned. Thus, for the purposes of this study, collaborative partnerships or collaboration or partnership interchangeably will be the terms used to identify and bring meaning to the joint freshmen year experiences efforts among academic affairs and student affairs. In addition, referencing Stein & Short's (2001) definition, as the

researcher of this study, I would also suggest that collaboration warrants some degree of intentionality with those involved viewing themselves as invested co-creators, generating something new and innovative for the freshmen-year experience (Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot & Associates, 2005). Additionally, in the literature and discussion on collaboration, there seems to be significant generalizations made about what collaboration are, reinforcing the purpose of this study to examine what academic and student affairs committee collaborations look like in a first-year program of excellence. Thus, investigating the actual process of collaboration among academic and student affairs has proven to be invaluable.

*Collaboration Characteristics and Opportunities*

Schroeder (1998) suggests that the following seven characteristics are present in order for collaborations to occur, be they internal or external collaborations. First, most college and university collaborative partnerships result from a particular felt need within the institution. Second, partnerships result from paradigm shifts or basic shifts in perspectives, whereby problems and opportunities are viewed through different lenses. Third, stakeholders develop shared visions of issues of importance that are perceived to be better addressed through collaborations. Fourth, mutually agreed upon objectives, such as student persistence, curricular and co-curricular achievements are supported through aligned human, fiscal, and physical resources. Fifth, cross-functional teams share a common purpose, are committed to student success, and want to ensure that educational outcomes are obtained. Sixth, senior administrators with a strong sense of vision, as well as advocates for innovation and change, make vital and noticeable

commitments to new initiatives. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, stakeholders are willing to break down silos and traditional boundaries surrounding their organizational functions to meet common objectives and achieve student success.

Higher education is about higher learning, with learning defined by Schroeder (1998) as a cumulative process that emphasizes application and experience, links established belief to new situations, and incorporates in-depth and frequent feedback on performance. By establishing collaborative partnerships with internal and external constituents, student affairs and academic affairs ought to be able to utilize effective learning approaches to promote various learning outcomes by creating support systems that link, align, and integrate resources, both on and off campus (Schroeder). Institutional outcomes are retention and increased graduation rates (Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot & Associates, 2005).

*Internal Institutional Collaborations*

Gardner (2004) provides suggestions for bridging the gap between academic and student affairs and enhancing those internal partnerships. He asserts that colleges and universities should appoint faculty members to student affairs campus committees, to student organizations as advisors, to ask them to attend student affairs professional conferences, and to teach extended orientation/freshmen seminar courses. Additionally, faculty members and student affairs professionals should co-sponsor academic programs, forums, colloquia, etc, promote social interactions between faculty members and student affairs professionals, and encourage student affairs professionals to assist with faculty research. Furthermore, internal collaborations should be designed to allow faculty

members to play a leading role in the development of residential colleges and living learning environments, share combined office space for functions that integrate both academic and student affairs support services, and request faculty assistance with student affairs programs and evaluations, and vice versa (Gardner).

In addition, the following institutions, also commonly discussed as benchmark institutions for Public State University, established programs and services through internal collaborative efforts to promote campus-wide academic affairs and student affairs partnerships. Auburn University, in an effort to promote academic affairs and student affairs interactions for its students, created a Student Success Center that integrated various campus activities, cross-functional services, and resources that centered on the academic and co-curricular experiences of their undergraduate population. In addition, the internal collaborations between academic and student affairs at Georgia State University, specifically the offices of New Student Programs and Undergraduate Studies, worked together to introduce and register first-year students in over 40 Freshmen Learning Communities. At Georgia State's orientation, a program that facilitates the transition of new students into the academic and social realms of the college environment (Miller, 1999), students enrolled in five common themed courses, and purposefully connected to faculty members, staff members, and current students within the Georgia State University community (FLC Brochure, 2004). The Joint Report (1998), in line with the operationalized definition of collaboration for this study, concludes that such internal collaborations could only exist through intentional cross-functional dialogues and cooperation.

*External Institutional Collaborations*

Because of budget cuts and the reallocation of resources, external collaborations play a viable role in colleges and universities identifying first-year experiences that provide early integration activities, community and campus connections and financial resources that yield student retention. In particular, institutions will often align themselves with resources in education sectors external to their institutions (Schroeder, 1998). In addition to persistence, developing external collaborations provides opportunities for the enhancement of undergraduate education, while also highlighting the important role higher education plays with such endeavors as improving public schools. Examples of external partnerships include: federal initiative, the "America Reads Challenge Program," a university-public school collaboration that provides literacy programs to elementary school students, whereby first-year college students provide literacy education to youngsters in their own community. Through this program, college students simultaneously earn their college work study financial aid funds, preventing economic stop-out and ensuring their persistence and graduation (Schroeder). In addition, programs for recruiting and retaining minority students, such as Georgia State University's "Tighter Grip" African American male retention initiative, can also be developed through external collaborations between academic and student affairs administrators, students, and local high schools. Currently, Georgia State's "Tighter Grip" initiative is a collaborative academic and students affairs partnership that works to educate and recruit African American high school juniors and seniors within the Atlanta Public School system to Georgia State University. Schroeder suggest that the aforementioned collaborations, along with a variety of other early recruitment and pre-

college enhancement programs, substantiate the importance of external collaborations, resulting in increased enrollment and first-year student success at the college and university level.

The educational sector is one avenue for external collaboration; however another is with businesses, corporations, and government, which is one of the most challenging trends confronting higher education – the lack of service to the local community and states (Schroeder, 1998). Nonetheless, Schroeder offers a glimpse of hope, highlighting some institutions, partnerships between student affairs; and academic affairs, particularly social science faculty members (i.e., psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists) have researched community needs and used the data to design service learning initiatives to address those needs. Schroeder also encourages external community-institution collaborations through student organizations and academic student councils with community agencies such as the Red Cross, Big Brothers-Big Sisters, and the United Way in order to connect undergraduate students with real life community issues and concerns. In the process, these connections will help students become aware of civic leadership and promote community development.

Moreover, such external collaborations between higher education and local businesses, government, and state agencies have produced university and community conferences that promote alcohol awareness and address societal problems such as binge drinking by college students. These initiatives help create a sense of collective community responsibility by emphasizing the importance of societal concerns to the entire community. Be they internal or external, all of the aforementioned collaborative descriptors reemphasize the importance of this study on academic and student affairs

collaborative partnerships and the importance of the intentionality of those partnerships (Schroeder, 1998).

*Public State University*

Public State University (PSU) was singled out by U.S. News & World Report in 2004 as one of America's best colleges shown to enhance learning. More specifically, Public State University's First-Year Experience program was nationally named one of the best academic programs leading to student success. PSU who? Public State University is located in Georgia, just 20 miles north of Atlanta, the capital of Georgia. It is a public university in the University System of Georgia, chartered in 1963. In 2002, Public State University opened the doors of its first residential housing facility shifting the campus environment to include not only commuter students, but also residential students. PSU now serves approximately 20,000 residential and commuter students and is looked upon as a valued resource of Georgia's Northwest region's educational, economic, social and cultural development (PSU Fact Book, 2004).

Public State University's core institutional priorities are teaching and learning, with service and research paramount in strengthening those priorities, much so that during hiring processes for faculty members and staff members, the university emphasizes its interest in candidates that are committed to fostering quality academic training, cognitive development, and diversity, as well as develop communication, interpersonal, leadership and social skills, while supporting the desire for lifelong learning. The mission of Public State University aligns with other University System of Georgia schools: to have a supportive campus environment that educates the whole

person whether student, faculty members, or staff members; to embody the ideals of an open, democratic, and diverse society; to be technologically advanced; and to form collaborative relationships with other System institutions, as well as with the State and local communities (PSU Fact Book, 2004).

In 1981, the first woman president of PSU was hired in the University System of Georgia. Under her direction, in 1983 the first freshmen seminar on campus, known at the time as PC 101 offered 9 sections with a student enrollment of 104. Since that time Public State University has gone through several names for the first-year seminar course: PC 101, PSC 101, PSU 101 and currently PSU 1101 (PSU Fact Book, 2004). Faculty members and administrators suggest that the changing of the course numbers for the first-year seminar mirrors the successful progression of the institution and its first year program, for which the core mission remains constant – to foster student success. Therefore, staying true to the progression of change, by 2004, Public State offered 46 sections of PSU 1101 seminar courses; 37 more than in 1983 and enrolled approximately 1000 students, 896 more than the charter or first enrolled class (PSU Fact Book, 2004).

*PSU First-Year Collaborations*

In efforts to meet the demands of the Dimensions Statement #2, in 2004, PSU's taskforce, which consisted of 17 faculty members, staff members and administrators from both academic affairs and student affairs, summarized all campus-wide efforts designed to enhance a student's first-year experience. The campus-wide programs include the Communities for Learning Success (CLASS) program, which provides living learning communities for students living in the residence halls. CLASS is an academic program

that is supported by the Department of University Studies (a unit within the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies), the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Counseling, Advising Program Services (CAPS) Center, and Student Enrollment Services (Student Affairs and Residence Life). As an integral part of this study, it is important to note here that the Department of University Studies, as of 2005, underwent a name change and is now known as University College, positioning itself as the university's 7th academic college. Additionally,

> building upon the existing structure of the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and University Studies involves the coordination of leadership for General Education, CLASS, Learning Support and Supplemental Instruction, ESL, Honors Program, as well as integrated programs for the First Year, Sophomore Year, and Senior Year Experience" (see Figure 1).

Other first-year student activities and retention efforts which are housed primarily with student affairs include the development of CAPS; the Career Services Center (CSC) on-line career portfolio; and Student Life Center (SLC) programs, such as New Student Orientation. Additional student affairs programs include an Activities Fair, Week of Welcome (WOW), "Bust Your Rut" co-curricular resource fair, the development of the Student Development Center (SDC), the opening of campus residence halls, PSU Place and University Place, and the CAPS and Career Center joint Majors Fair (PSU Foundations Task Force Report, 2004).

Housed specifically under Academic Affairs, the home of University Studies, the PSU task force outlined the following Dimensions Statement #2 retention efforts: CLASS, the PSU 1101 First-Year Seminar, the First-Year honors student program, Learning Support and English as a Second Language (ESL) program. The retention efforts as outlined by the PSU task force also included a comprehensive General

Education program, such as the PSU 1101 course including a diversity and internationalization component with The Diary of Anne Frank as a common reader, a built in community based learning experience, and interdisciplinary learning; as well as academic department course offerings tailored to first-year students, such as Biology, Business, and Human Services (PSU Foundations Task Force Report, 2004).

The Foundational Dimensions Statement #2 emphasizes that a coherent or sound first-year experience is attained and sustained through successful collaborative partnerships among academic affairs, student affairs and other administrative units (PSU Foundations Task Force Report, 2004). Therefore, this study examines PSU's first-year experience collaborative partnerships to provide understanding of what ways these collaborative partnerships work or do not work in attempting to achieve the goal of a sound and reliable first-year program.

In keeping with a climate of growth and in keeping with a century old higher education practice to develop committees to meet institutional goals (Veysey, 1965), Public State University in spring 2005 developed two collaborative committees, the University College Advisory Committee (UCAC) established by the Vice President of Academic Affairs, and the First-Year Orientation and Advising Committee (FYOAC) established by the University Studies Department Chair and the Director of CAPS to enhance its First-Year Experience program. Both committees were established as advisory committees to make recommendations for policies and implementation strategies to the PSU administration, particularly the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Dean of University College. Thus, the two committees are the vehicles which

this study identifies as examples of what collaborations looks like in a First-Year Experience program of excellence.

UCAC is the advisory council to the University College (UC), which is the academic home for undecided students who have not yet declared an academic major. The University College is the place, established in 2006, on campus where:

> faculty members who teach General Education, Honors, First-Year Experience, and Learning-Community classes, along with other units throughout campus, come together to provide support for projects related to interdisciplinary programs, faculty advising, supplemental instruction, pre-college outreach, and other issues as needed. The University College supports concerns that most impact student academic success throughout the undergraduate experience. The University College is the home for the proposed undergraduate degree in interdisciplinary studies, and it may house other select interdisciplinary academic programs (UC Memorandum, 2005).

UCAC, after aiding in the establishment of University College, outlined and summarized its accomplishments in regard to the Vice President's initial charge by: 1) setting up regular meetings during the academic year in collaboration with the Dean of University College, and 2) completing a University College mission statement, which reads:

> University College is an academic unit offering integrated programs and services to facilitate students' academic success and persistence. The goal of University College is to ensure a seamless and centralized experience for all of our undergraduate students. A primary objective of University College is to pioneer the development of innovative, cross-disciplinary academic opportunities to meet emerging academic needs (UCAC Summary, 2005).

Additionally, UCAC utilized existing PSU 1101 and PSU 1102 learning outcomes as a template for a more discipline specific first-year seminar. Furthermore, the committee went beyond the VP's charge and made a formal recommendation to the Dean to propose a PSU 1101/1102 curriculum. Based on the Dean's prompt affirmative response to the new proposal, it moved quickly through PSU's governance processes and was formally drafted by the UCAC committee chair in 2005. Over the months following the prepared

curriculum draft, it was approved by the Department of University Studies Curriculum Committee, the Chair of the Department of University Studies; the General Education Council, and the Undergraduate Policies and Curriculum Committee (UPCC). "The proposal received a 12-1 vote of approval from UPCC and became a curriculum requirement beginning fall 2005" (UCAC Summary, 2005).

In keeping with this academic focus, UCAC was also charged with drafting an organizational chart of University College and developing a list of possibilities for faculty involvement. However, the UCAC summary states that the committee "chose to only focus on faculty involvement, and thus drafted a set of 'joint appointment guidelines' for faculty members who seek to be jointly appointed in both a discipline-based college and University College" (UCAC Summary, 2005).

As much as UCAC had its successes, it also had its disappointments. UCAC was unable to meet the remaining VP charges, as outlined in the UCAC summary:

> Recommend assessment needs, policies, and procedures for the PSU 1101 course, recommend tenure and promotion processes and annual performance evaluation processes for University College regular faculty for the PSU faculty handbook, recommend recognition and rewards for the University College faculty, propose and examine in collaboration with other appropriate academic units undergraduate degree programs that are broadly interdisciplinary.

Focusing now on the First-Year Advising and Orientation Committee (FYOAC), with the support of the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Vice President of Student Success, FYOAC was established by the Department Chair of University Studies and the Director of the Counseling Advising Program Services Center (CAPS) to ensure that collaboration between University College and Student Success and Enrollment Services (SSES) existed and persisted for the betterment of the First-Year Experience. FYOAC not only reviews policies and procedures concerning orientation and advising,

but it also helps to reinforce the interaction between UC and SSES on other issues associated to first-year students (FYOAC, 2005).

Upon its completion, FYOAC made several recommendations to the Vice President of Academic Affairs and to the Vice President of Student Success and Enrollment Services which included future discussions about making FYOAC a subcommittee of UCAC, and implementing mandatory orientation with marketing materials sent to all students by spring 2006, prior to the implementation. FYOAC recommendations (2005) also included a new academic advising structure for students attending in fall 2005 with the new advising structure comprised of:

> 1) pre-advising sessions for exploratory students in small groups of 20 students, and 2) a consistent, trained set of academic advisors for each of the seven groups of advisees at orientation that will include two orientation leaders, two faculty/staff from the appropriate college, and one faculty representative from University College.

The seven groups of advisees included:

1) Exploratory students,
2) learning support,
3) College of the Arts,
4) College of Humanities & Social Sciences,
5) College of Education,
6) College of Science & Math,
7) Wellstar College of Health & Human Services, and
8) School of Business.

The final two FYOAC recommendations (2005) centered on the organization of new student orientation and the three part process of mandatory academic advising of first-year students. In reference to organizing orientation, the committee asked for a stronger academic component to ensure that the PSU1101/1102 requirements and University College and Student Success and Enrollment Services initiatives, such as mandatory

advisement be given the needed consideration and explanation. The three part process for mandatory advising of new students includes:

> The first point of contact between a student and his University College/CAPS Center advisor will occur during New Student Orientation. The second point of contact will occur during the first half of his first semester in either his PSU 1101 class, one of his out-of-class activities within his learning community, or a mandated appointment in the CAPS Center. The final point of contact will occur during his second semester to ensure the student is ready to declare a major or at least meet with an academic advisor in the discipline he is most likely to choose as his major. This meeting between the discipline-based advisor and the student will be coordinated by the University College/CAPS Center advisor to ensure the student does not get lost in the system (Appendix B).

Additionally, if by the end of a student's first year, he or she is still undecided about his or her major, the CAPS Center will continue to individually advise the student.

And finally, FYOAC recommended that the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Vice President of Student Success and Enrollment Services make a formal, but joint announcement to the campus community concerning mandatory orientation and mandatory academic advising for all first-time, full-time students (FYOAC Recommendations, 2005).

*Summary*

In an attempt to look at the committee collaborations of a First-Year Program of Excellence, a thorough review of literature was conducted. The literature review provides a historical perspective of first-year programs including the first-year seminar and learning communities, in addition to reviewing literature on collaborations, which is imperative to this study. Such efforts as internal and external collaborations as well as obstacles and opportunities for academic and student affairs collaborations were also reviewed. Moreover, as this study delves into the first-year practices of Public State University as a founding institution of the Foundations of Excellence and the

Foundational Dimensions statements, the latter part of this chapter provides historical background on PSU's institutional type, successes, growth, as well as past and existing collaborations.

# CHAPTER 3

# METHOD

Due to its ability to help the researcher to concentrate on holistic description and analysis of a single unit or bounded system, a qualitative case study is the most effective method of study for this research (Merriam, 1998). It is also the most preferred method for this research because of the type of questions asked, and because I, as the investigator have very little control over the events, and because the focus of the study is on a contemporary phenomenon within a current context (Yin, 2003). Furthermore, the case study is a mode of inquiry that helps to understand and explain the meaning of a social phenomenon, such as committee activity, with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible. Case studies often use interviews, whether structured formally or semi-formally, and through observation of behaviors, such as with this study of committee meetings. Structured formal interviews follow a rigid series of predetermined questions, whereas semi-structured interviews do not. The advantage of two practices is that they allow options of flexibility and opportunity for informal dialogue between the interviewer and interviewee, as well as allow the interviewer, after establishing a sense of trust with participants, to obtain information from the subjects that they might otherwise be reluctant to share (Jaeger, 1997).

In general, case studies do not claim any particular method for data collection, however interviews, observations, and institutional documentation are the usual sources of data collection, thus, they have been utilized for this study as well (Merriam, 1998).

As the researcher, I prefer the aforementioned mechanisms of data collection versus impersonal surveys or questionnaires for this study. As a result, subject observations, interviews, and documentation afford the opportunity to analyze data, and in this case, for storytelling, discovery, and interpretation versus hypothesis testing, as well as the holistic ability to capture a concept (Merriam). However, it must be noted that observations played a small part in this study. Although the attempt was made to gather information from committee observations, the attempt proved to be unsuccessful. Unfortunately, this study took place during the ending of a semester and during the summer when committees were completing their work. Therefore committee meetings were either not held or only resulted in one actual meeting taking place. One committee, FYOAC, never met during the time of this study; therefore information was unable to be obtained through committee observations. Additionally, the UCAC met only once during this study, and when observing the meeting and making an audio recording of it, the recording was inaudible therefore yielded little to no viable results. However, because case studies are not limited to one type of data collection, the research still yielded usable results due the note taking during the meeting and due to the use of interviews and other relevant documents.

This particular study takes a qualitative look at the academic affairs and student affairs collaboration for the first-year experience. The research is bounded by the use of formal FYE interviews with questions for Public State's academic affairs administrators and faculty as well as student affairs administrators and staff that partner and serve as chairs, and co-chairs of the Firs-Year Orientation and Advising Committee and the University College Advisory Council. Furthermore, key committee members from

FYOAC and UCAC were also interviewed as I identified them through committee chair discussions and documentation analysis.

*Interview Questions*

The questions asked during this study were based on the rubric below which is grounded in academic and student affairs collaboration literature. The literature provides characteristics that make for "good" collaborations, and the rubric was used to do university committee observations and subject interviews. Utilizing the rubric as a survey tool and guideline for asking questions, answers were obtained through coding and active listening.

*Figure 2.* Rubric.

1) Why were you selected to serve on this committee?

2) What are your roles in the first-year experience?

3) As I understand it, the University set up this committee to implement collaboration: how would you define collaboration within the committee?

4) If any shared decision making or shared risk taking is taking place within the committee, do you see this as collaboration? If yes, please explain, if no, what would you call it?

5) What sort of commitment is involved in the Advising & Orientation program/University College?

6) What are some of the goals and objectives in the Advising & Orientation program/University College?

7) Are there mutually agreed upon objectives? What are they?

8) Are the mutually agreed upon objectives supported through aligned human, fiscal, and physical resources? If so, explain and if not, does that cause you concern?

9) Is there a philosophical agreement on goals and objectives from all participants? If yes, what is the philosophy? If not, what are the different philosophies?

10) Do you view yourselves as invested co-creators, generating something new and innovative for the FYE?

11) Is this collaboration a result of a shift whereby problems and opportunities are viewed through different lenses?

12) Are there stakeholders that have the same vision of issues of importance perceived to be better addressed through collaboration? If yes, what is the vision? What are the issues? If no, what is the vision? What are the issues?

13) Do you think there was felt university need for this collaboration? If yes, how has it been expressed?

14) Are there vital and noticeable commitments to new initiatives and change from senior administrators with a strong sense of vision? If so, what are the commitments? What is the vision?

15) Do you see this collaboration as a long term venture? (Probe for meaning of long term venture.)

16) Are stakeholders willing to break down traditional boundaries surrounding their organizational functions to meet common objectives and achieve student success? If so, what boundaries are being broken down? Which ones remain?

*Data Collection*

In addition to observations and personal interviews as mentioned in this methods section, primary resources were used to collect data by reviewing PSU's Foundations of Excellence documents as well as committee and administrative notes and e-mails (see Appendixes A, B, C, and D for FYOAC agenda and recommendations, and UCAC minutes and summary). As the Foundational Dimensions statements constitute the model that provides AASCU Institutions, including Public State, with a means to evaluate and improve their first-year student experience, as anticipated, the documents illuminated the intricacies and the intentionality of forming collaborative partnerships. Furthermore, the information gathered provides insight on the complexities of utilizing the skills and

capabilities of both academic affairs and student affairs educators, as well as illustrates any changes the institution may have undergone, funding activities and efforts, and correspondence with Deans and/or Vice Presidents.

Additional data was collected from national publications, such as the U.S. News and World Report in recognition of PSU as an institution of excellence for first-year programs. The purpose here was to collect general information about Public State University, the campus climate in regards to the FYOAC and UCAC, and the local and national progress of PSU's First Year Experience program. And finally, secondary resources were used to investigate the nature of academic affairs and student affairs partnerships for first year excellence, such as scholarly literature defining and discussing First-Year Experience, institutional roles and responsibilities of academic affairs and student affairs, and literature discussing the details of collaboration.

*Data Analysis*

Data analysis in qualitative research occurs simultaneously with data collection (Merriam, 1998). As the researcher and instrument of data collection in this particular study, because of my current and prior work experience, there has been the opportunity to relate to both the student affairs perspective and the faculty perspective of the subjects interviewed and observed. As such, there was a comfortable familiarity to the process and not too difficult of an experience separating the phenomenon from the context; however, it is important to note that what was observed and written about was highly dependent on the following five conditions:

1) the research itself – the romanticism of going native or doing what is inherent because of researchers familiarity with the subject (Merriam) and in my case, academic affairs and student affairs partnerships within the first-year experience;
2) researcher personality biases and occupation(s);
3) the various events and group dynamics that can occur during the fieldwork;
4) the researcher's ability to categorize, analyze, write and portray with accuracy the voices of interview subjects, the academic affairs and student affairs educators;
5) and giving continuous thought to the dissemination of information, given the uncertainties of an unknown environment and understanding that the fieldwork was emergent, ever changing and developing (Merriam, 1998).

As a past student affairs administrator, the assumption that I would share commonalities and thoughts of those interviewed, for example that faculty members are too rigid and do not necessarily understand the curricular and co-curricular experience or development of first-year students, which as a result could separate me from the faculty perspective, was incorrect. It was a pleasant surprise to find that because of their roles working with first-year students, that participating faculty members not only accepted the notion and value of the co-curricular experience, but were also advocates of it. Additionally, as a current faculty member within PSU's Department of University Studies, there was also the assumption that the faculty perspective on collaboration and even the stereotypical criticism that student affairs is too "touchy feely" or activity-based for academic rigor to take place was also an incorrect assumption. In reality, because of the nature of all their faculty member positions, either full-time or part-time, they were all very appreciative of the activities provided by student affairs and utilized some of those programs in their

classroom discussions. Realizing the dichotomy or bipolar positions that I could encounter as the researcher, did prepare me and provide me, however, with an understanding for both the academic and student affairs areas. Additionally, having both backgrounds also provided familiarity and comfort to me as the interviewer, which through nods, smiles and statements such as, “well, you understand” from participants proved that they too seemed at ease during the discussions, which I felt helped secure more thoughtful discussions, thus strengthening my connection with both and enhancing my role as data collector. In addition because of my background in student affairs and my current faculty position, I believe I was also more sensitive to the potential student affairs “touchy feely” or faculty member rigidity assumptions that might hinder my collection and analysis of data. As a result, as anticipated, this study provides indeed a first-hand account of the First-Year Experience committee collaborations at Public State University, therefore offering insight and recommendations to PSU’s Foundations of Excellence initiatives, as well as offers a comprehensive, integrated approach to a student’s first-year experience (Barefoot, 2004).

With informed consent (see Appendix F for consent form) of both the committee chairs/co-chairs as well as the committee members of both the First-Year Advising and Orientation Committee and the University College Advisory Council, I audio taped one University College Advisory Council committee meeting, which proved to be inaudible. I therefore relied on field notes, as well as audio taped individual interviews of both committees and incorporated them into a system for collecting, storing, and retrieving data (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Humberman & Miles, 1994). During the interviews, I asked questions according to the rubric; as the answers were given, I listened intently trying to

identify, as well as assess, what was being verbalized. This ongoing data analysis influenced the decisions about the direction of the interview and dictated whether or not to proceed with the next rubric question or to continue in the direction generated by the participants' answer(s) (Seidman, 1998), both of which was done in order to be true to the emergent or developing data and qualitative inquiry.

The next phase of analysis occurred as I transcribed the taped interviews and the UCAC meeting. As I remained open to the emerging data, I listened intently to the words, voices, tones, sounds, and even pauses made by participants in hopes to pick up on repetitious remarks, patterns, or themes. Throughout each phase of the research, there was constant comparing and highlighting of participant answers in order to fully analyze and code the data (DeVault, 1999; Seidman, 1998). This comparison of answers includes separating the pieces of data, synthesizing them in new and meaningful ways, and deciding what information was useful for learning more about PSU's committee collaboration experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). This constant comparison technique ultimately lead to 5 categories to explore and 2 overreaching themes to compare with the data that emerged throughout the interviewing process, and while the categories and themes are not the actual data, they are the abstractions derived from the data (Merriam, 1998). Additionally, in hopes of getting the most accurate information and data, at the end of the observation and interview process and transcribing of observation and interview audiotapes, I offered participants the opportunity to review the transcripts for which they were involved (Creswell, 1998). Participants were pleased to be asked; all declined to review the transcripts but offered great enthusiasm for reading the findings and final document.

Finally, understanding that the process of analysis is largely intuitive (Merriam, 1998), I made personal notes to myself on observed participant behaviors that better informed the words recorded on tape. In addition, I also recorded and made notes on separate note pages and the margins of the rubric about my thoughts and responses as I observed and interviewed. This method of personal note taking perhaps helped me to concentrate more on the participant answers rather than on my preconceived assumptions, as well as decreased my anxiety about remembering my thoughts throughout this process. As this research study and analysis concluded, I was able to speculate without apprehension the results of this study, for the purposes of this research, as well as for future research on this subject matter (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998). I was also able to make meaning of the findings from interviews, observations, interactions, and documentations so that those reading this study can be well informed about Public State's collaboration practices as a school of excellence for its First-Year Experience program, and more specifically deepen the reader's understanding of the issues and results of PSU's academic and student affairs' committee collaborations, as well as draw implications for best practices (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998).

*Summary*

This study utilizes case study as a mode of inquiry to help understand and explain the mean of a social phenomenon such as committee collaborations, with as little disruption to the natural setting as possible. Although this study is bounded by PSU's FYE program, through the use of interviews, I was still afforded the flexibility and opportunity for informal dialogue between the interviewer and subjects. This chapter

included a discussion of the research instrument, a rubric of 16 questions grounded in collaboration literature on characteristics enhancing collaborations; data gathering procedures, and an analysis of the data. The next chapter will examine the results of this study, first-year experience collaborations among academic and student affairs, and look at the impact of the results on the study institution, as well as other Foundations of Excellence Institutions

# CHAPTER 4

# RESULTS

This chapter discusses the findings and the impact of the findings of this research on Public State University, and how they are perhaps generalizable to other similar Foundations of Excellence institutions. This research may also have an impact on the Foundations project itself, as a measurement model and tool showing how other colleges and universities can create similar organizational structures, policies, and more specifically academic and student affairs committees that provide an intentional comprehensive and collaborative approach to a student's first-year experience.

## *Description of Participants*

Given that this study sought to identify committee collaborations for first-year experience programming, it was essential to identify the two target committees. The target committees were the First-Year Orientation and Advising Committee (FYOAC) and the University College Advisory Council (UCAC). Interview participants for the First-Year Orientation and Advising committee consisted of 1 Caucasian female, the Department Chair of University Studies, as well as co-chair of the committee; 2 Caucasian males, one of whom serves as the Director of the Counseling Advising Program Services Center (CAPS) and co-chair of the FYOAC, while the second white male serves the University as the Director of the Leadership Center within Student Affairs and faculty instructor for the Department of University Studies, in addition to

holding general membership on the FYOAC. The co-chairs of the committee have each served at the institution between 15 and 16 years and have professionally known one another for that length of time as well. The third participant has served at the institution for about 13 years in Student Affairs and just recently received a joint position as a faculty member in the Department of University Studies within the past two years, which is also why he was selected to be interviewed. Of the three interview participants of the First-Year Advising and Orientation committee, the Department Chair holds a PhD degree and the two males hold master's degrees.

The University College Advisory Council interview consisted of 3 participants, 2 Caucasian females and 1 Caucasian male. The first female participant served as chair of the council and has been in her position as Director of the CLASS program for the Department of University Studies for the past 2 years; she has been at the University in a professional capacity for approximately 7 years as a faculty member in the Communication Department. The second female interview participant for the council, the co-chair, has been at the university for approximately 17 years and serves as a faculty member in the College of Science and Mathematics. The third University College Council participant, the male, was the only member of the council from Student Services, which was also why he was selected as an interview participant, has been at the university for approximately 25 years and currently serves as the University Registrar. Of the three UCAC participants, both women hold PhD degrees, while the third participant, the University Registrar, holds a master's degree.

*Open and Axial Coding*

Open coding is the part of analysis that pertains specifically to the naming and categorizing of phenomena, such as committee collaborations through close examination of the data. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest that during this initial stage of coding, open coding is used to name categories, which are discovered when concepts are compared one against another and appear to pertain to a similar phenomenon. As a result, the concepts are grouped together under a higher order category which is more conceptual. Thus, the coding process for this study took form by first performing a full document analysis, paragraph analysis, and then a line by line analysis to yield the categories. Descriptive categories emerged throughout the coding and were highlighted for distinguishable identification, while actual participant comments were used to provide support for each category.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) define axial coding as a "set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding by making connections (themes) between categories" (p. 96). This is done by utilizing a paradigm model involving conditions, context, actions/interactional strategies, and consequences. Though open and axial coding are distinct analytic procedures, the researcher alternates between the two modes when actually engaged in analysis (p. 98).

During open coding various categories were identified. Some pertain to the specific phenomenon of committee collaborations, what's at work, definitions, and the process. Other categories denote function, strategies, and contributing factors, while others refer to consequences of action/interaction such as factors contributing to success and barriers hindering success and collaboration.

The data in this study emerged into the following 5 broad categories:

*Figure 1*. Emergent categories.

| CATEGORIES | TITLES |
|---|---|
| Category 1 | Institutional Role |
| Category 2 | Definition of Collaboration |
| Category 3 | Contributing Factors to Collaboration |
| Category 4 | Barriers Hindering Collaboration |
| Category 5 | Institutionalized Collaboration |

*Category 1 – Institutional Roles*

All six participants were selected by university administrators, which were the Vice President of Academic Affairs (who selected UCAC members), the Department Chair of University Studies and Director of CAPS (who selected FYOAC members). Members of the UCAC (see Appendix D for overall membership list) were initially nominated by the Deans of their departments and selected by the VP of Academic Affairs based on their university role. Members of FYOAC (see Appendix B for overall membership list) were selected by the Department Chair and Director of CAPS also because of their institutional position or role. Additionally, all six participants expressed a sincere interest in the first-year experience of students and felt that their pure interest in the subject matter aided in their selection. The participants of FYOAC described their roles within the institution in the following manner:

> Because of my role as the Department Chair of University Studies and this department is uniquely positioned to serve as the home to undeclared students as they come on campus and also serve as gatekeeper for helping students find their appropriate life majors. It is our role to help mentor students and help them be successful at PSU and success being defined as academic social and personal success.

Therefore, because of her role as Department Chair and being “uniquely positioned” as such, she self-selected to organize, coordinate, and chair the First-Year Advising and

Orientation Committee. Another participant, the co-chair, self-selected also because of his role within the university, explains:

> Because of my role as the Director of the CAPS center and our role within the office coordinating and running orientation, I along with the Department Chair of University Studies created the First-Year Advising and Orientation Committee, thus also self selected to be co-chair. I've always been involved with University Studies and had a very good relationship with the prior Chair. So, I mean, it's always been there and so it's just a natural progression.

The FYOAC member stated:

> Because of my position in Student Services working with student organizations and orientation programs and role with academic affairs with my new role as a faculty member in the Department of University Studies, teaching PSU 1101. Both roles better help to bridge the collaboration, as well as connect the two pieces by talking about the shared experiences.

The participants of UCAC (chair, co-chair, and committee member) described their roles within the institution. The Chair stated:

> When the information came down from the Vice President of Academic Affairs' office regarding the development of the UCAC, it stated in his materials that the Department Chair of University Studies, the First Year Experience Director, and the CLASS director would be permanent members of the UCAC. So, I was chosen to serve on the committee solely by my job title. At the first meeting, I was nominated as chair and the UCAC membership voted me in as chair.

The co-chair declared:

> Oh, that's an interesting question. I was chosen to serve on the UCAC because of my interest in first-year students and because of my role in the university as Chair of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee a couple of years ago. As Chair of that committee, I became acquainted with the Dean of University Studies who put together the University College Advisory Counsel, and I believe she put my name forward. And I am not certain, but I think she may have done so because she knew of my interest.

The member of UCAC reported:

> The Vice President of Student Success and Enrollment Services asked me to be on the committee and I think for two reasons, one because of my position as University Registrar and secondly in that position, I had worked very closely with

> the Department Chair of University Studies and her predecessor, thus my relationship with that department was a deciding factor.

*Summary*

Category I, presents the various institutional roles of the six participants of the study, the three members of FYOAC, which admittedly were selected based on their unique positions as Department Chair of University Studies, Director of CAPS who is both staff member and faculty member within academic and student affairs. Additionally, the three UCAC members voiced that they too were selected because of their roles as CLASS Director, Chair of Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, and University Registrar. Furthermore, participants stated that they found themselves on their respective committees because of their interest in FYE, as well as due to previous relationships with the Dean, the department, and/or department predecessor.

*Category 2 – Definition of Collaboration*

When asked to define collaboration there was no single or generalizable definition of collaboration. However, most of the participants did consistently include in their descriptive definitions the following words “messy,” “power,” “turf,” “fear,” “relationships,” “territorial,” and “student success.” Participants defined collaboration as the following:

> [FYOAC co-chair and Department Head] Collaboration is messy with give and take without guarantee of which one of those two you’re going to do – but be willing to do both. For example, we came into this willing to give up some power, thus enabled us to have success with this committee. CAPS knew that we were willing to sort of share our turf and it opened up the doors for very honest and intense collaboration. I think if they felt they had to give up some of their position or power, they would have been less likely to collaborate with us. A lot of collaboration is fear of losing ground on your turf. It is the trust word that I can’t underscore enough. Additionally, collaboration is relationships, for

> example, had I been a different department chair he might not have been so willing to pull us in and let us into some their turf. The trust and relationship made it be less a turf war.

To clarify turf, the FYOAC co-chair and Department Head defined turf as "faculty resources and defined areas of responsibility such as academic acclamation at orientation rather than in the normal classroom setting."

The FYOAC member stated:

> Collaboration is connecting to create a seamless experience of first year students, understanding what students need in order to be successful. This forces us to drop our territorial natures. Collaboration is stop looking at our specific or individual areas and start looking at the process and how the process can work effectively when we begin working closer in alignment and understanding one another. Additionally collaboration is building relationships thereby yielding student success.

The UCAC member defined collaboration as "working together." And the UCAC co-chair stated,

> Collaboration is letting go of individual power and working together for student success. Collegial – that kind of a term that kind of floats around a lot but it's also, there are personal relationships.

And the UCAC chair emphasized:

> Collaboration is bringing together a group of diverse individuals and rather than having them argue solely from the standpoint of what is best for me, what is best for my department, what is best for my college but instead they were saying, let's look at first year students and see what would be best for them.

Although interview participants did not necessarily comment that their specific committee collaborations would yield a long-term venture, the study did support Stein & Short's (2001) concept that collaboration involves commitment on the part of collaborators and a philosophical agreement from all participants. In this case, the philosophical agreement or underlying commitment from the perspective of both the above committees was student success, whether defined as "the well being of students,"

"understanding what's needed for students to be successful," "building relationships for student success," "working together for student success," or as RPG, which is stated by interview participants as a University System of Georgia Board of Regents push to increase retention, progression, and graduation rates. In any case, student success was the ultimate theme, so the members had the commitment, and developed the desired outcome for the two committees to push through silos, turf issues, fear, and power struggles.

As a result of such collaborations, the First Year Advising and Orientation Committee, chaired by the Department Chair of University Studies and the Director of CAPS took on the task of coordinating advisement at PSU's orientation for an institution with newly developed campus housing that resulted in a shift from a traditional commuter campus to a residential campus. This shift meant there would be an increase in the student population, and specifically, new traditional aged students would be attending Kennesaw for the first time. As a result, the University Studies Department Chair expressed her pledge to share faculty hours to participate in the advising and registration process at orientation if CAPS would permit. The Orientation program accepted their participation for student success purposes, and with the understanding as a member of the Foundations of Excellence that as an component of the institution that their intentional partnership would support first year success inside the classroom as faculty members participated, as well as outside the classroom as faculty members participated at orientation. Additionally, this collaboration also ensured both parties, University Studies and Orientation, that each would have a voice in the upcoming University move to create a University College (see Appendix G and H for University College memorandum and

University College FAQ's), a new academic college, where PSU 1101 and PSU 1102 would be a mandatory curriculum requirement (see Appendix D for curriculum requirement) for new students.

*Category 3 – Contributing Factors to Collaboration*

The results of this study substantiate Schroeder's (1998) suggestions that certain characteristics are present in order for collaboration to occur, in particular, commitment, shared vision, and collaborators viewing themselves as co-creators. Stein & Short (2001) assert that collaboration involves commitment on the part of the collaborators. When discussing commitment, interview participants asserted that the noticeable commitments from their committee involvement were time and the commitment to communicate. For example, the FYOAC co-chair and Department Chair of University Studies stated:

> The commitment of time was a huge collaborative move on our part when it came to faculty participating in advising and registration at orientation. The willingness to partner on something that might not carry a lot of weight, in our case with tenure and promotion, was definitely a commitment. But it is having student success as a priority and as a value that made our time commitment worthwhile.

Additionally, the Director of CAPS and FYOAC co-chair declared:

> The commitment to be present at the meetings and not just there, but also to be there and be focused on what the conversation is about is also a commitment. So also communication with the fortitude to say what you're thinking and to communicate fear, as well as excitement for what the collaboration can bring. It is important that everything is put on the table and the innuendos or rumors are not there once we leave. Commitment to listen and respect one another and it is those relationships based on respect that I think has really helped us.

The FYOAC member reported:

> Well, the commitments amongst the members are, each person on the committee has a responsibility for implementing a part of what we talk about, but understanding that most of the work gets done after the committee meeting. So, when we talk about time commitment, these are people who actually get the work

> done and implement decisions. And so, there is a definite time and effort commitment outside of the committee itself.

However, even though all agree that time commitment was important to their committee's existence and more importantly to collaboration, the honest feedback was that individual committee member commitments to attend meetings was not always there, and for some members, individual reasons for attending also varied, again alluding to the messiness of collaboration. The Chair of UCAC commented:

> I would say that most of the members were very committed. They were sort of like wow, here we are doing something and we're not really sure what it is and so there is an adventure attached to that. Additionally, a lot of people were hand picked because they are first year advocates, so they were pretty committed. There's a particular department chair that was put on this committee who never showed up I think to a single meeting, maybe one, and could have really cared less about the whole thing. But by and large I would say most of the members showed up to meetings. I mean there were people who were saying if I'm going to be here on a Friday afternoon, I'm going to have my voice heard and I'm going to make a difference in what I'm doing.

Just as the research participants were clear on commitment to time, as well as communication being imperative to committee collaboration, they were just as adamant that there was little commitment in respect to resource allocations. Although they did question whether some of the commitment for attendance was due to faculty members getting release time and paid for their participation on UCAC, there was still very little university commitment in the way of money and physical resources to the committees or their efforts, which will be addressed further in the Barriers to Collaboration section of this study.

*Shared Vision*

As Schroeder (1998) suggests, shared vision is a characteristic often present in order for collaborations to occur; such is a finding of this research. More specifically there was a vision of issues of importance that were better addressed through collaboration, due to the scope and magnitude of increased enrollment, RPG, and the PSU 1101 curriculum requirement change, as well as a shared philosophy of student success amongst committee members and university administrators. Furthermore, this shared vision of issues of importance as well as general philosophy of the both the UCAC and FYOAC emphasized the holistic approach to student success, for example as the FYOAC committee chair and Department Head stated:

> I think all of us want students to come here and be retained and be successful academically, personally and socially, but what are we actually doing beyond the scope of our little circle about this big picture? The University College Advisory Council, a lot of the people on that, I'm sure don't really care a whole lot about the University College but they recognize that the general education sort of investment of their College, and their first-year programs are better served by their participation on this Advisory Council. And I would submit to you that the same thing is true of the collaborations with the CAP center and Orientation. We (Department of University Studies) have historically been co-workers with CAPS, but we've even shifted our focus on their importance and come to very purposefully value their contribution and their knowledge in a way we've not done before. We don't just view CAPS or student affairs as appendages but as a partner. I think we all have the same vision; students coming here, being retained and successful, thus we have to move beyond our little circles – if you are about PSU students you have to care about the big picture and all the different pieces or you'll be stretched to thin. They realize that that's not quite their territory, but by partnering with CAPS we give the students a better chance at accurate information, and a better transition, than by bucking the program.

Additionally, the committee member of FYOAC affirmed:

> I think philosophically we are on the same page. I think that philosophically we want students to be successful. I think that is the philosophy that has impacted the way we are working together. The vision is that we are here to create a process by which students can matriculate easier and point to the first-year experience and say this impacted our retention rates, thus student success, which means that

> students are actively, happily engaged in their campus community and succeeding academically. All can be addressed through our working together, or being forced together byway of committees and have dialogue and build some type of relationship.

And the UCAC member commented:

> I think that our primary vision is how can we make the first-year experience better so that as these student progress from their first year to the second year to the third year that they're getting the most out of college both intellectually, as well as the…. learning that comes outside the classroom.

Additionally, the chair of the UCAC agreed that there was a common philosophy as well as a shared vision, however in her comments; she also shared her frustration about fiscal allocations, for example:

> I think if you were to put the Vice Presidents and some of their kind, maybe all the Deans in a room they would all agree that retention of first-year students is vitally important to improving our six-year graduation rates. I think they would also agree that Public University should try to enhance its already well-known first-year programs because they provide a great recruiting tool and it's lovely to be able to have our name listed in U.S. News and World Report and these other sort of things. However, where the rubber meets the road is when you ask Dean X, does all this mean that you would be willing to only see your budget increase by 5% so that the budget for University College, the home of first-year programs, can be increased by 10% because they really need some frontline people who are going to help those first-year students and make a difference in advising and those sorts of things – the answer to this question is where the whole disconnect occurs. But hey, yeah – I think in theory there's a shared vision and philosophy that we've got some problems. We've got to do something about retention, and we've got to do something about graduation.

To further expound upon and emphasize the importance of a shard vision, and being rooted and grounded in a shared philosophy, I must explain what seems to be an opposite occurrence within the committees and that is the committees were very unclear about their specific committee goals. Schroeder (1998) suggests that campuses today are disconnected from common institutional missions, guidelines, purposes, or values. I would submit that from the findings of this study even institutional committees are also

fragmented and segregated from their purpose and goals. All of the participants could identify with what they thought were the goals of their respective committees; however as a collective their goals were quite different from what they perceived the common goals were of their committee. When asked what the goals of FYOAC were, the following responses were given from the co-chairs and committee member:

> [Department Chair and FYOAC co-chair] Effective communication is a goal. Communication between student success and academic affairs is the number 1 goal.
>
> [CAPS Director and FYOAC co-chair] We have a very common goal, and the common goal obviously is to make sure the students get serviced and serviced appropriately, make sure they get advised especially in the first-year, and make sure they get a strong foundation wit the 1101s and the 1102 learning communities.
>
> [FYOAC member] I don't know that we've defined it clearly but my assumption is that we are focused on trying to bring the areas of University Studies and the CAP center responsibilities together.

When asked what the goals of UCAC are, the following responses were given from the co-chair and then chair:

> Well, we are definitely in flux right now. The committee is an advisory to the Dean but now that our Dean is returning to teaching, we or some of us will be on the recruiting committee for the new Dean. Thus, we will then look to that new Dean for new direction to see where the University College goes from here.
>
> The Vice President composed a two-page document and asked members from the college campus to be a part of UCAC and when we met for the first time he talked about how the Advisor Council in terms of how it was going to be composed and initially the first year were each supposed to get $500 in professional development funds, and we were supposed to get a one course reassignment. So I mean this was supposed to be heavy duty service work – this cracked me up. They actually put in the charge all members will receive a certificate of appreciation and a University College medallion to wear on their graduation regalia. Yeah, we're still waiting on those. Also, we were given the task to meet some very general goals like recommend assessment needs, policies, and procedures for the PSU 1101 course. Recommend tenure and promotion processes and annual performance evaluation processes for University College faculty and recommend recognition and rewards for the University College faculty. Now none of these things to my knowledge ever happened. However, we did to a lot in the first year

> of the committee in regards to curriculum requirements in terms of getting the joint appointment guidelines. We did also develop a mission, vision, and goals for University College. All that was done but everybody still had the question, what is a University College and what are we suppose to do to build one? And there was a sense of well, let's just sort of make it up as we go along. And that's kind of what we did. So the overall goal was to try and figure out what University College was and where it fit into PSU's landscape. So how do you have a goal for a structure that you're not even sure what it is? UCAC was very much a top down decision.

Last, when the UCAC committee member was asked about the goals of UCAC, he responded:

> I think that our goals and objectives primarily is to at least originally was to make sure that this college gets up and operating, but now that that has happened, I think that our goals are primarily to make the first-year experience the very best that it can be.

The comments on unclear goals could seem unproductive to collaboration which would add validity to Cohen and March's (1974) assertion that unclear goals often characterize colleges and universities. However, in the case of Public State University' first-year committees the opposite occurred. Rather than being committees that became disconnected because of their inability to agree on common goals, they became stronger and more productive, which speaks to their intense sense of shared vision of student success – a vision and philosophy that began in the early years of the woman president's term with the mission of Kennesaw State and remains still at the forefront of all their decision making processes. So the irony here is that regardless of whether or not members were aware of common goals, effective collaboration still existed because their shared vision of student success remained constant, one of Schroeder's (1998) contributing factors for collaboration and evident by participant responses and repetitiveness throughout this study. It is this shared commitment to student success, as

stated by participants, for example, “we want students to be successful… that is the philosophy that has impacted the way we are working together.”

*Co-creators*

Additionally, the respondents of each of the respective committees did feel as if they were invested co-creators, generating something new and innovative for First-Year Experience. Their responses again supported Schroeder’s (1998) characteristics for establishing collaboration. And furthermore, because of this overarching feeling of creating something new, they felt more invested in the collaboration. The participants’ responses included: “co-creating eliminates the threat of I’m losing something here and if you co-create you will both be invested and both are creating. Yes, co-creators generating something new which is what drives me to be a part of this committee.” Although agreeing with the other respondents on the satisfying feeling of being co-creators, one committee chair felt it was important to bring to the forefront that when doing committee work, one must realize that there is always a core group of committee members that are very dedicated and committed to the cause of the committee and to first-year programming, while at the same time it must be understood that “anytime you have a large group of people working together there is going to be some unevenness in terms of the amount of time and energy people put into the committee, thus different levels of commitment.” Yet, overall it is safe to say that the respondents credited their hard work, determination, and even committee success to their ability to see themselves as co-creators generating something new to the first-year experience of students, as evident by a participant response below. For FYOAC something new was the collaboration on

advising at orientation with the CAPS center and faculty members from the Department of University Studies; for the UCAC it was the PSU 1101 and PSU 1102 requirement, as explained by one of the chairs of UCAC:

> I think that several people on the UCAC really got excited about the idea of this curriculum proposal that became a requirement. I am thinking like one of the my colleagues in the College of Business who was an incredible advocate for the curriculum proposal and so genuinely enthusiastic – like wow, this is just going to be so great for students and this is really going to make a difference in their experience. It was a new requirement that came from the invested work of the committee that really enhanced the two primary FYE programs that we run on this campus. I mean to go from 30 to 40 sections of PSU 1101 to 66, to go from having somewhere in the mid 30s learning communities to 57. It sort of said we are here, and because we have this opportunity to impact so many students, look at all the great things we as a committee will continue to get to do that we might not have been able to do prior to this collaboration.

*Summary*

Similar to Schroeder's (1998) claim that certain characteristics are present in order for collaboration to be effective; the participants of this study discussed the contributing factors for their committee collaborations. Participants stated that because of their shared vision of issues of importance, the institutionalized philosophy of student success, and because of their felt involvement in creating something new, the FYOAC and UCAC collaborations were successful.

*Category 4 – Barriers Hindering Collaboration*

Schroeder (1998) asserts in his discussion of barriers hindering collaboration that "Functional Silos," practices put in place to preserve and promote interactions within functional areas but create obstacles for external areas, are critical issues. Functional Silos are the result of compartmentalization of faculty members, staff members and administrators. These silos, while working in such isolation, can prove to be productive

when relying on the expertise of those involved to effectively carry out tasks within functional teams, however when involving committee collaborations for first-year experience silos become barriers to productivity. The committee members acknowledge the importance of breaking down barriers for effective collaboration, thus when asked if committee members were willing to break down boundaries surrounding organizational functions to meet the common objective of student success the participants responded:

> [FYOAC co-chair and Department Head] That's tough. I'll say this as long as they don't feel hugely at risk with their sort of station here. If they feel like they've got a lot to gain and not much to lose they'll play in the sandbox. Orientation is certainly a boundary that has been broken.
>
> [FYOAC member]I think they are to a certain degree. There is so much transition going on at this university with a new president, new Dean of University College it would be unfair to judge them. I think that when there's a state of uncertainty that it's hard to be certain about anything. However, I do think that this uncertainty has pushed us to create further alignments and stronger connections. It is in our best interest to align, because if we have a strong relationship and a strong bond and doing good things, then we're not going to be touched by the new administration that's coming. The test for the committee will be when the new President and dean comes in if we maintain or if new priorities are established and we may have to break and fall because of that. This will tell us if we are truly in this for the philosophical best interest of the student or we then move in different directions because of the focuses of those two people.
>
> [UCAC co-chair] There were certainly wonderful opportunities for some of us to get out of our little worlds, for me, Computer Science and Information Systems, and attend a writing workshop which is pretty foreign to my field in a sense. By doing this, there were some boundaries broken down in the sense of my getting a glimmer of what goes on in another discipline.
>
> [UCAC member] Absolutely! Yeah, boundaries have been broken, that is in the way of establishing relationships both formally and informally. We have never felt inhibited by our organizational structure not to do something. And quite frankly, I personally believe that that's why Public University has been able to enjoy some of the successes we've had. It's because we have been able to do more with less because of the fact that we have been willing to not worry about those traditional boundaries per se of having to go from here to here and back to here. We just go straight across organization boundaries or straight up and I think that that's helped us. We've been able to do a lot because of that freedom of fewer boundaries. Or even though the boundaries exist, we don't feel inhibited by

> those boundaries. We work across them or through them or on top of them or whatever.

Committee member and chairs alike agreed that from and through their collaborative efforts, boundaries had been broken and broken to meet what Schroeder (1998) suggests as common objectives to achieve student success. However, they also admitted that there were boundaries that remained, and still needed to come down, specifically as the territorial issues and silos involved financial resources, fiscal allocations, and different institutional budget expectations and rewards for faculty and student affairs professionals. Particularly, when asked if there were mutually agreed upon objectives supporting aligned human, fiscal, or physical resources, FYOAC members commented:

> [FYOAC co-chair and Department Head] Some are and some aren't, but overall I'd say no. The budget we have to do things for retention, graduation and progression is so small in this department comparatively that we are not supported by dollars.
>
> [FYOAC member] I don't think we could go wrong with having more people. We could also always use the financial resources as a means to better our processes. Physical space is probably the number one biggest problem – we even struggle with reserving space for first year students at orientation. I think we're moving to where we want to be but we're not there yet.

Members of the UCAC echoed the same financial concerns:

> [UCAC chair] As an advisory council we were never given any opportunity to look at a budget, to talk about what kinds of faculty or administrative structural needs we might see. There was never any discussion of whether we need a budget manager, nor was there ever any discussion about where is University College going to physically be housed. This is sort of one of the other jokes on campus and it is a valid question. Where is University College? There was no discussion of fiscal. There was no discussion of place or location or any kind of allocation of resources other than jointly appointed faculty.

The member of UCAC answered with some uncertainty:

> [UCAC member] That's a tough question, and I don't know that I know the answer for that. I think that physically, in terms of space, I don't think we are there yet. I think we're a long way from there because I think that part of that is just Kennesaw. We are so cramped for space that trying to realign actual people or offices or college space is very difficult. Now in terms of realigning actual people, I think that there's probably still work to do. In terms of budgetary things, I think that those are becoming more in line, but in terms of actually aligning people, reporting structures, there's probably much to be done. And certainly in terms of space there's just no way that they could realign some of that space.

Additionally, the co-chair of UCAC responded in the following manner:

> With the start up of the Council there was funding and I think there are still some, but not nearly as much as there were in the first year. We had, each of us on the committee had the option of taking a course reassignment so that we could focus on UCAC and there were also some travel monies. And a number of us went to conferences using that money. I'm not sure that we still have that. As I am answering these questions, I am realizing that I need the answers, but I don't have them.

Participants reflected Schroeder's (1998) suggestion that differences in expectation of rewards are a factor for prohibiting collaborations. And as a result of respondent answers, it is clear that fiscal and physical resources are important factors in committee collaborations, however because of such rewards as reassigned time, and conference travel funds, particularly with UCAC, committee members saw some support from administrators to provide some backing for faculty members and staff collaborative efforts. In regard to administrative support and funding the UCAC chair responded:

> I think the VP of Academic Affairs would say giving $500 in professional development money to each of those faculty members showed a commitment and giving them reassigned time. He use to laugh about no good deed goes unpunished because he got such, he really took a lot of heat over the reassigned part. Even more so than the money, which was kind of funny. I mean he really was criticized at senate. I mean there are huge service commitments on this campus…. And so I think he really felt like he was showing his intense commitment because he was giving resources and he was giving reassign time.

*Category 5 - Institutionalized Collaboration*

As reported by the joint task force between the American Association for Higher Education, the American College Personnel Association, and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (1998), collaboration takes place when a task or charge is too big, too urgent, and too demanding or requires too much knowledge for one person or group to do alone, hence the committee collaboration of FYOAC. FYOAC focused on the collaboration between Academic Affairs, specifically with the Department of University Studies and Student Affairs, CAPS, concerning orientation and advising; and the UCAC collaboration focused on the curriculum requirements for PSU 1101 and PSU 1102 for all first time, full time students with 15 credit hours or less within University College.

Overwhelmingly, respondents agreed that there was a felt university need for their committee collaborations. For example the co-chair of FYOAC commented:

> The woman president for years pounded home the importance of the first-year experience but her efforts were only chipping away at it or just the beginning. It wasn't an important value to the university, however until this new institutional requirement and creation of University College. All of which made it more a part of the culture than just talking about it but now it is part of the fabric of the academic requirement.

The FYOAC member exclaimed:

> No question, yes there was a felt need! It was expressed very directly by the Vice Presidents that we have got to do something about our retention rates, and graduation rates. Thus, I feel why the committee was formed.

The UCAC member echoed:

> I think the university as a whole felt the need for collaboration. I don't think the university as a whole felt that there was need to create a new structure, such as a new college.

And the UCAC chair stated:

> A felt need for collaboration, yes, I think that probably is a little closer to the mark. I think because no one had ever heard of anything like University College, people didn't really know what it was. Therefore, it wasn't like anyone came together and said I am so glad they finally put this committee together. However, I do think there are a number of people, from faculty to the Deans who in their hearts get tired of the silos. I think they all think we have got to figure out how to make this experience better for students, especially for those people who teach general education classes. There is a much greater appreciation for the student affairs professional on our campus. So, I think if you took a poll and said if money didn't matter would you like to see a greater sense of collaboration across campus, I think you would get an overwhelmingly yes answer to that.

The participant responses illustrate that Public State University as an institution of higher education is in the midst of profound change. Thus, as an attempt to reform their undergraduate education, there is an intentional institutional priority to integrate academic and student affairs efforts to create a seamless learning environment for a student's first-year experience (Schroeder, 1998), as evident in this memorandum excerpt from the Vice President of Academic Affairs to all Faculty members and staff members concerning University College:

> I am pleased to announce the Board of regents recently approved PSU's request to give our Undergraduate and university Studies administrative unit the new name 'University College'… focusing on student success. The Department of University Studies will continue as an academic department in the University College, and new departments will be added as needed. The University College is the academic home for exploratory students who have not yet declared an academic major, and it is a new place to bring together faculty who teach General Education, Honors, First-Year Experience, and Learning Community classes. The University College will work with academic departments and other units throughout campus to provide support for projects related to interdisciplinary programs, faculty advising, supplemental instruction, pre-college outreach, and other issues as needed. The University College will continue to support issues that most impact student academic success throughout the undergraduate experience.

Additionally, as expressed by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and from all participants, the commitment here is to collaboration focusing on student success, not

necessarily to institutional committees' agenda items. When asked whether the committees would be long term ventures as a result of the institutional commitment, there were answers of uncertainty about the committees but positive responses were given when they spoke of continued collaborations overall. Respondents answered in the following manner:

> [FYOAC co-chair and Department Head] Yes, I think the collaboration is a long term venture, because whenever you make a decision to have a 7th college and a new major, you've made a commitment to the institution's history and its future. I also think yes to collaboration because it will continue to effect our number of students that return to this institution and that in turn affects our funding. But I think that long term for the committee is to be determined by the next couple of years. If we flounder and don't do any viable work – making only happenstance connections then no as far as long term for the committee. But I say to you, as long as I am chair of this department and have any kind of influence over its strategic mission or plan, it will continue.

The FYOAC committee member responded:

> No on the committee, yes on the collaboration because if the relationships are developed and the relationships become stronger there won't be a need for the committee.

FYOAC, focusing on first year advising and orientation and UCAC, focusing on PSU 1101 and PSU 1102 curriculum changes, were both tasks too big and demanding for one person, thus yielding first year committee collaborations. Furthermore, because of the continued university efforts to reform undergraduate education and the institutional commitment to create a 7th college, FYOAC and UCAC committees see collaboration at the university as long term ventures, and an embedded part of the university's culture.

*Summary*

Through the 5 emergent categories (1) institutional roles, (2) definition of collaboration, (3) collaboration factors, (4) barriers to collaboration, and (5)

institutionalized commitment surfaced the overarching themes for this study, committee collaborations based on relationships and collaborative committees with a common institutionalized philosophy of student success. Administrators, faculty members and staff members at PSU have proven that the disparities and myths of uncooperative working relationships between faculty members and student affairs staff members are truly myths, particularly in PSU's FYE program. Schetlin (1969) asserts that the idea that faculty members are not concerned with their students, that student affairs professionals were derived out of the need to fill the rift between faculty and students, and that the student affairs philosophy is only appreciated by student affairs staff member rather than faculty members are unfounded myths. Schetlin (1969) further states that these are myths that came from ignorance and a lack of historical knowledge on understanding on the parts of both groups. The participants of this study by their responses and examples provide understanding of the working relationships between academic and student affairs. At the same time, the participants show that their collaboration efforts are an ongoing process and through their candidness reveal some of their own perhaps prejudices and stereotypes, such as the following comment by the co-chair of FYOAC and Department Head:

> Orientation folks realize they could do a better job if they had more faculty input, as for the accuracy of information to students, efficiently because they recognize that students know that a college experience is all about the faculty and the interaction with the faculty and not the counselors. They have a secondary role to play. And I think it is wise for them to continue to be somewhat wary given the shift in administrative top appointments at this point. But I think as long as the VP for Student Affairs stays the same then CAPS will be somewhat protected.

When asked about remaining boundaries, the co-chair of UCAC responded:

> Well sure there are some boundaries that remain. There were some people who to the end said you know that this University College is not relevant to me. There

> were some, yeah. I think there were some specific academic departments who still really aren't on board with the idea of a University College and the idea of addressing first-year students' needs in that fashion. So, sure there are still boundaries.

A UCAC committee chair responded:

> I think that the boundaries that need to be broken are probably with faculty members and staff too that don't fully see the value of some of these first-year initiatives that we're trying to take. I think that because we still have certain individuals who have tunnel vision, some in the academic side of the house, some of the professors in the major departments have tunnel vision for only their major. And I think there would certainly be some on the administrative side of the house who as well have tunnel vision only for their little piece of the pie rather than seeing how it fits into the bigger picture. So, yeah, but I also think that philosophically at the senior administration level they're saying that we don't want to let boundaries stay in the way. I think it will just take time for all those to be broken down.

As alluded to in the above response and in previous participant comments, collaboration is "messy" and not without its challenges. And as Gardner (2005) states, collaboration can not be forced but it can be facilitated. Thus, the faculty and staff at PSU have continuously spoken about students and student success and for that reason are willing to involve themselves with such committee collaborations as FYOAC and UCAC. Additionally, the respondents assert and illustrate through their committee collaborations that academic affairs and student affairs both have pertinent roles in retention, progression, and graduation efforts at Public State University that are clearly operationalized through their personal relationships and campus culture. And perhaps, when speaking about collaboration, particularly within the PSU campus culture, the following UCAC member states it best:

> It's learning and as people come on board, an example, if a person comes on board and this is what's in place, you kind of believe that that's the structure and that's the way it was and you become part of that culture. Whereas if you were not and you didn't believe in it initially, you may have been resistant, well as

> though over time either one, you change, or else you move on. And then as the new people come in, they're embedded into the current structure and the culture.

Furthermore, senior administrators at Public State University, both within Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, have a felt need for student success, thus their work to support committee collaborations speaks to a shift in operation whereby problems and opportunities are viewed through the same lenses – the lens of a common philosophy and the lens of institutionalized collaboration and more specifically on a grass roots level, committee collaborations within and between FYOAC and UCAC.

# CHAPTER 5

# CONCLUSION

*Summary of Results*

This research is specifically grounded in the Foundations of Excellence 2nd Dimensions Statements, which looks at "organization structures and policies that provide a comprehensive integrated and coordinated approach to the first year" (Foundations of Excellence Report, 2004, p. 8). Therefore, this research observes Public State University's first-year experience program through academic affairs and student affairs collaborative lenses. Specifically, this study analyzes Public State University's established committees that are engaged in collaboration, the First-Year Orientation and Advising committee (FYOAC) and the University College Advisory committee (UCAC). In doing so, the overarching research question was asked: What do academic and student affairs collaborations look like in a first-year experience program of excellence? Reiterating the paraphrased words of Lincoln (2004), this research examined what was at work rather than simply what works, revealing the structures, policies, and collaborative behaviors which illustrate, as well as bring understanding to Public State University's first-year efforts.

U.S. News and World Report (2004, 2005, 2006) lists Public State University as one of the top schools in the nation for its first-year program. Simultaneously, in 2006 the U.S. News and World Report listed Public State University as one of only two schools in Georgia known for first-year programming, further supporting the importance

of this study that examines PSU's first-year experience program and more specifically examining the committee collaborations within this nationally recognized first-year program. The issue of collaboration pervades the literature about creating successful first-year experience programs, and the literature provides characteristics that make for successful collaborations. Therefore the interviews were grounded in academic and student affairs collaboration literature and served as a guide for this study.

1) Why were you selected to serve on this committee?

2) What are your roles in the first-year experience?

3) As I understand it, the University set up this committee to implement collaboration: how would you define collaboration within the committee?

4) If any shared decision making or shared risk taking is taking place within the committee, do you see this as collaboration? If yes, please explain, if no, what would you call it?

5) What sort of commitment is involved in the Advising & Orientation program/University College?

6) What are some of the goals and objectives in the Advising & Orientation program/University College?

7) Are there mutually agreed upon objectives? What are they?

8) Are the mutually agreed upon objectives supported through aligned human, fiscal and physical resources? If so, explain and if not does that cause you concern?

9) Is there a philosophical agreement on goals and objectives from all participants? If yes, what is the philosophy? If not, what are the different philosophies?

10) Do you view yourselves as invested co-creators, generating something new and innovative for the FYE?

11) Is this collaboration a result of a shift whereby problems and opportunities are viewed through different lenses?

12) Are there stakeholders that have the same vision of issues of importance perceived to be better addressed through collaboration? If yes, what is the vision? What are the issues? If no, what is the vision? What are the issues?

13) Do you think there was felt university need for this collaboration? If yes, how has it been expressed?

14) Are there vital and noticeable commitments to new initiatives and change from senior administrators with a strong sense of vision? If so, what are the commitments? What is the vision?

15) Do you see this collaboration as a long term venture? (Probe for meaning of long term venture)

16) Are stakeholders willing to break down traditional boundaries surrounding their organizational functions to meet common objectives and achieve student success? If so, what boundaries are being broken down? Which ones remain?

The data from this research were organized into five categories under which each word, phrase, or passages was classified. Open and axial coding were used to ultimately determine the categories. The categories were: Institutional Role, Definition of Collaboration, Contributing Factors for Collaboration, Barriers Hindering Collaboration, and Institutionalized Collaboration.

The final state of analysis in qualitative research is selective coding. During this stage themes emerged and a story line was developed. Two sets of themes emerged in this study. One theme centered on the connectivity of campus and personal relationships to collaboration and the second theme centered on a common or institutionalized philosophy of student success.

All of the participants, within the First-Year Orientation and Advising Committee and within the University College Council, identified relationships which ultimately yielded trust as a key factor in their committee collaborations. The FYOAC committee chair and Department Head stressed that collaboration is a process, and a messy process. She further explained: “messy means you can’t go one, two, three, four, this is how it’s going to work… you are going to make mistakes, but once you’ve built a level of trust, you are

allowed a few missteps." In paraphrasing the subjects' responses, the relationship is of the utmost importance, particularly as mistakes are made, because it is then that allowances for the mistake are made and the collaboration is able to continue. To further make her point about trusting relationships the same FYOAC co-chair asserts:

> I can pick up the phone and say, that didn't go exactly how I thought it would, and I am sorry about that, but let's start again. And he's going to cut me some slack because of that preceding foundation of trust.
> You have to earn it over time. And that's the unknown factor. You have to earn it over time. So, when you hire a new person, they don't automatically come in with the trust factor, they have to earn it.

All participants had been employees at Public State for 10 years or more and in that time had previously worked with one another in one capacity or another or had been made aware of the other through another trusting colleague relationship, even if that colleague had since moved on from the institution – their opinion was still valued and revered. In speaking with the participants all made mention of prior working relationships of previous colleague connections, along with their job titles, as to why they collaborated and some participants credited prior relationships to why they were selected to serve on their respective committees. For example, the co-chair of UCAC commented:

> I became acquainted with the Dean of Undergraduate Studies through my role in the university, the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. I was chair of the Undergraduate Curriculum a couple of years ago, and I became acquainted with her and those two things just kind of dovetailed. And so, I think when they put together the University College Advisory Counsel, the Dean may have been the one who put my name forward.

The Director of CAPS and co-chair of FYOAC responded:

> I've been here 16 years and I've always been involved with University Studies, back when it was called Learning Support. Back when the only thing that was there was PSU 1101 and learning support courses. So, I've always been involved with it, had a very good relationship with the Dean and prior to that the chair of that department.

The UCAC chair explained:

> At the first meeting we took nominations for both chair and chair elect. And a colleague who was at the time a faculty member in the Department of Communications [now a faculty member and colleague in the Department of University studies], nominated me as chair and the UCAC membership voted me in as chair.

And the UCAC member stated:

> And I think the reason that I was asked to serve as primarily for two reasons. Being the registrar I had worked closely with the Department Chair of University Studies, and her predecessor, who also was the Dean of Undergraduate Education… I originally worked with the Dean and the current University Studies Department Chair on two major projects… but I had worked with the Dean and the current Department chair on setting up how we register students in learning communities.

It became very apparent through discussions that it was indeed developed relationships, whether through previous connections or current, that shaped the foundation for collaboration. Interestingly enough, because of the length of employment of all involved, relationship building was not an issue, thus collaboration was successful – again, not because it was a smooth process, quite the contrary, but because the committee members involved had a prior connection and trusted that each had the other's best interest in mind when dealing with such barriers to collaboration as boundaries, silos, and financial and physical resources.

Three of the participants involved in this study, based on job responsibilities, reside in Academic Affairs, while three of the participants based on primary job responsibilities reside in Student Affairs. However, unlike the academic/student affairs myths that were perpetuated because of incorrect perceptions and lack of knowledge about each other's job, the origin of student affairs and even the alienating jargon discussed by Schetlin (1969) they all, when performing work related task and more

specifically when performing their committee responsibilities, had the same working philosophy, student success.

Student success was defined by committee members as the academic, personal, and social development of students. Student success was also defined as students making connections with the university, their peers, faculty members, staff members, and campus resources. Student success, by all accounts from FYOAC and UCAC, is a holistic approach to meeting students' needs and creating a seamless environment for them to make connections for their success.

Additionally, according to the committee members, the institution defined student success in much the same way; however, the university took its definition from the State of Georgia higher educational governing body, the Board of Regents, and defined student success in the terms of retention, progression, and graduation rates. All of the research respondents while taking part in their committee work were somewhat aware of the possible encompassing responsibilities surrounding retention, progression, and graduation; however none of them, when asked about the goals of their committees, could provide a common set of goals for their committee. Some responded that the goals of their respective committee was goal setting; some stated that the goal was to develop a seamless environment known as University College, while another thought the common goal of their committee was to secure a strong first-year curriculum foundation. As a result of their inability to articulate common goals for either committee, it might appear that because of these unclear goals that any collaborative efforts by UCAC or FYOAC would have failed. However, quite the contrary occurred.

Instead, because of trusting relationships and a common philosophy of student success from committee participants and from the institution, the committee collaborations were successful. As a result of the First-Year Orientation and Advising Committee collaborations, the Department of University Studies and CAPS successfully partnered at orientation, with University Studies faculty members who are committed to helping new students adjust to PSU, assisting with academic advisement at New Student Orientation (see Appendix I for faculty advising script at orientation). As a result, based on New Student Orientation Evaluations for fall 2005 (see Appendix J) and fall 2006 (see appendix K) all agreed that students received the appropriate academic advising. The evaluations showed that in fall 2005, 95% of first year students indicated they were satisfied with the advising information received, while 94% stated they understood PSU's registration process and 95% stated they were satisfied with their class schedules. Additionally, the fall 2006 evaluations showed that 92.92% of the first year students were satisfied with the advising information they received, while 93.08% indicated they understood the PSU registration process as well.

Additionally, the University College Advisory Council was successful in its collaborative efforts in that it met some of the charges set forth by the Vice President of Academic Affairs (see Appendix D for charges within the UCAC summary) such as developing a mission statement that reads:

> University College is an academic unit offering integrated programs and services to facilitate students' academic success and persistence. The goal of University College is to ensure a seamless and centralized experience for all of our undergraduate students. A primary objective of University College is to pioneer the development of innovative cross-disciplinary academic opportunities to meet emerging academic needs.

However, most importantly UCAC accomplished the new curriculum change (see Appendix D for 1101/1102 curriculum requirement) requiring all first-time, full-time students with less than 15 credit hours to register for the PSU 1101 First-Year Seminar, and, residential students meeting the same criteria to register for a PSU 1102 Learning Community rather than an independent seminar.

*Implications*

This study has both practical and theoretical implications. The intention now is to share this research first and foremost with the involved committees, FYOAC and UCAC, and then with Public State University's administration, First-Year Experience faculty members, student affairs staff members and members of the Foundations of Excellence committee in order to enhance their understanding of collaborative partnerships. Additionally, the findings of this research has the potential to broaden the perspective of those involved based on the importance of intentional collaborations while understanding that the process of collaboration can be less than perfect, but still yield an effective outcome for student success. For Public State University, the process was "messy" and not without its own set of problems as well as opportunities. However, the ideal elements of collaboration that prove to be invaluable to PSU's committee collaborations involving FYOAC and UCAC dealt with trusting relationships, whether self established or referred by a trusting colleague, and in alignment with Schroeder's (1998) characteristics of good collaboration, a common philosophy woven throughout committee membership, as well as institutionally. As a result of these findings, it is my hope that this study will give way

to articles for publication in national higher education, academic and student affairs journals, as well as presentations at local, regional and national conferences.

As an academician and former student affairs staff member, I hope that this study challenges current assumptions and perspectives about what collaboration means and how collaborative partnerships are entered into and defined. This research shifts paradigms and theoretical notions of academic and student affairs work. It challenges both professions to embrace the philosophy of collaborative partnerships to enhance a student's first-year experience by design. This philosophy is based, of course, on the assumption that optimal student learning cannot take place if the central institutional components involved in the first-year experience are separated from one another by structure and or by commitments (Kuh, 1996). Hence, this study on partnerships among academic and student affairs at Public State University, a first-year experience has made for a worthy investigation, and has proved to be in line with Veysey (1965) who states that by establishing committees to meet institutional goals, that Public State University is keeping with the climate of growth and with a century-old higher education practice to develop committees to meet institutional goals. And even more specifically in the case of Public State, and clearly throughout this study of committee collaborations, the institutional goal is student success which begins with PSU's first year student in their first-year program of excellence.

It is important to note that historically, student success is not a new phenomenon for Public State, but a model deeply rooted in Public State University history. The legitimacy of student success at this southern institution goes back twenty-five years with the inauguration of its first female president, whose platform and institutional mission

embodied student success. This was evident and echoed in her ability to establish the first-year seminar at the onset of her term as president and although it has evolved tremendously, the first-year seminar and now first-year experience program with the underpinning of student success has permeated and left an indelible mark on the culture of the institution. Culture, according to Kuh & Whitt (1988) is unique to every organization and includes the norms, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions that guide behaviors and provide a frame of reference for individuals within an organization (institution). Culture shapes the institution socializes its leaders and laypersons, and maintains stability within the institution. Culture develops over a long period of time and is usually very resistant to change. Hence the unchanging phenomenon of culture, continuity, consistency and comfort at Public State University ultimately illuminates a flaw in the literature on collaboration.

Schroeder's (1998) characteristics of collaboration certainly speaks to established trust and trusting relationships, however, what Schroeder does not address is the impact of culture on those trusting relationships and the comfort that such cultural influence has brought to those that serve at institutional levels, such as Public State. As with the second president at PSU, those employed at Public remain employed consecutive years and are known fondly by their female president as "long marchers," which can be applied to the concept of marching long in the commitment of student success that started in the early 1980s and has successfully continued through to 2006. With that in mind, it is fair to also argue that because there has been such consistency with the philosophy of student success, as well as with long-term employment of employees, that the environment and the culture of PSU is that of institutionalized comfort and familiarity, hence anything

unfamiliar yields an uncomfortable position of not knowing what to expect, apprehension, lack of trust. For example, as stated by FYOAC co-chair, “when you hire a new person, they don’t automatically come in with the trust factor, they have to earn it.”

Furthermore, as identified in the literature review, having clear goals was a specified collaboration characteristic for success. However, the study found that with committee collaborations at Public, the clear goal concept of Schroeder’s collaboration model was not met which should have yielded committee chaos. Chaos did not occur due to Public’s deeply rooted commitment to the philosophy of student success, and because of participants’ intense familiarity with one another and the personal relationships that developed and sustained themselves over long periods of time as long as , 15 or 25 years. While this study substantiates that for the most part Schroeder (1998) was on target with his characteristics, it is important to note also that the literature, must also include a more in depth study or recognition of institutional culture and the role it plays in the success of collaboration.

And although the first-year committee collaborations at Public State proved to be successful, it must also be stated that as a newcomer to an institution with such commitment to culture, philosophy, and one another, that those on the outside coming into such an institution may find that such a culture is very difficult to permeate and even individual efforts to permeate may appear threatening to those on the inside, which I will later explain. The concern, moreover for such institutions, is that as people move out of positions through retirement or even death, after having been “long marchers,” committee collaborations or collaborations in general might be threatened. As stated by one respondent, “I don’t know that if I weren’t in this position that the collaboration would

still exist, but as long as I am here, it will continue." So the question now becomes for Public and like institutions engaging in collaboration, what happens when the familiar is no longer the familiar. However, perhaps Public has successfully mastered that dilemma as well, by a means even unknown to them, but certainly rooted in southern tradition - that collaboration remains alive and well, by way of the "good old boy" network.

The use of the "good old boy" term is not to be derogatory toward Public, but to prove the point that even as one person leaves the institution, the legacy of the person remains - the outgoing faculty, administrator or for the purposes of this research, the committee member leaves but upon doing so names or appoints another as their predecessor, as this research has proven through such comments as "I worked closely with the University Studies Department Chair and her predecessor." The current Department Chair has commented in casual work conversations that her predecessor mentored and groomed her for the Chair's position. So as collaborations continue to be a benchmark within schools of excellence for the first-year experience, it must be noted that there is an institution of first-year excellence that has perfected the art of committee collaborations outside some of the normal rules, regulations, or characteristics of collaboration.

Knowingly or unknowingly, this institution perfected its ability to support a culture of comfort through a sustained philosophy of student success and sustained relationships of trust through a legacy of "long marchers" that as a result crossed traditional boundaries, barriers, silos, and territories. Ironically, perhaps their should be some consideration to the notion that the "good old boy" network also has a place in the collaboration literature in sustaining first-year initiatives and collaborations, as it has substantiated Public's collaborative committee successes (despite unclear goals) and

ability to breakdown the higher education historical gap between academic affairs and student affairs.

*Personal Observations & Commentary*

As the interviewer and ethnographer of this study, I would be remiss if I did not share or include in this research my personal observations of the institutional culture just described. In the summer of 2004, I applied for a Director position at Public State University. The position was housed in the Department of University Studies. During my initial interviews with the Department, it was clear that I was well informed and well qualified for the position, however from the perspective of those hiring, there was still true concern about my ability to be successful. I was told that in the final hours of making a decision, someone else, an alumnus, a current employer had also applied for the position and because she was not a newcomer to Kennesaw, she was now the favored candidate. The rationale was that it is easier for a familiar person to be hired into a new position and form campus-wide connections than an unfamiliar person. It was stated, and correctly so, it would be like throwing me into "the lion's den." Ultimately the latter candidate was offered the position of CLASS Director, not necessarily because of Learning Community expertise, but because of the ease of making inroads into the community and the ease of forming and maintaining trusting relationships. This is the way of PSU. It is easier to teach job responsibilities than it is to teach culture.

However, as a newcomer of only two and a half years to Public State, I have had the opportunity to serve on committees at Public, as well as even chair a committee. And while I certainly value the first-year experience and espouse the student success

philosophy that is so historically rooted in the PSU experience, I have to admit that I have had to still combat Public's strong institutional culture of comfort and familiarity. I have quietly learned that as a committee member, and even as chair that until a level of trust has been obtained by way of time (long marchers), or by way of being introduced and giving legitimacy by way of a familiar Long Marcher or legacy, that it is very difficult to have a voice at the committee table. My experience has been, even though the commonality of philosophy may have gotten me to the table, that commonality by no means afforded me the luxury of trusting relationships or even privy to having my voice recognized until there had been some level of credence giving to me by the familiar. Once I was brought into conversations by way of someone familiar, then my comments or actions at the table were accepted or legitimized or at least partially.

As I have served as Chair of the First-year Convocation committee and now as a member of the new Presidential Inauguration committee, I am very aware that I am only there as a figure to be seen and not necessarily heard unless asked or tapped by a "familiar." Only then am I recognized and given the opportunity to contribute. I also know that as this process continues that I am being groomed to become a "familiar" - a long marcher and that coupled with my philosophy of student success will enhance my abilities to be a part of the First-Year Experience collaboration among academic affairs and student affairs at Public State University.

Please note that as I share anecdotal comments and observations about this research, that I do so in an effort to bring a better understanding of the findings of this research and to bring attention to perhaps a gap in the literature, whereby, when examining academic and student affairs collaborations, institutional culture must also be part of the discussion

and a part of the literature. It is not my intention to be offensive or again even derogatory, but instead be true to the research and to the academy. As I will share one final anecdotal commentary alluding to my own part in the institutional culture described as the "good old boy" network. Upon being hired as a PSU 1101 instructor, and rightly so on my own merit, experience and credentials, I too had been acculturated. On the day of my interview, I was met at the door of the department of hire, not by my interview committee, but by two familiars – familiar to Public as "long marchers," but also familiars to me, in that through previous statewide work, the two had become trusted colleagues and friends. Unbeknownst to me then and I believe even to them, I had just been tapped.

*Limitations of the Study*

This study has some limitations that must be taken into consideration. First, generalizations about the findings cannot be made due to the institutional culture and climate of Public State University. In other words, it is uncertain that institutions of a larger size or with faculty and staff with shorter employment tenure would have the same affinity or need for long-term relationships in order to establish and maintain successful collaborations. Perhaps for different institutions of higher learning, established relationships would not be the foundation for collaboration, instead the intent to collaborate or the collaboration effort would be the foundation with relationships being a by-product of the collaborative process.

Second, the information gathered on Public's first-year collaborations only involved committee collaborations, however, it might prove productive to look at other types of

collaborations, such as external institutional collaborations - those involving universities and local or global communities; also other categories of internal institutional collaborations involving student success, such as those mentioned by Gardner (2004), including student organization advising with both faculty and student affairs staff, conference presentations by both, faculty and student affairs research, and/or shared office space that function to connect both academic and student affairs support services. Obtaining more information on the above items might be relative to the findings and add much to the discussion and literature.

Third, although the attempt was made to collect data from committee observations, the attempt was unproductive due to the timing of this research in relation to the university's academic calendar. Understanding that collaboration is a process and because I was only able to observe part of the process, I would suggest for future study observing the ongoing work of future committee work in its entirety so as to see the interpersonal relationships and interactions of group members and how group dynamics impact, impede or enhance collaborations. Thus, it is fair to say that timing is critical to this type of higher education observations, so future research should take into consideration faculty and staff work schedules and the beginning and ending of semesters.

*Recommendations for Future Research*

Future research in this area of first-year experience programs of excellence committee collaborations is needed to determine whether the findings in this study can be duplicated. Further research utilizing the rubric developed for this study might

substantiate the validity of the instrument. However, because of the results of this study, it might be profitable to include an additional question or questions dealing with institutional culture, and the underpinnings that institutions of higher education are social systems (the “good old boy” network) inextricably tied to and connected to their external environments (a southern institution), and the impact of such on collaboration.

It is also recommended that future research of this type be conducted with other Foundations of Excellence institutions in an effort to better determine on a larger scale if committee collaborations are a true benchmark for determining organizational structures and policies. Perhaps this additional study can further the efforts in highlighting the comprehensive integrated and coordinated approach to the first year, as stated by second Dimensions statement within the Foundations of Excellence report (Barefoot, 2004).

Moreover, it is recommended that future research include contacting additional committee members as an alternative to one member, along with committee chairs, in an effort to identify if those members would respond differently to the initial study. In the same vein, it might prove worthwhile to contact and interview senior administrators, such as the Vice Presidents and Deans of Academic and Student Affairs, as they are involved participants in the collaborative process, to see if they respond differently to the initial study, as well as result in different findings. Additionally, when speaking of committee members, perhaps future research could include interviewing new employees (three years or less) that serve or served as committee members or committee chairs to see if their experiences mirror or dispel those in the commentary.

Finally, given that this study revealed that relationships were crucial to the committee collaborations, it might prove to be worthwhile to conduct the same research with those

referred relationships or relationships formed by the introduction of a former colleague. Since this study did not include such conversations with previous employers or supported relationships that proved to be a conduit for establishing current committee relationships, future research could yield new findings.

*Summary*

What do academic and student affairs committee collaborations look like in a First-Year of Excellence program? This study answers that question by looking at Public State University, one of the founding institutions of the Foundations of Excellence endeavor to provide systematic standards for a college or university's total approach to a student's first year experience. This research is grounded in the second dimension taken from the Foundations of Excellence eight Dimension Statements that states that institutions that are looking for models of excellence should: "create organization structures and policies that provide a comprehensive integrated and coordinated approach to the first year" (p.8). Therefore, this research observed PSU's First-Year Experience program through academic and student affairs collaborative lenses, specifically examining PSU's established committees that were engaged in collaboration, the First-Year Orientation and Advising Committee (FYOAC) and the University College Advisory Council (UCAC).

The rubric used during this research was based on academic and student affairs collaboration literature that provided characteristics that make for good collaboration, which most were exemplified by the participants of this study. For example, Public's committee members clearly state that they were chosen for their respective committees

because of their roles at the university, and because of them working on some level with the first-year experience program. Additionally, committee members identified collaboration as "messy with give and take without guarantee of which one of those two you're going to do, but be willing to do both." Collaboration is "connecting to create a seamless experience of first year students, understanding what students need in order to be successful." Collaboration is "letting go of individual power and working together for student success." Collaboration is "bringing together a group of diverse individuals and rather than having them argue solely from the standpoint of what is best for me… let's look at first year students and see what would be best for them." Overall, the committee members generally agreed and affirmed most of the characteristics outlined in the literature for making collaborations work.

However, there were some contradictions, particularly relating to aligned fiscal resources, and mutually agreed upon goals and objectives from each committee. Contradictions with aligned fiscal resources are clearly stated by the UCAC chair:

> I think if you were to put the Vice Presidents and some of their kind, maybe all the Deans in a room they would all agree that retention of first-year students is vitally important to improving our six-year graduation rates. I think they would also agree that Public University should try to enhance its already well-known first-year programs because they provide a great recruiting tool and it's lovely to be able to have our name listed in U.S. News and World Report and these other sort of things. However, where the rubber meets the road is when you ask Dean X, does all this mean that you would be willing to only see your budget increase by 5% so that the budget for University College, the home of first-year programs, can be increased by 10% because they really need some frontline people who are going to help those first-year students and make a difference in advising and those sorts of things – the answer to this question is where the whole disconnect occurs.

The UCAC chair continued to state:

> The Vice President composed a two-page document and asked members from the college campus to be a part of UCAC and when we met for the first time he talked about how the Advisor Council in terms of how it was going to be composed and

> initially the first year were each supposed to get $500 in professional development funds, and we were supposed to get a one course reassignment. So I mean this was supposed to be heavy duty service work – this cracked me up.

In relation to contradictions concerning committee goals, participants responded:

> I don't know that we've defined it clearly but my assumption is that we are focused on trying to bring the areas of University Studies and the CAP center responsibilities together.
>
> Well, we are definitely in flux right now. The committee is an advisory to the Dean but now that our Dean is returning to teaching, we or some of us will be on the recruiting committee for the new Dean. Thus, we will then look to that new Dean for new direction to see where the University College goes from here.
>
> So the overall goal was to try and figure out what University College was and where it fit into PSU's landscape. So how do you have a goal for a structure that you're not even sure what it is?

The comments on unclear goals could seem unproductive to collaboration which would add validity to Cohen and March's (1974) assertion that unclear goals characterize colleges and universities. However, in the case of Public State University' first-year committees, rather than being committees that became disconnected because of their inability to agree on common goals, they became stronger and more productive. This research shows that these committee collaborations were successful due largely to trusted relationships and a strong sense of a shared philosophy of student success. For some, particularly the "long marchers," the relationships were 13 to 25 years in the making and the philosophy of student success began in the early years of the first woman presidency with the mission of Public State and remains still at the forefront of all their decision making processes today. So the irony here is that while there were not affirmative responses to all the characteristics of good collaborations set forth by the literature that caused FYOAC and UCAC committees to be successful, there is the knowledge that as

long as there is an embedded culture of a shared philosophy and trusted relationships, collaborations in PSU's FYE program will work.

Relationships and a shared commitment to student success were the constants throughout this study and as stated by the FYOAC member, for example:

> I think philosophically we are on the same page. I think that philosophically, we want students to be successful. I think that is the philosophy that has impacted the way we are working together.

Additionally, in regards to relationships, the Department Chair and FYOAC co-chair stated:

> Additionally, collaboration is relationships, for example, had I been a different department chair he might not have been so willing to pull us in and let us into some of their turf. The trust and relationship made it be less a turf war.

And in terms of institutional culture, the UCAC member responded:

> It's learning and as people come on board… this is what's in place, you kind of believe that that's the structure and that's the way it was and you become part of that culture. Whereas if you were not and you didn't believe in it initially, you may have been resistant, well… over time either one, you change, or else you move on. And then as the new people come in, they're embedded into the current structure and the culture.

So what do these findings mean and how does it add to the body of academic and student affairs collaboration literature? Because of "long marchers" and trusted relationships, and because of the core belief and institutional commitment to student success, this study encourages us to further explore the phenomenon of institutional culture, and more specifically, institutional culture in the South, as this has been a study on a Southeastern University. The unyielding commitment of the "long marchers" of this institution to its philosophy and to one another reflects that of the Southern social system known as the "good old boy" network. Perhaps it might be of value to include in the literature on academic and student affairs collaboration information on institutional

culture, and investigate whether the underpinnings of institutional culture are actually social systems (the "good old boy" network) that are inextricably tied to their external environments (southern institutions), that in turn impact foundational benchmarks as collaboration on First-Year Experience programs.

*"New President, New Era"*

"New President, A New Era" was the theme of the inauguration ceremony for PSU's third president, after the retirement of PSU's, first woman president of 25 years. Additionally, spring 2007 marked the PSU's first State of the University address, when the new President unveiled the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan.

> The plan takes into account the position of the State of Georgia and the University System of Georgia in 20007, and their aspirations for 2012. It acknowledges the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, affecting KSU's past, present and future (PSU Strategic Plan, 2007).

During the State of the University address, the new president informed administrators, faculty members, staff members, and students that PSU will begin its inaugural comprehensive capital campaign in efforts to become a "true destination campus." It will become a campus of first choice for students with new buildings, new residence halls, and new parking garages. The president continued,

> we are growing, we're expected to grow, we're mandated to grow, and thus there will be more noise, more mud, and a redirection of traffic patterns…. We are urban - no longer rural, and no longer suburban…. Every facet of PSU is on an upward trajectory (Papp, 2007).

However, the President assures his constituents that the challenges ahead can and will be met, because of the "dedicated faculty and staff members of the PSU community."

Additionally, the new president recognized and solidified PSU's reputation as an institution with "accredited and nationally ranked programs that are committed to student success; initiatives for first-year students, and involvement in community service." However, despite his enthusiasm about change, since the President's arrival and his State of the University Address, there seems to be a climate of quiet uncertainty, long marcher retirements, and new presidential administrative hires. A "New President, New Era," is signifying not only new relationships, but perhaps a new institutional culture.

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# APPENDIXES

## APPENDIX A

University College/SSES Advising Task Force (FYOAC)

Agenda

Charge: history, purpose and responsibilities

Set Priorities (initial and long-term)

Develop mission statement

First Year Mandatory Advising & Orientation

Impact of Proposal for PSU 1101/1102: Certification of requirement

Role of OCP and Advising Council

APPENDIX B

First-Year Orientation & Advising Committee (FYOAC)
Recommendations by Committee Chairs

1. Continue the regular meetings of FYOAC for at least two years to ensure that collaboration and coordination between University College and Student Success and Enrollment Services continue. This body not only reviews policies regarding orientation and advising, but it helps strengthen the communication between UC and SSES on other issues related to first-year students.
    a. There may need to be discussion I the future about collapsing FYOAC into UCAC as one of the standing subcommittees, but that does not seem to be the best course of action right now. We recommend this issue be revisited in spring ’06 before new appointments are made to UCAC for the fall.
2. The message of “mandated orientation” needs to be delivered to students in all materials immediately, but the actual enforcement of that mandate should be delayed until spring ’06. This policy mandate is distinct from curriculum requirements, and its enforcement will require creativity and cooperation from the Registrar’s Office, CAPS Center, Residence Life, and University College. We recommend that FYUOAC invite stakeholders from these entities to work together to develop a manageable enforcement process.
3. The FAST program should be discontinued as of May 20005, and a new structure for academic advising during orientations should be implemented this summer for the eight fall orientation dates. The new structure will include (1) pre-advising sessions for exploratory students in small groups of 20 students and (2) a consistent, trained set of academic advisors for each of the seven groups of advisees at orientation that will include two LINK leaders, two faculty/staff from the appropriate college, and one faculty representative from University College.
    a. Those seven groups are (1) exploratory students, (2) learning support, (3) College of the Arts, (4) College of Humanities & Social Sciences, (5) College of Education, (6) College of Science & Math, and (7) Wellstar College of Health & Human Services.
4. The organization of new student orientations should be re-tooled to include a stronger academic component to ensure that University College initiatives like the PSU 1101/1102 requirement and UC/SSES initiatives like mandatory academic advisement receive the necessary attention and explanation. This re-tooling should be explored in early Fall’05 with the rollout in late fall during spring’06 orientation sessions.
    a. FYOAC will work with the Orientation Planning Committee to implement policy decisions, but OPC will continue to function as a “nuts-and-bolts” team to plan and carry out new student orientation.
5. The mandatory academic advising for first-year students is a three –part process. The first point of contact between a student and his University; College/CAPS Center advisor will occur during New Student Orientation. The second point of contact will occur during the first half of his first semester in either his PSU 1101

class, one of his out-of-class activities within his learning community, or a mandated appointment in the CAPS Center. The final point of contact will occur during his second semester to ensure the student is ready to declare a major or at least meet with an academic advisor in the discipline he is most likely to choose as his major. This meeting between the discipline-based advisor and the student will be coordinated by the University College/CAPS Center advisor to ensure the student does not get "lost in the system." (A student who is still struggling with his choice of major at the end of his first year will continue to be advised by CAPS Center personnel, who will be able to work individually with the student on the completion and analysis of assessments that will assist in the decision-making process.)

A final word: All members of FYOAC strongly support a campus-wide announcement made jointly by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Vice President of Student Enrollment Services regarding mandatory orientation and mandatory academic advising for all first-time, full-time students. All members agree that FYOAC's ability to work with the University Advising Council and other entities on campus will be greatly enhanced by the release of this joint announcement being made prior to the end of the spring semester.

Respectfully submitted on April 20, 2005.

FYOAC Members

5 members from UC
5 members from CAPS

Appendix C

University College Advisory Council Meeting

September 24, 2004
Meeting held in BB 151
By: Chair

1. A member was nominated for an unofficial secretary position. She offered to compile minutes for this meeting until an official secretary is elected. While the Council has no governance responsibilities, the Department of University Studies Chair suggested that a record is kept of the Council's discussions to share with the campus community.

2. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies asked everyone to thank the Chair for the preliminary draft of the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet. The chair asked if there were any questions or concerns coming from each member's departments after the FAQ were distributed. The relationship between this Council and the General Education Council was questioned. The Chair and Dean clarified the fact that they are independent. There may be a logical connection between the two in the future, but it is premature to assume that at this stage. Many of the questions will be answered as the University College Advisory Council develops the structure and determines the scope of responsibilities of the University College.

Many members had questions concerning program development and the interdisciplinary studies degree. The Dean explained that the graduate degree was proposed prior to the formation of University College by a faculty member. The undergraduate degree is currently proposed and under review by the Board of Regents. A UCAC member described this program as one that will be custom tailored to meet student needs. A recommendation was made that the Senate Committee be kept aware of our progress, and the Chair agreed to present where we are now, though she noted that she would not be able to answer many questions, as the Council is in a formative stage.

3. The Chair gave a PowerPoint presentation of national UC models and charged the council to research the existing models, but not to limit our visions to these examples. Included in this presentation was the 2004 NSSE data from Ed Rugg showing the need for improvement in customer relations on this campus between students, faculty and administrative personnel, especially for first-year students. She cited PSU's involvement in the national Foundations of Excellence in the First Year project as the impetus for the formation of a University College. The UC concept also connects, rather than fragments interdisciplinary collaboration. For example, every University College that responded to a national survey in 1993 was responsible for student orientation, academic advising for first-year students (and other special populations like exploratory students), and academic support services. Many of them also offered first-year courses (such as PSU 1101) and coordinated learning communities and other special initiatives. As PSU continues its current growth pattern, the need for a centralized umbrella for first-year initiatives and support services becomes more necessary.

National models from Ohio State, Butler University and IUPUI were briefly reviewed. The Chair also reviewed mission statements from Alabama State and University of South Florida. The presentation concluded with samples of organizational charts from Ball State, University of Texas at El Paso and Ohio University. (Ohio is home to the oldest University College, which was created in 1935).

4. The Chair then reviewed the goals of subcommittees and charged them with meeting prior to the October 5th UC meeting at 3:30 (location TBA). The chairs of subcommittees will email meeting dates. (These chairs are from the following subcommittees: Communication, Mission, Faculty Appointment, and PSU 1101/CLASS).

The subcommittees were also given the following charges:

- *Mission* – to construct a purpose statement for University College to be reviewed by the full Council;
- *Communication* – to gather feedback from campus constituents and develop effective means of transmitting information about the Council's work to the larger campus community;
- *Faculty Appointment* – to draft an organizational chart for University College and to develop a list of possibilities for faculty involvement; and
- *PSU 1101/CLASS* – to develop proposals to strengthen the course and the learning communities initiative within the structure of University College.

5. A member volunteered to produce a website for the University College Advisory Council to assist in efficiently informing the campus community of our activities. The FAQ, Chair's Powerpoint presentation, members of the subcommittee, and other materials will be available on the website.

6. Future UC meeting times: October 5th, 3:30-5 p.m.; October 19th, 3:30-5 p.m.; November 5th, 2:30–4 p.m.; and December 5th, 3 – 4:30 p.m. (Locations to be announced.)

APPENDIX D

## Summary of Activities
## University College Advisory Council
## Year One: 2004-05

**Introduction**

Faculty members and academic administrators from each of the six discipline-based colleges as well as the Department of University Studies were invited to join the University College Advisory Council in August 2004. This advisory body, which would provide recommendations to the Dean, was asked to serve as a "think tank" to ensure that the best ideas on developing, implementing and maintaining a University College were provided to the Dean. The council's membership was determined by Academic Affairs.

The UCAC's first meeting was held September 17, 2004. The VP for Academic Affairs and the Dean facilitated the meeting, and they charged the council members with a broad set of duties. Administrative details were also decided at the first meeting. The CLASS Director, was elected Chair of the UCAC; the Professor of CSIS, was elected Chair-Elect. Members were also given an opportunity to sign up for subcommittees that would explore the (1) mission, vision and goals of University College; (2) faculty appointments within University College; (3) PSU 1101/CLASS issues; and (4) communication regarding University College to both internal and external audiences.

The University College Advisory Council then met as a full body seven times during the academic year. The subcommittees met numerous times to prepare their proposals to the full body.

This has truly been a year of exploration for the UCAC. As with any new initiative, the members of UCAC have had to forge their own path. They have accomplished a great deal and are poised to finalize many of their initiatives in the second year.

**Summary of Accomplishments**

*Mission Subcommittee*: The group's original charge – as it appears in the September 24, 2004, minutes – was "to construct a purpose statement for University College to be reviewed by the full Council." The subcommittee completed this task in early 2005 and sent the Dean its formal recommendations. The mission statement for University College is as follows:

> University College is an academic unit offering integrated programs and services to facilitate students' academic success and persistence. The goal of University College is to ensure a seamless and centralized experience for all of our undergraduate students. A primary objective of University College is to pioneer the development of innovative, cross-disciplinary academic opportunities to meet emerging academic needs.

This subcommittee also developed a set of value statements to guide University College:

- Provide a **student-centered** structure that focuses on the needs and achievement of PSU's unique student population as the ultimate measure of the College's success.
- Approach undergraduate education in an **intentional**, rather than haphazard, way.

- Ensure a **coherent experience** for students.
- Create a clearly defined "**portal of entry**"[1] for first-year students.
- **Transcend disciplinary boundaries** in order to serve students' interests in the best possible way.
- Utilize **ongoing assessment** to guide and refine initiatives.

Finally, this subcommittee detailed the objectives for University College:

- Enhance student satisfaction with the undergraduate experience at PSU.
- Create structures to enhance communication across disciplinary boundaries.
- Integrate General Education and advisement within undergraduate education through the Communities for Learning Success (CLASS), First-Year, Sophomore-Year, and Senior-Year Experience programs.
- Improve PSU's retention rates.
- Improve PSU's graduation rates.

*Communication Subcommittee:* This subcommittee was charged with "gather[ing] feedback from campus constituents and develop[ing] effective means of transmitting information about the Council's work to the larger campus community." The subcommittee completed the following initiatives:

- developed and maintained a website for the UCAC to ensure that its work was easily accessible to the campus community and transparent to those who were interested in following its progress;
- developed and administered a survey to determine what students wanted to know about University College;
- assisted in the development of presentation materials for other subcommittees of the UCAC; and
- worked with University Relations to develop a two-phase strategy for publicizing University College.

The Communication Subcommittee's work was predominantly focused on planning this year, since its work logically followed the work of the other subcommittees. The group will serve as the liaison between University College and those charged with implementing its ideas during the 2005-06 academic year.

*Faculty Appointment:* This subcommittee's charge was to "draft an organizational chart for University College and to develop a list of possibilities for faculty involvement." The subcommittee chose to focus on the second half of the charge for this year and developed a draft of "joint appointment guidelines" for faculty members who seek to be jointly appointed in both a discipline-based college and University College. Using the University of Michigan's document as a starting point for discussion, the subcommittee developed guidelines that would be useful to University College but would also be applicable to other entities at Public State University. There was a consensus at the final meeting of the UCAC to send the guidelines to the Dean as a formal recommendation. The UCAC Faculty Appointment Subcommittee will hold an open forum for the campus community

[1] *Portals of Entry: University Colleges and Undergraduate Studies* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina National Resource Center for the Freshman Year Experience, 1998).

on these guidelines in Fall 2005 and will serve as a liaison when governance bodies begin to review the guidelines during the 2005-06 academic year.

*PSU 1101/CLASS Subcommittee:* This subcommittee reviewed the national learning outcomes assessment report of the First-Year Initiative benchmarking survey, developed by the Policy Center on the First Year of College and Educational Benchmarking, Inc. (EBI), to help shape the PSU aspirational model for its Foundations of Excellence in the First College Year project. Matching up the CLASS learning outcomes (that had been previously developed) and the PSU 1101 modules that were utilized in the Fall 2004 courses, the subcommittee found that PSU's two first-year initiatives met those national benchmarking standards. (The subcommittee recognized that the "Wellness" standard was touched upon in PSU 1101 and most of the learning communities but dealt with completely in the HPS 1000 institutional requirement. The subcommittee also chose to add an eleventh standard to ensure that a commitment to diversity and global appreciation was explicitly represented.) The subcommittee wrote learning outcomes specifically for the PSU 1101 course. It also drafted the national benchmarking standards into 11 learning outcomes that it determined all first-year students at PSU should experience.

In early 2005 the subcommittee reached a consensus that its formal recommendation to the Dean would be a curriculum proposal. The subcommittee's desire to ensure that all first-year students are introduced to the 11 learning outcomes led it to propose a structure to reach that goal: All first-time, full-time students entering PSU with fewer than 15 semester credit hours would be required to take either PSU 1101 or a learning community, which the subcommittee proposed to be named PSU 1102.

The Dean's immediate acceptance of the proposal allowed it to move through the governance process for curriculum additions, changes, or deletions. The proposal was formally drafted by the UCAC chair in February 2005. Over the next two months it was approved by the Department of University Studies Curriculum Committee; the Chair of the Department of University Studies; the General Education Council; and the Undergraduate Policies and Curriculum Committee. The proposal received a 12-1 vote of approval from UPCC and became a curriculum requirement beginning Fall 2005.

Finally, this subcommittee served as a resource throughout the curriculum proposal process by sponsoring an open forum for the campus community, providing assessment data on both PSU 1101 and CLASS, and ensuring transparency by placing voluminous amounts of information on first-year seminars and learning communities on the UCAC website.

The focus for this subcommittee next year will be to develop a template for disciplines that want to develop their own first-year seminars and to review all CLASS proposals for Fall 2006.

*Advising Subcommittee:* A fifth subcommittee was discussed in late 2004 to assess the effectiveness of orientation and advising for first-year students. An ex-officio member of the UCAC, agreed to chair the subcommittee, but it never met. Instead, a task force of

University Studies personnel and CAPS Center personnel was created in spring 2005 to examine orientation and advising for first-year students. This task force's recommendations were provided to the Dean, the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the VP for Student Success and Enrollment Services in late spring.

**Accomplishments Based on Charge**

The following eight possible duties for the UCAC were originally delineated in the charge to the council. Many were accomplished during this first year.

1. Set up regular meetings of the University College Advisory Council in collaboration with the Dean of University College

➢ This was completed with monthly meetings during the academic year. The February 2005 meeting was canceled because of so many conflicting conferences.

2. Develop the mission, vision, and goals for the University College

➢ This was completed by the Mission Subcommittee, although one-year and five-year goals should be developed during the 2005-06 academic year.

3. Develop a template for the PSU 1101 course and possible discipline-specific equivalents for consideration and discussion

➢ The 11 learning outcomes that now define PSU 1101 and PSU 1102 will also provide the foundation for any discipline-specific first-year seminars. The PSU 1101/CLASS subcommittee will work with departments interested in developing discipline-based courses.

4. Recommend assessment needs, policies, and procedures for the PSU 1101 course

➢ There was no explicit exploration of this duty, primarily because the Department of University Studies established an assessment committee for all programs housed in the department. The PSU 1101/CLASS subcommittee will continue to serve as a resource for this departmental committee while also working with departments choosing to develop discipline-specific first-year seminars.

5. Recommend tenure and promotion processes and annual performance evaluation processes for University College regular faculty for the PSU Faculty handbook

➢ This was not explored explicitly, since the "University College regular faculty" are all currently housed in the Department of University Studies. The Faculty Appointment Subcommittee did include extensive discussion of tenure and promotion issues in the joint appointment guidelines.

6. Recommend recognition and rewards for the University College faculty

➢ This was not discussed by any of the subcommittees.

7. Propose and examine in collaboration with other appropriate academic units undergraduate degree programs that are broadly interdisciplinary

➢ No degree programs were proposed or examined, but the Faculty Appointment Subcommittee's work detailed a plan for faculty desiring an interdisciplinary appointment.

8. Other duties as the need arises

➢ Clearly, the focus of the UCAC during its first year was to develop the mission statement for University College, pursue a consistent first-year experience for students, and develop a plan for explaining University College and its initiatives to internal and external audiences.

**Members of the University College Advisory Council**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Dr. | English | |
| Dr. | University Studies | Standing Member |
| Dr. | University Studies | Chair, Mission Subcommittee |
| Dr. | Visual Arts | |
| Dr. | Education | |
| Dr. | Health, PE & Sports | Chair, Fac. Appt. Subcommittee |
| Mr. | Registrar | |
| Dr. | University Studies | Standing Member; UCAC Chair |
| Dr. | Health | |
| Dr. | History & Philosophy | |
| Dr. | Communication | Chair, Comm. Subcommittee |
| Dr. | Biology | |
| Professor | University Studies | Standing Member; Chair, PSU 1101/CLASS Subcommittee |
| Dr. | CSIS | UCAC Chair-Elect |
| Dr. | Int'l Services | |
| Dr. | Economics | |
| Professor | Coles College | |
| Dr. | Wellstar College | |
| Dr. | Theatre | |
| Dr. | Education | |
| Professor | Mathematics | |
| Dr. | Education | |
| Dr. | Economics & Finance | |
| Dr. | Music | |
| *Ex-Officio Members* | | |
| Dr. | Academic Affairs | |
| Dr. | Student Success | |
| Dr. | Academic Affairs | |
| Dr. | Academic Affairs | |
| Dean | University College | |

APPENDIX E

Georgia State University
Educational Policy Studies

**Informed Consent Form**

Title: A First-Year Experience Program of Excellence: Academic & Student Affairs Committee Collaborations

Principal Investigator: Dr. Philo Hutcheson
College of Education, Georgia State University
epspah@langate.gsu.edu, (W) 404-651-2583
Student Investigator: Kimberly G. Frazier
1000 Chastain Road, 4th floor library, Public State University
Kfrazie8@kennesaw.edu, (W) 770-423-6147,

I. Introduction/Background/Purpose:
You are invited to participate in a research study. You will be interviewed regarding your impressions of PSU's First-Year Experience. The purpose of this study is to examine a first-year experience program at a university identified as a school of excellence for first-year programs. I, Kimberly G. Frazier (student investigator), will specifically observe the committee work of two ongoing academic and student affairs collaborations. The two committees are: the Advising and Orientation Committee, and the University College Committee.

II. Procedures & Duration:
This research will include 35 overall committee members as subjects for this study, including committee chair(s) and/or co-chairs. This number comes from the total number of people that are already assigned by the university to each of the committees (Advising & Orientation and the University College committee). In addition to being observed and audio-recorded during upcoming meetings, chairs and co-chairs and possibly one significant contributing member from each committee will be verbally interviewed for about an hour each.

IV. Benefits:
This research will have no direct benefit to you, however, it is my hope that the knowledge gained from this research adds to the existing literature on academic and student affairs collaborations within higher education, as well as contribute to the further success of First-Year Experience programs.

V. Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal:
Participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to be in this study. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at

any time. You may skip questions or discontinue participation at any time. Whatever you decide, you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

VI. Confidentiality:
I will keep records private to the extent allowed by law. I will use pseudo names rather than your name on study records where possible. Your name and other facts that might point to you will not appear when this study is presented or results published. The findings will be summarized and reported in group form. This consent form includes all the IRB federal regulations; there will be no experimental procedures or any foreseeable risks or discomforts to you, as subjects. I will maintain confidentiality of records, materials, minutes and/or e-mails that I obtain that are not public record. I will do so through a separate filing system which will be located off campus. Please know that at anytime throughout this research you may discontinue your participation at anytime, or choose not to answer questions or complete specific tasks. And finally, know that I will relay to you any significant new findings during this research that might relate to your willingness to participate, as well as let you review the completed work of this study, if you so desire.

VII. Contact Persons:
Please contact Dr. Philo Hutcheson, Principal Investigator/Faculty Advisor at 404-651-2582 if you have questions about this study.

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this research study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) which oversees the protection on human research participants. Susan Vogtner, in the Office of Research Integrity, can be reached at 404-463-0674.

VIII. Copy of Consent Form to Subject:

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep. If you are willing to volunteer for this research, please sign below.

_____

Subject Date

_____

Principal Investigator Date

_____

Student Investigator, Kimberly G. Frazier Date

APPENDIX F

MEMORANDUM

To: Faculty and Staff
From: Vice President of Academic Affairs
Date: January 24, 2005
Re: University College

I am pleased to announce the Board of Regents recently approved PSU's request to give our Undergraduate and University Studies administrative unit the new name "University College." The Dean of the University College and will continue many of her current assignments as undergraduate dean, in addition to providing leadership for increasing PSU's academic programs focusing on student success. The Department of University Studies will continue as an academic department in the University College, and new departments will be added as needed. Programs and initiatives currently under Undergraduate and University Studies will continue in the new University College.

The University College is the academic home for exploratory students who have not yet declared an academic major, and it is a new place to bring together faculty who teach General Education, Honors, First-Year Experience, and Learning-Community classes. The University College will work with academic departments and other units throughout campus to provide support for projects related to interdisciplinary programs, faculty advising, supplemental instruction, pre-college outreach, and other issues as needed. The University College will continue to support issues that most impact student academic success throughout the undergraduate experience. The University College is the home for the proposed undergraduate degree in interdisciplinary studies, and it may house other select interdisciplinary academic programs in the future.

The Dean will continue to head the General Education Council and have responsibility for the overall direction, coordination, and administration of PSU's General Education, Honors, First- Year Experience, and CLASS programs. The University College Advisory Committee will continue to make recommendations to Dean Frank for policies and implementation strategies within the University College.

Vice President for Academic Affairs

APPENDIX G

# Frequently Asked Questions Regarding University College and the University College Advisory Council

### *1. What is a University College?*

A University College is an academic unit used at numerous institutions throughout the nation to stress the importance of undergraduate excellence and student success. The concept of a University College is more than 50 years old, according to the Association of Deans & Directors of University Colleges & Undergraduate Studies.

### *2. Why do we need a University College at PSU?*

A University College will allow us to intentionally ensure a more seamless and centralized experience for all of our undergraduate students by building on the collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Success. Additionally, the University College will provide integrated and select academic interdisciplinary programs and coursework.

### *3. Why are we developing a University College now?*

PSU was named one of 12 institutions to serve as benchmarks for the Foundations of Excellence in the First Year program. We began to benchmark ourselves against the other 11 national partners to work on improving aspects of our already strong first-year initiatives. Additionally, we have been recognized for the past two years in *US News & World Reports* for excellence in our first-year programs. This institution has a long history of placing premium importance on undergraduate education, but President Siegel and the University System of Georgia would like to see us focus on specific goals in the coming years that improve the student retention, academic achievement, and the overall living learning environment at PSU. A University College will focus on those goals and help us take our undergraduate initiatives to a new level while building interdisciplinary programs to benefit all of our students in innovative ways.

### *4. What is the University College at PSU?*

The focus of University College is to continue to provide integrated and select academic interdisciplinary programs and coursework as well as leadership in undergraduate programs at Public State University. Building upon the existing structure of the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate & University Studies and the Department of University Studies, the University College will involve the coordination and leadership for General Education, Communities for Learning Success (CLASS), Learning Support and Supplemental Instruction, ESL, Honors Program, as well as integrated programs for the First Year, Sophomore Year, and Senior Year experience.

To facilitate the details of implementing the University College, we have an Advisory Council composed of faculty members who were recently charged with developing both the substance and the Implementation of University College. This Council is to provide advice to the Dean of Undergraduate and University Studies, who is assuming the position of Dean of the University College. The Advisory Council will investigate national models but will assist the Dean in developing a University College that works for the unique needs of Public State University.

### *5. How were Advisory Council members chosen?*

The faculty members, who were asked to serve on the University College Advisory Council by the Vice President of Academic Affairs, were initially nominated by their Deans or were selected based on their contributions to the university. Chosen for their professional perspectives, these faculty members represent a diversity of disciplines, experience at PSU, and ideas about University College.

### *6. What is the function of the Advisory Council?*

Designed to be a "think tank" rather than a governance body, the Advisory Council members will pursue a variety of initiatives. Some of these duties may include:

- developing the mission, vision and goals for the University College
- developing a template for the PSU 1101 course and possible discipline-specific equivalents for consideration and discussion
- recommending assessment needs, policies and procedures for the PSU 1101 course and interdisciplinary courses
- recommending procedures for involving PSU faculty in the activities of University College
- recommending tenure and promotion processes and annual performance evaluation processes for faculty involved with University College for the PSU Faculty Handbook
- recommending recognition and rewards for faculty involved with University College
- propose and examine in collaboration with other appropriate academic units undergraduate degree programs that are broadly interdisciplinary.

Advisory Council members will serve staggered terms. Half of the faculty members and department chairs appointed in this inaugural year will serve two-year terms, while the remainder will serve three-year terms. The Chair of University Studies, Director of Learning Communities (CLASS), Director of the First-Year Experience, and a faculty member at large from University Studies will serve as standing members of the Council.

### *7. What happened at the first Advisory Council meeting?*

The Advisory Council met for the first time Sept. 17$^{th}$. Ex-officio members the VP for Academic Affairs, the VP for Student Success and Enrollment Services, and the Dean of

Undergraduate Studies each provided perspective and information to the 19 Council members in attendance. Specific actions from the first meeting were as follows:

a. (Director of Learning Communities & Associate Professor of Communication) was elected Chair of the Council,
b. (Professor of Computer Science & Information Systems) was elected Chair-Elect,
c. four sub-committees were developed to explore (1) the mission statement for University College; (2) faculty appointment within University College; (3) PSU 1101/CLASS program requirement; and (4) communication to external constituencies; and
d. meetings will be held at least every 14 days throughout fall semester.

## *8. Who are the members of the Advisory Council?*

Dr. Dr.
Dr. Dr.
Dr. Dr.
Dr. Professor
Dr. Dr.
Dr. Dr.
Mr. Dr.
Dr. *Ex-Officio Members*
Dr. Dr.
Dr. Dr.
Dr. Dr.
Dr. Dr.
Professor Dean
Dr.
Dr.
Dr.
Dr.
Dr.

APPENDIX H

**REVISED SCRIPT FOR ADVISORS**:
AS YOU'VE HEARD ALREADY, ALL RESIDENTIAL STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO ENROLL IN A LEARNING COMMUNITY. THOSE ARE CALLED PSU 1102s IN OUR REGISTRATION SYSTEM.

SOME OF THE LEARNING COMMUNITIES INCLUDE A COURSE CALLED PSU 1101. SOME OF THEM DON'T. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHICH KIND OF COMMUNITY YOU ENROLL IN AS LONG AS YOU ARE IN A LEARNING COMMUNITY THIS FALL.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PSU 1101 & PSU 1102? THE FIRST IS A COURSE THAT ACTUALLY APPEARS ON YOUR TRANSCRIPT WITH A GRADE. THE OTHER IS JUST A REGISTRATION NUMBER. IT'S A COLLECTION OF COURSES.

**PSU 1101** is called our First-Year Experience course. It's an academically oriented, 3-hour course that acquaints students with higher education, the PSU campus, strategies for success in college-level courses, ethical decision-making skills, and major/career exploration. It counts as a lower-division elective for most majors.

**PSU 1102** is the registration number for our learning communities program, referred to by the acronym CLASS. (PSU 1102, CLASS, and learning communities all refer to the same program.) As you've heard already, a learning community is a cohort of 20 to 25 students who are enrolled in the same sections of two to four first-year classes that have integrated content designed around a theme. You can find more than 50 communities that we are offering this semester listed in your Schedule of Courses book beginning on page ___. There are learning communities that include PSU 1101, and some that don't. Some include English 1101, while some do not include English at all. One community includes English 1102 for those of you who already have credit for your first English course.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER REGARDING YOUR CHOICE OF COMMUNITIES:

1. SOME OF THEM MAY FILL UP TODAY BEFORE YOU REGISTER, SO PLEASE HAVE A SECOND AND THIRD CHOICE IN MIND.
2. YOU ONLY USE ONE CRN NUMBER TO REGISTER FOR A COMMUNITY. [ASK THEM TO PULL OUT THE PRINTED SCHEDULE OF COURSES, TURN TO PAGE 5 AND EXPLAIN WHERE TO LOCATE THE CRN NUMBERS.]
3. MENTION THE ISSUE WITH AP SCORES AND LEARNING COMMUNITIES – DO THEY KNOW THEIR SCORES?
4. ALL LEARNING COMMUNITIES ARE ONLY FOR ONE SEMESTER.

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THIS SECTION IS ONLY NEEDED STARTING JUNE 29TH:
- How many of you are going to be living on campus? If you are residential student, you will need to register for a learning community (PSU 1102). Please review the descriptions

of the communities and determine two or three that sound particularly interesting to you. Some are themed around topics of general interest, while other communities are geared for specific majors. Since you are majoring in _____, you might be particularly interested in the following communities:

# _____ <title>
# _____ <title>
# _____ <title>
# _____ <title>

- How many of you are going to be living off campus? If you planning to take a full load (at least 12 credit hours) -- which is generally required for some scholarships, most insurance programs, and many health plans – you will need to register for either a stand-alone section of PSU 1101 or join a learning community. You can find the sections of PSU 1101 listed on page _____ of your Schedule of Courses. As I mentioned earlier, you can find the learning communities listed on pages _____.

---

*** College of Science & Math rep should say: Biology majors can sign up for BIOL 2101 to satisfy this requirement, since it is a discipline-specific first-year seminar. There's also several learning communities designed for biology majors, so please review those options as well.

*** College of the Arts rep should mention the need to have portfolios reviewed for the two visual arts communities.

Before I turn the floor over to _____, who will be talking with you about your major and answering questions you have about getting started in your major, I want to REMIND YOU about registering for a learning community. Each community has one CRN, or computer number, that you use to register at one time for all the courses in that community. All you have to do is type in the five-digit CRN that is found to the left of the courses in a community, and you will be automatically registered for every course in that community.

If the learning community of your choice has only two or three courses in it, you will need to select other General Education and/or major courses to take to complete your full-time schedule. Both _____ and I will be happy to work with you individually about options for your first semester.

Do you have any questions about PSU 1101, PSU 1102, THE WELCOME BBQ ON AUG. 16TH OR FIRST-YEAR CONVOCATION? Well, I will be with you for the remainder of your time as you register for classes, so please let me know if you think of further questions.

Welcome to PSU! I LOOK FORWARD TO ASSISTING YOU IN THE LABS THIS AFTERNOON WITH REGISTRATION, SEEING YOU AT THE WELCOME BBQ, AND MEETING YOUR FAMILY AT FIRST-YEAR CONVOCATION.

APPENDIX I

**New Student Orientation Evaluation Summary**
**Fall 2005**

A total of 3169 First Year and Transfer students attended orientation sessions for Fall 2005. Attached are samples of the evaluations including totals of student responses, both individually for Transfer students and FY students, and also one showing totals for both.

First Year

A total of 2011 FY students attended orientation. Of this group, 97% indicated satisfaction with information provided by their LINK leaders, while 98% indicated their leader made their group feel comfortable and 93% would feel comfortable contacting their LINK leaders.

95% of FY students indicate all of their Financial Aid questions were answered while 97% indicated the Card Service presentation helped them understand the use of the PSU ID card, Debit card and Parking decal. 93% of FY students responded that the PSU 1101 presentation answered all of their questions.

95% of FY students indicated satisfaction with the advising information provided. 94% of FY students indicated they understood the PSU registration procedure and 95% were satisfied with their course schedule.

98% of FY students believe what they learned at orientation would help them be successful their first semester at PSU and 97% of FY students indicate they would recommend orientation to other students.

Transfer

A total of 1158 Transfer students attended Summer 2005 orientations. Of this group, 96% indicated satisfaction with information provided by their LINK leaders, while 92% indicated their leader made their group feel comfortable and 93% would feel comfortable contacting their LINK leaders.

90% of Transfer students indicate all of their Financial Aid questions were answered while 96% indicated the Card Service presentation helped them understand the use of the PSU ID card, Debit card and Parking decal.

93% of Transfer students indicated satisfaction with the advising information provided. 95% of Transfer students indicated they understood the PSU registration procedure and 88% were satisfied with their course schedule.

96% of Transfer students believe what they learned at orientation would help them be successful their first semester at PSU and 97% of Transfer students indicate they would recommend orientation to other new students.

APPENDIX J

# New Student Orientation Evaluation Summary

## Fall 2006

## First-Year Students

**A total number of 1,576 First Year students responded to the evaluation survey.**

**A total number of 2,377 students attended the First Year Fall 2006 Orientations. Attached are samples of the evaluations including total student responses, individual FY students, and summary showing totals for each orientation held.**

**<u>First Year</u>**

**Of this group responding, 92.99 % indicated satisfaction with information provided by their LINK leaders, while 85.22 % responded they would feel comfortable contacting their LINK leader, which 93.71 % indicated their leader made their group feel comfortable.**

**88.44 % of FY students indicate all of their Financial Aid questions were answered while 93.40 % indicated the Card Service presentation helped them understand the use of the KSU ID card, Debit card and Parking decal as well as the presentation on the Bookstore/Food Services information. 94.34 % of FY students responded that their Student Life/Residence Life questions were answered satisfactory. 93.45 % of FY students responded that the KSU 1101 & 1102 presentation answered all of their questions.**

**92.92% of FY students indicated satisfaction with the Advising information provided. 93.08 % of FY students indicated they understood the KSU Registration procedure.**

**97.68% of FY students believe that the Orientation Staff and LINK Leaders were helpful and/or courteous during orientation. 95.49% of FY students feel what they learned at orientation would help them be successful their first semester at KSU and 95.08 % of FY students indicate they would recommend orientation to other students.**