

First Year Seminar Description

Introduction

First Year Seminars are a common requirement at Universities across the country. Research indicates that first year seminars, when properly implemented, staffed with full-time faculty, adequately funded, and offered for at least 2 credit hours, increase retention and student success. Successful seminar courses are structured so that students are engaged in academic activities, learn positive study habits, build community and become acquainted with the workings of the institution. The recent Noel-Levitz consultation report listed the successful implementation of a first year seminar as the most promising strategy to increase Indiana University East's retention.

Below is a description of the objectives, goals, and some content that will be a necessary part of the First Year Seminar Experience. However, the methods that individual instructors choose to achieve them will depend in large part on their own styles and personalities. The main purpose of the Seminar is to create a sense of community among the freshman class while giving the students the necessary tools to eventually graduate. With that in mind, the Seminar, in a word, should be stimulating. The design of the course may focus on a particular theme, such as Action Films: Coping in a Stressful World. The course would then incorporate the objectives, goals, and content through, and in some cases, around the focus of the course. Through films, music, field trips, television, other medium, or a combination, the delivery of the Seminar needs to engage students through their interests.

In an effort to create an even deeper sense of community within the freshman class, the Seminar will take advantage of opportunities to socialize with other Seminar sections through coordinated, common events whether that is a common field trip, a presentation on campus, a game in the quad, or lunch in the Whitewater Lobby. These may be formalized activities that are planned by the instructors of the Seminars, or they could be informal, spontaneous plans that the instructors coordinate with one another. The First Year Seminar is an opportunity for students to develop an early bond with one another and with faculty, an important component to retention and success for first time college students.

Using the research available, we recommend implementing a required First Year Seminar course. This course will be a 2-credit hour course, using the existing EDUC U100 course number. The course will be team-taught by a full-time faculty member as the lead instructor and a peer mentor. A team may also choose to include a librarian as one of the team-instructors, but should – at a minimum – include the library and the librarians in some of the curriculum.

This document does not attempt to dictate individual sections of the Seminar; however, it does attempt to create common objectives, goals, and particular content. Individual instructors will determine the extent to which they need to dwell on any particular topic.

The following page (**Proposal**) will define what will be discussed, revised, and eventually passed or rejected in the Curriculum Committee and Senate.

Proposal

- A) The First Year Seminar is a required course for all beginning freshmen at Indiana University East. For the purpose of the proposed policy, all beginning students and all transfer students with 12 or less credit hours in transferring course work are considered beginning freshmen.
- B) The course will be delivered under EDUC-U 100 Threshold Seminar for 2 credit hours. (Explained in Section E.)
- C) The primary objectives of the course are to create a supportive environment in which students (The objectives are explained in section A)
- Engage students in academic activities and practice academic skills that are expected of beginning university students;
 - build an academic work ethic;
 - create community;
 - explore various aspects of human diversity; and
 - develop strategies for success in college and in life.
- D) Instructors are encouraged to meet these objectives through their own pedagogical style; therefore, no explicit syllabus for the seminar course is provided. There are however some aspects that should be addressed in the seminar. These common content aspects are not intended to be the entire course but need to be covered: (The expectations for the common content aspects are explained in Section B.)
1. Mission of IU East and Use of campus resources;
 2. Library and information literacy;
 3. Professionalism and ethics in college and careers;
 4. Students' rights and responsibilities;
 5. Financial Literacy;
 6. Goal setting for achieving in college and career planning.
- E) All seminars will undertake one common field trip during the semester. (Details of the common activities are explained in section C.)
- F) Each section of the First Year Seminar will consist of an instructional team, including a faculty member and a peer mentor. Joining this team for at least part of the course will be a librarian. (Section D explains the role and expectation of the faculty member and the peer mentor in teaching the first year seminar. This section also includes expectations for training of faculty and of peer mentors in preparation for teaching the seminar.)
- G) Each course will receive thorough and adequate assessment. Also, thorough and adequate assessment will be undertaken to determine the retention value of the First-Year Seminar program. (Section F)

This concludes the actual proposal for the First Year Seminar. What follows elaborates on the rationale behind the design of the course.

A. Course Objectives

The following goals and skills define the values that should be applied to every section of the Seminar. The First Year Seminar Committee established these as the fundamentals for pursuing academic work. The goal is that a student that completes the Seminar will be able to transfer the skills learned to other courses and eventually to their discipline. These overarching objectives should be incorporated throughout the course. Model assignments are included to illustrate ways to meet the objectives. Other types of assignments that meet the objectives are encouraged.

Here are the campus objectives that may be addressed at one level or another in the seminar:

- ***Engage students in academic activities***

The First Year Seminar committee believes that the seminar should be an academic course. It should therefore engage students in those academic activities that students will encounter in all future courses. In particular, we believe that the seminar should be designed so that students practice and hone their skill in the following critical areas:

- Critical Thinking Skills
- Communication Skills
- Analytical Skills

The committee would like to emphasize that the seminar must not be presented as a remedial course. Instead, fluency in these fundamental skills should be portrayed as a prerequisite for any university course, and that no discipline or major will exempt students from maintaining those basic skills. Students should graduate from the course with the expectation that a course in any discipline will require them to communicate verbally and in writing, analyze texts and perform basic mathematical operations.

- ***Build basic academic skills that will anticipate the work that students will be assigned in future classes***

Rationale: Research shows that ***the first few weeks of a students' college experience are critical in forming good behavior***. Students who use their time studying during the first few weeks of the semester will maintain this behavior throughout their college career, while students who study only very little (or not at all) in the first weeks of the first semester will continue to do so as long as they are in college.

George Kuh's research shows that students enter with the expectation that they will have to work harder than they did in high school. Yet, their expectations are typically not met, and at the end of the first year, most students admit that they did not study nearly as much as they had anticipated

initially. Therefore, the First Year Seminar offers the opportunity to create good study habits that will last throughout the students' college career.

The Seminar will create a strong work ethic by creating meaningful academic activities outside of class that prepares them for future course work. It is important that this behavior be practiced in the first weeks of classes. The First Year Seminar must not degenerate into a class where students sit back and listen during class, and then are sent home without anything to do. Legitimacy of the course relies on establishing the foundational routines inherent in the basic academic skills above.

Possible Activities:

Students might be asked to keep track of the time they spend studying and of the kinds of distractions they encountered while studying. Journal entries can help students articulate how they chose to prepare a given assignment. It may be helpful to instructors to introduce the class to a different kind of reading/studying strategy each week, and ask students to try studying using that technique. Reflective writings can help students identify a technique that works for them.

- ***Create Community***

Rationale: Mutual support of students is an untapped resource. Students who have friends on campus spend time here and enjoy campus life are more likely to return than those who don't. Vincent Tinto's research indicates that students who experience rewarding social and academic experiences on campus become more integrated into the campus community. Tinto argues that most students who are not retained through graduation drop out because they perceive being confronted with insurmountable problems. Intellectual and social integration of the student into the campus community are essential in helping students overcome these problems and hence retain them.

The First Year Seminar should include opportunities for students to engage with their peers in class, and outside of class. The out-of-class experiences should include activities with peers that are both targeted on academics (e. g., team-homework) and on the social aspects of campus life. Teaming with the Mindful Explorations Committee will give the Seminar an opportunity to develop important extracurricular and co-curricular activities.

Possible Activities:

The Service Learning Center on campus is an excellent resource to assist instructors with establishing good community building activities in the class. The Baxter Neighborhood project, for example, provides a multitude of short term projects that are suitable for 1-week assignments. These service learning segments could be prepared during class, carried out in small teams, and then discussed and assessed again in class. Of course, other possibilities may include working with campus organizations or with other First Year Seminar

classes to create joint activities. Instructors may also want to consider extracurricular activities, such as the Foreign Language Film Festival, other campus activities, or field trips to a movie, the theatre, a museum, etc.

- ***Explore various aspects of human diversity***

Rationale: We live in a diverse world. Human difference makes life interesting; the ability to understand and be able to work with persons of different backgrounds from one's own is a requirement in today's workplace. One goal of the course is to present diversity not as something that is only addressed on specific days or occasions, but as something that transcends all aspects of our lives. Some issues of diversity should therefore be integrated in all class segments.

Possible Activities:

International students, faculty, or alumni could be invited to speak about their home country.

Students might be asked to immerse themselves in a lifestyle that is significantly different than theirs (e.g., attend religious services of a different religion; attend PFLAG meetings or Community Builders; etc).

Weekly writing assignments can be used to direct students' attention to issues of diversity.

- ***Develop strategies for success in college and in life***

Rationale: Many of our incoming students are not prepared to face the social and psychological challenges that college life imposes on them.

Recent high school graduates have had little opportunity to learn how to manage their time. This poses problems when students encounter deadlines in assignments. The ability to prioritize tasks is a skill that is missing in many of our students.

In addition, many of our students face a multitude of personal issues. These include family, personal health and financial worries. While a First Year Seminar cannot solve these problems for the students, it can provide them with strategies that will aid them in taking responsibility and improving their situation.

Finally, many of our students have not encountered the large variety of teaching styles that they will discover in college. Part of a college experience is to learn and to study with persons of different backgrounds, various teaching styles and foreign accents. In an increasingly global economy, the ability to cope with these challenges is a vital asset.

Included in this group of topics are:

- Stress management, time management, use of campus resources (counseling center)
- Awareness of an internal versus an external locus of control, accepting responsibility;
- Awareness of the necessity to adapt to changing situations, in particular in the classroom.
- Include a segment on personal health (incl. STD and contraception)

B. Common Content Aspects

In addition to the outcomes listed above, the committee recommends that the following topics be covered in all first year seminars. These topics can be treated as one specific unit, or may be woven into the discussion of other topics. The list of the topics below does not constitute the list of all topics to be covered in the seminar. Instructors must add additional content, so that the course can be justified as a 2-credit hour course, and so that the objectives in B can be achieved.

- **Mission of IU East, Objectives of the seminar**
Some time at the beginning of the class should be spent discussing the objectives of the course, expected behavior in the course and the learning objectives of IU East.

- **Library and information literacy**

Rationale: The Association of College and Research Libraries defines information literacy as follows, “Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. Information literacy also is increasingly important in the contemporary environment of rapid technological change and proliferating information resources.” Freshman students have many tools available to them through electronic and tangible sources. Students may have the ability to use technology but in many cases do not understand how to evaluate and filter the information they find. While this is a continual process the students need to start developing these critical thinking and evaluation skills during their first semester. There are two sections to this topic area. The students need initial instruction on how to use University information systems. This would include Oncourse, Onestart, email, and the library. The second section is helping the students start developing the tools to evaluate information. This includes evaluating library resources, internet sources and all other types of media.

Included in this group of topics are:

- the use of IU email, Oncourse, and other university systems;

- Use of library search tools and internet search tools, and evaluating the credibility of queried documents.

- **Use of Campus Resources**

Rationale: Once the semester begins students need to be introduced to the campus resources, not necessarily by way of being provided with a tour of the offices, but by actually using them when possible.

When applicable, course topics should be used to familiarize students with campus services: These include Advising, Financial Aid, Registrar, Dean of Student, Campus Life, Graf Center, Library, Conflict Resolution Center, and CHP.

Each instructor of the seminar course should find suitable ways of engaging students in the use of the resources.

- **Diversity**

Rationale: In addition to being an overarching objective, specific time should be set aside to address diversity on a global level.

Included in this group of topics are:

- Discussion of human difference (race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, religion);
- The goal of this topic is to create an understanding of tolerance and inclusion and what the difference is between the two.

- **Professionalism as student**

Rationale: To be successful in college and in the workforce, students need to know and understand what their expectations are. Success is often influenced by one's ability to separate what the classroom or an employer needs or demands from one's own needs and demands.

Included in this group of topics are:

- Student Code of Conduct; behavior on campus, in classroom, and off campus;
- Expectations of work in and outside of the classroom;
- Personal responsibility in using social networking systems (facebook, myspace, email);
- Responsible use of internet resources (copyright violations through filesharing).

- **Students' rights and responsibilities**

Rationale: A large proportion Indiana University East's students are first generation college students, it is inconceivable that students would have learned about those academic policies at home, and we can be certain that they did not learn about them in High School. We therefore believe that the first year seminar is the appropriate place to introduce students to academic policies that affect them. Most importantly, we wish to create awareness among students that it is their responsibility to stay informed about policies that affect them. As such, this topic ties into the Success Strategies Objective (above). This topic can be handled in a relatively short amount of time. However, some of the academic rules of the campus should be covered in this seminar.

Included in this group of topics are:

- Academic rules for withdrawal, attendance, grade replacement, incompletes, etc.
- Student Code of Conduct
- The students' role in accepting responsibility in being knowledgeable of rules.
- Creating lines of communication with professors

- **Financial Literacy**

Rationale: Our educational system needs to provide the community with the tools to critically analyze credit card and mortgage offers and assist them in navigating through the most basic financial and economic decisions that they will make. Graduates from IU East are particularly vulnerable: A recent report shows that upon graduating IU East's graduates have one of the highest student loan balances in the nation! The First Year Seminar should have as part of its curriculum a module on financial literacy.

Included in this group of topics are:

- Financial Aid system (FAFSA, Loans, Grants). Requirements to repay loans, waivers of these requirements.
- Personal finance (banking, checking accounts, credit cards, interest, loans and mortgages);
- Critical evaluation of financial advertisements, loan terms, and other financial contracts.

- **Setting a goal for achieving in college and career planning**

Rationale: Post-secondary education is becoming an expected part of the entry level preparation for a large portion of the workforce. Therefore the college experience is an increasingly important entry-level training and proving ground. Additionally, the baccalaureate degree is not the termination of a student's education. Because of the length and expense of education, students need to develop skills for proactive, long-range planning and timely goal setting to efficiently work toward graduation. Especially for the nontraditional and first-in-family college students common to IUE, proficiency in these skills is essential for balancing their on and off campus responsibilities. By establishing milestones early in their academic career, all students can measure individual successes and better anticipate completing their degree.

Included in this group of topics are:

- Creation of a 4-year plan for degree completion;
- Academic Exploration: Awareness that college education allows for broadening of one's horizon, and allows the student to learn about disciplines that are not directly related to one's immediate career goals.
- Establish students' contact with academic advisor

C. Common Activities for all First Year Seminar Courses

Building community among students and bonding with faculty and the campus should sometimes involve more than just the participants of one section of the seminar, their instructor and peer mentor. In order to build community and create a feeling of belonging to the IU East campus, all first year seminar students will participate in two common events:

- **Welcome Ceremony during the first week of classes**
This ceremony should involve all faculty and all freshmen students and the peer mentors. It is recommended that the ceremony take the format of a dinner in the lobby, so that students and faculty sit at the same tables.
- **One common field trip on a Saturday or Sunday.**
We hope that by providing one meaningful activity for all first year students at the same time, we can generate a sense of belonging to the campus that we would not be able to create through interaction in a small group. The Freedom Center in Cincinnati could be a destination for such a trip.
- **First Year Seminar Competition**
We recommend that each semester, the different first year seminars come together on an additional Saturday or Sunday to engage in a fun, friendly and foolish (FFF)

activity. For example, this could be a paintball competition in the woods behind the campus, a croquet tournament, or an “Eggdrop”¹.

D. Roles of Lead-Instructor and Peer Mentor

At a minimum, each first year seminar should have a full-time faculty member as the lead instructor and a peer mentor. It may also be advisable to include a librarian and/or an academic advisor on the team, but the decision to do so rests with the lead instructor. If a librarian or academic advisor are not included on the team, they should be invited as guest speakers to the class at suitable times during the seminar.

The roles of and expectations for the instructor and peer mentor are explained below:

Role of Lead Instructors

- Creating Community
One of the main roles of the lead instructor, and the objective of the seminar is to create a sense of community among students, foster interaction with faculty and engage students in meaningful academic activities.
The lead instructor
 - Should socialize with the students inside and outside of the classroom;
 - Should find way to build community among students;
 - Organize extracurricular activities for students in the seminar.

- Early Intervention
Research shows that the first semester, and in particular the first weeks, of a students’ life on campus are critical to forming good study habits. The instructional team of the first year seminar should be proactive in intervening early. Early intervention should take the following forms:
 - There is mandatory attendance in all class portions of the seminar. Faculty or peer mentors immediately contact a student by phone and/or email when they miss a class.
 - Assignments for the seminar are expected on time. Faculty/peer contact students with missing assignments immediately.
 - The instructional team assists students in registering for the next semester. Faculty contact students who do not enroll during early enrollment and determine why the student chose not to enroll.

- Participate in Assessment of the Seminar (See below).

Selection Criteria for Lead Instructors

¹ The purpose is to build a contraption that allows an egg to be dropped off a building, so that the egg lands without breaking.

“We invite faculty to see first-year students as ‘fresh slates’ that can be transformed into the kind of learners we want them to be. ... Faculty can be engaged, with appropriate support, to see students’ academic needs as an opportunity to teach them the strategies of active learning, critical thinking, forming community, integrating knowledge and valuing diverse perspectives, along with the skills for managing time, difficult reading and use of new technology.”²

Faculty who teach the first year seminar must be full-time faculty members and should have several years of teaching experience at Indiana University East. Beyond these basic criteria, there are no selection criteria. We believe that most critical aspect of faculty self-selection for the seminar is the desire to see first-year students as ‘fresh slates’.

Therefore, faculty who wish to teach the seminar should be willing to

- Prepare a teaching portfolio prior to faculty training;
- Commit to participate actively in the faculty training;
- Commit to the objectives of the first year seminar and use learner-centered methods to facilitate the seminar;
- Participate in professional development related to first year seminars and disseminate their experience of teaching the seminar;
- Participate in a monthly teaching seminar (which is open to all faculty).

Training for Training for Lead Instructors

Training for faculty members who wish to teach the seminar should be an integral part of the program. We recommend that this training be conducted at an off-campus retreat and at the same time as the peer-mentors are being trained (see below). Until the first year seminar is well-established at Indiana University East, we recommend that this training be facilitated by an experienced person from outside the IU East community.

Aspects of the training should include:

- Brief review of the course objectives;
- Discussion of possible ways to create community in a class;
- Planning of the common first-year seminar events (deciding on a place for the field trip, considering possibilities for the welcome event, themes for the first-year competition);
- Generate ideas for other extracurricular activities;
- Consider an academic project in the scholarship of teaching and learning that could be linked to the experience derived from teaching the first year seminar.

Recognition of Faculty

We believe that faculty commitment to teaching the first year seminar should transcend all aspects of faculty workload. That is, the work invested into the seminar should be considered part teaching, part service and part research/creative activity or professional

² Evenbeck, S. and Jackson, B. (2005) Faculty Development and the First Year. In Upcroft, M, Gardener, J., and Barefoot, B. (Eds.) Challenging and Supporting the First Year Experience. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

development.

We suggest that the planning of the extracurricular activities and the community building aspect of the seminar be considered a service to the institution.

Further, we propose that faculty who are involved in the teaching of the seminar also treat the teaching of the seminar as scholarship of teaching and learning. Here, a monthly seminar for faculty could provide an avenue for dissemination.

While workload considerations are certainly an important aspect in creating a reward structure for attracting qualified faculty to teach the seminar, we feel that the senior administration of the campus should provide additional, tangible rewards for faculty.

Role of Peer Mentor

- Provide a role model
The peer mentor attends all class sessions of the seminar and acts as a model student. He/She should read the assigned reading, and complete the homework assignments. In the classroom, the peer mentor should participate in the discussion, but may also be called upon to facilitate some in-class activities.
- Facilitate interaction between students and engage students outside of the classroom
The peer mentor is responsible for engaging students on campus outside of the classroom. Such activities may include organizing and playing games on the quad or in the Graf center, leading the discussion in a team homework assignment, etc. The peer mentor should share his/her experience with the class where appropriate and should become a person students can confide in.
- Facilitate interaction between students and campus resources
The peer mentor aids students in the seminar to find assistance on campus as needed. The peer mentor should stay informed about the students' academic progress in class and offer help even if the struggling student does not specifically ask for it. The mentor introduces students to the resources on campus, introduces them to the person that they need to see and makes sure that this office understands what the students' problem is. Finally, the peer mentor should introduce students to the clubs.

Selection Criteria for Peer Mentors

We recommend that a peer mentor should have the following qualifications:

- Have a GPA of at least 2.5;
- Have interpersonal skills that suggest he/she would be able to meet the expectations for a peer mentor;
- Have completed the U100 seminar no more than 3 semesters prior;
- Be recommended by his/her U100 seminar instructor.

Training for Peer Mentors

Training for peer mentors should be conducted on the same day as training for the faculty members who teach the seminar. During part of the day, peer mentors are trained in a separate session; however, part of the training is common to both faculty and peer mentors. We recommend the following items to be included in the training of the peer mentors:

- Mentoring strategies
- Community building strategies
- Introduction of peer mentors to campus resources (and office personnel)
- Conflict resolution
- Interpersonal communication

Recognition of Peer Mentors

We propose that peer mentors are paid at an hourly rate for participating in the seminar. In addition, Indiana University East should cover all expenses for extracurricular activities that the peer mentor might incur. Further, we propose that the peer mentor be provided with tuition remission for one 3-credit hour course during each semester he/she is a peer mentor.

E. Credit Hours and Course Numbers: EDUC-U100 (2 Cr. Hrs.)

Because the needs of certain schools/programs are considerably different from other disciplines on the campus, some seminars will be labeled to demonstrate different content. Some courses may be labeled, for example, “Recommended for prospective Education, Nursing, Business, Natural Science and Mathematics, Humanities and Social Sciences students” etc. However, all seminars will satisfy the same requirement, strive to achieve the same outcomes, and be assessed in the same way.

F. Assessment

To conduct thorough and adequate assessment, there needs to be an evaluation of each objective for the course. However, not every objective needs to be evaluated each time there is an assessment. Given the need for timely feedback on the first year seminar, it is recommended that this assessment focus on what are perceived to be the most important components of the First Year Seminar: 1) coping skills, 2) community building, and 3) knowledge of resources available to students.

Responsibility for Assessment

The first year seminar is an initiative of Indiana University East to increase retention and students' chances for success in college. As such, assessment for this course must be coordinated from a central office. The committee recommends that a short-term task force be appointed during Spring 2009 to create an assessment plan and assessment instruments for the various objectives of the seminar. Success of the seminar ultimately

rests on the ability to adjust its delivery and/or content to achieve the desired outcomes. We therefore recommend that the faculty administrator of the program be responsible to evaluate the assessment data and make recommendations for change if needed. Faculty who teach this course have the responsibility to administer the assessment instruments for the course.

The first year seminar committee suggests some assessment strategies for the most critical objectives of the course:

Coping Skills:

The goal is to help students increase their understanding of and abilities to use stress management, time management, and study habits. This component could be assessed by a short writing assignment at the beginning of the semester along with a follow-up assignment near the end.

Students will also be assisted in learning to adapt to changing situations, in particular as they apply the classroom. Professors teach differently and learning to adjust to a variety of styles of instruction is an important part of the transition into college. This objective could be assessed by helping students understand their own learning style better and teaching ways of compensating when an instructor’s delivery is not particularly well-suited for the students individual learning style. This could be assessed by either using a pre- and post- test related to learning styles or writing samples that require students to reflect on a time they were in an academic environment that was not a good match for their preferred style of learning. What do they do to cope and what would they do differently based on the information they have gathered from the course?

The topic of locus of control will also be addressed in the First Year Seminar. Helping students determine whether they have an internal or external locus of control would help students become better at accepting responsibility for their own outcomes. This could be assessed by either using a pre- and post- test or writing samples.

Community Building

One of the goals of the First Year Seminar is to increase retention by building relationship with and among students. Research consistently finds that one of the best predictors of students persevering from freshman to sophomore year is the extent to which they feel connected to the university, the faculty, and their classmates. This could be assessed using a short questionnaire or writing assignment.

For example:

To what degree do you feel comfortable with/connected to Indiana University East?

Very Much				Very Little
5	4	3	2	1

To what degree do you feel comfortable with/connected to the faculty?

Very Much				Very Little
5	4	3	2	1

To what degree do you feel comfortable with/connected to your classmates?

Very Much				Very Little
5	4	3	2	1

Campus Resources:

First year students would benefit from knowing about the resources available to them and how to access those resources. (Ex: the IU East library, the Advising Center, Student Support Service, the reading and math lab, the counseling center, etc.)

This could be assessed using either a questionnaire or even a map of the campus.

Institutional Research

The effectiveness of the First Year Seminar on retention can be assessed through institutional research. We recommend that this effort be made part of the Director for Retention and First Year Program's portfolio. To this end, it is recommended that data be collected to monitor:

- Student persistence to next semester
- Student retention to sophomore and junior year
- 4-year, 5-year, 6-year graduation statistics
- Academic Momentum Indicators (Number of W's, DF's, Probation/Suspension)

G. Unresolved Issues

Staffing

We recommend considering teaching the first year seminar as a 3-credit hour load for faculty members, even though it is only a 2-credit hour course. This would create an incentive for faculty to teach the seminar, and would compensate for the additional time required to organize and participate in extracurricular activities.

The First Year Seminar committee recommends that the first year seminars be administered by a faculty administrator. This administrator's be responsible to:

- Schedule the seminar courses;
- Assist deans in selecting faculty who teach the seminar;
- Select peer mentors;
- Plan and hold the training sessions for faculty and peer mentors;

- Assume the role of supervisor of faculty in case of grievances, grade appeals etc., related to first year seminar courses
- Serve as fiscal officer for the First Year Seminar cost center;
- Participate in assessment of the effectiveness of the first year seminar and propose changes to policies/practices in response to assessment outcomes;
- Collaborate with the Director of Retention and First Year programs and ensure that the course meets the needs of the campus retention efforts.

Fiscal Needs

Each seminar should be provided with sufficient funds to pay for the following activities:

- Occasional coffee/lunch for faculty (or peer mentor) with individual students.
- Funds for field trips and other extracurricular activities (going to movies, theater, concert).

Cost Center

First Year Seminar is organized as a single cost center. Tuition revenue is used to finance peer mentors, trips. The cost center reimburses schools for faculty who teach the seminar.

I. Future Plans

Strong and Sustained Leadership

We expect the senior administration of the campus to provide the fiscal support and a reward structure in which a successful first year seminar can develop. We are aware that success of a seminar does not happen overnight, and that it must develop over several years before its full potential is reached. It is our hope that our senior administration shares this vision and advocates the seminar by creating a suitable fiscal structure and reward system for faculty.

A Textbook of Our Own

As a 3-5 year goal, the committee suggests that IU East faculty develop a course packet for the entire course. Each segment of the packet is organized as follows:

1. An introduction of the faculty members who wrote the segment (photo, brief description of specialty).
2. An introductory text that students read independently before class. This could be a short story, a news article, etc.
3. A homework assignment for writing in the journal.
4. An assignment for speaking to the class.
5. Topics for discussion in class – these topics must involve either the peer leader or the librarian or both.
6. An assignment for teams of students (to be completed outside of class).
7. A written homework assignment, preferably an essay. Each week's assignment should require at least one of the following:
 - a. Some sort of research in the library or through internet searches;
 - b. Analysis of data that is presented within a text or in graphical form;
 - c. Analysis of written information.

8. An assessment method for the unit.