

April 4, 2006

Subject: Survey and FYE Experience Models
To: Freshman Year Seminar Study Committee

Below are the site locations on a list of different types of FYE models and a brief overview of a 2003 survey on FYE that we discussed at the last full FYS Study Committee meeting. I have also provided the address for the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC).

“A baker’s dozen of freshman year experience models,” was prepared by Jane Oitzinger and Katherine Holman, UW Marinette, Fall 1999. One semester models are provided at the site:
www.uwc.edu/Learning_Communities/Fye.htm

An overview of results on a recent survey on characteristics of FY Experience courses follows from the **National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition**. The site location is: <http://www.sc.edu/fye/research/surveyfindings/surveys/survey03.html>

Summary of Results from the 2003 National Survey on First-Year Seminars

In October 2003, the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition undertook its sixth national survey of first-year seminar programming in American higher education. Chief Academic Officers or Chief Executive Officers at all regionally accredited colleges and universities with undergraduate students and lower divisions were e-mailed a link to our web-based survey. Institutions without working e-mail addresses (511 schools) were sent paper letters directing them to the survey website. A total of 3,258 schools received invitations to participate in the survey. Following is a summary drawn from survey responses.

For more detailed information, see [Monograph 41](#).

3,258 Survey invitations distributed
771 surveys completed (23.7% response rate)
629 schools responded that they offer first-year seminars (81.6%)

***Note. All data below reflects only those schools that are non-proprietary and offer a first-year seminar. ***

Types of Seminars (N=621)

65.2% indicate that they offer extended orientation seminars (n=405)
27.4% indicate that they offer academic seminars with generally uniform content across sections (n=170)
24.3% indicate that they offer academic seminars on various topics (n=151)
14.2% indicate that they offer pre-professional or discipline-linked seminars (n=88)
20.0% indicate that they offer basic study skills seminars (n=124)
8.2% indicate that they offer some “other” type of first-year seminar (n=51)

These “other” courses were primarily hybrids of two or more types of seminars.

*Note. Percentages add up to more than 100% because several schools offer more than one type of seminar for first-year students.

General Seminar Characteristics (across all seminar types)

Course Objectives (N=621)

Respondents were asked to identify the three most important course objectives of their first-year seminar. The three most frequently reported objectives were:

1. Develop academic skills (n=394, 63.5%)
2. Provide an orientation to campus resources and services (n=370, 59.6%)
3. Self-exploration/personal development (n=247, 39.8%)

Course Topics (N=621)

Respondents were asked to identify the five most important topics that comprise the content of the first-year seminars. The five most frequently reported topics were:

1. Study skills (n=390, 62.8%)
2. Campus resources (n=382, 61.5%)
3. Time management (n=371, 59.7%)
4. Academic Planning/Advising (n=361, 58.1%)
5. Critical Thinking (n=325, 52.3%)

Academic Credit (N=618)

89.3% of schools indicate that their first-year seminars are offered for academic credit (n=552)

Of those 522 schools whose seminars count for academic credit:

49.5% offer seminars carrying 1 semester/quarter hour of credit (n=273)

13.2% offer seminars carrying 2 semester/quarter hours of credit (n=73)

31.2% offer seminars carrying 3 semester/quarter hours of credit (n=172)

9.2% offer seminars carrying 4 semester/quarter hours of credit (n=51)

1.3% offer seminars carrying 5 semester/quarter hours of credit (n=7)

2.5% offer seminars carrying more than 5 semester/quarter hours of credit (n=14)

*Note. Percents add up to more than 100% because some schools offer varying levels of credit for their seminars.

Application of Credit (N=522)

57.3% of schools allow seminar to apply towards general education requirements (n=316)

42.0% of schools allow seminar to apply as an elective (n=232)

6.0% of schools allow seminar to apply towards major requirements (n=33)

Grading (N=620)

78.9% indicate that seminars are graded using a letter grade system (n=489)

18.5% indicate that seminars are graded pass/fail (n=115)

2.6% indicate that seminars are not graded (n=16)

Students Required to Take Seminar (N=615)

46.8% of institutions require their first-year seminars for ALL first-year students (n=288)

33.3% of institutions indicate that the seminar is required for some, but not all, students (n=205)

19.8% of institutions do not require the seminar for any of its first-year students (n=122)

Special Sections (N=621)

44.8% reported that they do not offer any special sections for unique student populations (n=278)

Seminar Size (N=618)

18.3% indicate that approximate class size for their seminar sections is 15 or fewer students (n=113)

36.1% indicate that approximate class size for their seminar sections is 16-20 students (n=223)

33.7% indicate that approximate class size for their seminar sections is 21-25 students (n=208)

12.0% indicated "other" class sizes (n=74)

*Note. All "other" responses were for sizes of 26 or more students.

Administrative Unit (N=621)

46.2% of institutions administer their seminars directly through the office of academic affairs (n=287)

20.8% of institutions administer their seminars directly through the office of student affairs (n=129)

15.9% of institutions administer their seminars directly through academic departments (n=99)

10.5% of institutions administer their seminars directly through a first-year program office (n=65)

Schools that have some "other" administrative unit most frequently administer their seminars through the advisement office, the Dean of Arts and Science Office, councils associated with the first year or student success, or some joint administrative arrangement between academic and student affairs.

Learning Communities (N=613)

24.8% of institutions report linking first-year seminars to one or more other courses (n=152)

Service Learning (N=612)

23.7% of institutions report including service-learning as a part of their first-year seminars (n=145)

Instructors (N=621)

89.9% indicate that faculty members teach their first-year seminars (n=558)

45.2% indicate that student affairs professionals teach their first-year seminars (n=281)

6.3% indicate that undergraduate students teach their first-year seminars (n=39)

4.3% indicate that graduate students teach their first-year seminars (n=27)

30.1% indicate that "other campus professionals" teach their first-year seminars (n=192)

The most frequently reported "other campus professional" to teach the seminars were academic affairs administrators, library staff, and other staff with master's degrees and an interest in first-year students.

*Note. Percentages add up to more than 100% because several schools use teachers from multiple categories.

Instructor Training

72.4% of responding institutions offer training for their first-year seminar instructors (443 of 612 respondents)

68.8% of the schools that offer training require it of their first-year seminar instructors (302 of 439 respondents)

Academic Advising (N=618)

30.4% indicate that they offer sections in which the instructor is also the students' academic advisor.

Team Teaching (N=615)

39.3% of institutions report using teams to teach their seminars (n=242)

Seminar Evaluation (N=615)

52.4% indicate that they have conducted a formal program evaluation since Fall 2000 (n=322)

Results of First-Year Seminars (N=322)

Respondents who had performed a formal program evaluation since Fall 2000 were asked to select all

applicable results that could be attributed to the first-year seminar.

58.9% report increased persistence to sophomore year (n=189)

58.4% report improved student connections with peers (n=188)

51.2% report increased use of campus services (n=165)

50.6% report increased student satisfaction with the institution (n=163)

45.0% report increased out-of-class faculty/student interaction (n=145)

41.6% report increased level of student participation in student activities (n=134)

36.0% report increased academic abilities (n=116)

31.1% report increased student satisfaction with faculty (n=100)

26.7% report improved grade-point-averages (n=86)

18.3% report increased persistence to graduation (n=59)

Age of Seminars (N=608)

8.7% of institutions report having first-year seminars that have been offered for 2 years or less (n=53)

50.2% of institutions report having first-year seminars that have been offered for 3 - 10 years (n=358)

41.1% of institutions report having first-year seminars that have been offered for more than 10 years (n=250)

For the national resource see: ERIC - Education Resources Information Center. Searches on freshman year seminars and experiences provide many other sources and documents.

http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=Home_page