

Foundations Institutions create organizational structures and policies that provide a comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated approach to the first year.

These structures and policies provide oversight and alignment of all first-year efforts. A coherent first-year experience is realized and maintained through effective partnerships among academic affairs, student affairs, and other administrative units and is enhanced by ongoing faculty and staff development activities and appropriate budgetary arrangements.

For each of the areas listed below, the report also needs to include narrative on:

- Current situation / committee discussion notes
- Summarize institutional resources / evidence
- Recommendations

PI 2.1 Organizational Coordination

Evaluate how well multiple administrative structures cooperate to administer and align first-year policies, practices, and programs.

Current situation / committee discussion notes:

Reviewing the data provided in the CPI, combined with committee members varied experiences, a variety of efforts at organizing the first year experience were observed. Some efforts are coordinated more at the unit level (for example, first-year instructors), some by the College (for example, CLAS Residential College), and some at the level of the university (for example, first-year success coaching). Observing the many programs related to the first year experience, the Committee concluded it may be possible to have too many good intentions and too many good ideas.

Recommendations:

Form should follow function. The organizational structure should enable students, faculty, and advisers to be aware of crucial goals for the First Year, assess students' progress toward them, and coordinate a response when a student is at risk of failing to meet a crucial goal. The current organizational structure should be reviewed from this perspective.

1. Develop more formalized/regularized information sharing of activities impacting first year students between various offices – e.g. emails sent by Financial Aid, outreach by advisors, surveys being sent, Coaching outreach programs, tutoring marketing. The goal is to decrease overlapping and repetitive communication, to enable students to appropriately prioritize.
2. Review and assess the various elements of/partners in the current organizational structure to identify roles, responsibilities and strengths.
 - a. Identify “low-hanging fruit” (gaps, areas of duplication, lack of information) in order to implement changes/adjustments/improvements that can affect student experience, student transition and student success.

- b. Determine how each element can best facilitate implementation of the critical goals identified by the philosophy and other committees.
3. Make sure the organizational structure makes the most 'at-risk' students readily visible and reachable. The work of other committees will likely identify characteristics of the most 'at-risk' students who seem most likely to benefit from intervention.
4. Try to provide all students with a coordinated structure of support similar to what already exists for some groups (For example: Barrett students, ROTC students, Starbucks Online students, Student-Athletes and Veteran Students). Examine the support structures in place for those and other groups to determine what can be appropriately modified and provided more broadly.

PI 2.2 First Year Students Focus

To what degree does your institution's first-year organizational structure facilitate the following actions as they apply to first-year students?

	Very Low/ None	Low	Medium	High	Very High	N/A
Coordinated, timely communications	xx	x	xxxx	x		
Provision of accurate and timely financial aid information				x		
Early warning initiatives that include special attention to first-year students		x	xxx	x	x	x
Academic advising that includes special attention to first-year students			xxx	xx	xx	

Current situation / committee discussion notes:

The committee noted that first year students receive a great deal of communication, some of it using different language to describe the same thing. As a result, students may find it difficult to read and prioritize the communication. In addition, those who support first year students (instructors, advisors, housing staff etc.) are not aware of all of the communication the students receive, so they are often unable to reinforce or explain as needed. Advisers are a crucial, and logical, conduit between students and all other aspects of the College and university. There is sometimes more information than it is possible to manage, or they are simply unaware of all the information.

Recommendations:

1. Coordinated, timely communications.
 - a. Conceive of communication as either "providing useful information" or "alerting a student to a distinctive challenge or opportunity."
 - b. Communication "providing useful information" should be as stable and constantly available as possible. One idea is to replace emails with clearly labeled information pathways via myasu, and

- knowledge articles in Salesforce. For students, “Financial aid question, start here” “Clubs and activities, start here” “Need academic help, start here.”
- c. Communication “alerting a student to a distinctive challenge or opportunity” should be as personal and “important feeling” as possible. The student needs to see it as evidence that the University/College/academic unit really sees the student and wants to help him or her succeed. This kind of information should preferably be delivered by an advisor or a faculty member (particularly in the first semester).
2. Develop more formalized/regularized information sharing of activities impacting first year students between various offices – e.g. emails sent by Financial Aid, outreach by advisors, surveys being sent, Coaching outreach programs, tutoring marketing. The goal is to decrease overlapping and repetitive communication, to enable students to appropriately prioritize. (Repeated from “Description”)
 3. Utilize enterprise-wide tool, Salesforce to enhance communication with students. Salesforce provides visibility into communication sent to students at various stages while at the university. Salesforce can also be used to understand individual student preferences for communication from the University. With the right data in the tool, it can serve as the retention dashboard with a significant benefit—that you can build communication and/or interventions quickly and easily—allows for actionable data/information. It could also be used to aggregate keywords, communication, etc. to serve as a warning indicator based on all the comments entered on a student’s record and/or types of email communication sent in addition to student inquiries.
 4. Early warning initiatives that include special attention to first-year students.
 - a. Make student success course and first year critical course (particularly in the major) instructors aware of any indications students in their course are not progressing toward the essential goals of the first year. The instructors can personalize the importance of communication the student may receive and personally urge action.
 - b. Develop more formalized/regularized early warning system that incorporates a broader range of inputs, from a wider set of offices
 - c. Clarify the purpose, implementation and follow-up of the ASR system. Balance need for ease of use with expressivity. Link problems identified in the ASR to available, clearly conceptualized tutoring/behavioral interventions.
 - d. Create a simple “critical attendance/engagement” button connected to the grade roster, so that faculty can quickly indicate that a first year student is either not attending class or not turning in work. Ensure that more than one of these reports will prompt a quick and personal outreach to the student by someone in addition to the faculty members.
 - e. Adopt a ‘companion’ to the ASR system for more general non-academic faculty concerns
 5. Academic advising that includes special attention to first-year students.
 - a. Explore options for advisor to serve as “concierge” for students.
 - b. Ensure academic advisers can get the ear of chair/director/undergraduate director about both individual student issues and general first year buzz about courses, cohort-building, or any other issue.

PI 2.3 Integration

To what degree does the structure indicated in PI 2.1 result in an integrated approach that crosses division/unit lines (e.g., student affairs and academic affairs)?

Very Low/None	Low	Medium	High	Very High	N/A
xx	x	xxxxx	x		

Current situation / committee discussion

While the current organizational structure (multiple administrative units) does not result in a formally integrated approach across units, the committee observed that there are many strong, cooperative relationships between units within the college and across the university. There are, however, some areas which are less integrated than others. For example, faculty are in some ways well placed to be “first responders” to student problems, since they quickly see absences, disengagement, and lack of English or other skills. However, there are areas about which they receive no information. In terms of early warning initiatives, there is not a cohesive, integrated system that takes into account all of the student touch points such as residential life, faculty, advising, etc.

Recommendations:

1. Assess various elements of/partners in the current organizational structure to identify roles, responsibilities and strengths and ensure each is performing at optimum levels.
2. Ensure each element/partner has a finite set of crucial goals/objectives as established by the university/college to ensure all partners are working together for student success.
3. Once or twice a semester, the CLAS Dean’s Office should bring together undergraduate directors, lead advisers, and a residential life representative for discussion of College goals, assessments, and priorities (in the way graduate directors and chairs/directors assemble).
4. Create committee/regular meetings for primary contacts across administrative structures (University/College/academic units) to brainstorm, and share ideas and activities.
5. Ensure that any early warning system allows for the conversion of a set of “yellow flags” from a variety of sectors – residential life, faculty, advising – into a “red flag.”

PI 2.4 Effectiveness

To what degree is your current first-year organizational structure an effective mechanism for coordinating and delivering the first year at your institution?

Very Low/None	Low	Medium	High	Very High	N/A
	x	xxxxxx	x		

Current situation / committee discussion

ASU and CLAS have a variety of programs and initiatives that seem to emanate from different institutional structures, rather than a “first-year structure” organized around communicating, pursuing, and assessing a set of essential outcomes for our first year students.

There are some excellent practices and some pockets of higher-level coordination. Financial aid, for example, is univocal and coherent. Responses to dramatic behavioral crises are also well-coordinated. However, an organized, personal response to students who are floundering, rather than flaming out, does not always happen, even when a number of people and structures have some awareness of the students' problems.

The committee also found that some crucial academic support services (such as tutoring) have a number of different homes and seem to lack definition: which services are course content-oriented? Which are intended to build basic skills? Which are intended to instill appropriate first-year habits of mind? How do students and faculty learn of them? To which should students be directed? This is an example of how a central element of the first year experience, support for students struggling academically, can be diffuse and confusing to students and faculty less because of a lack of resources than because of a lack of guiding vision and coherent communication.

Recommendations:

1. Begin with the "philosophy" committee's vision of what students should emerge from the first year having learned, and ensure the organization allows:
 - a. communication of those goals to students, staff, and faculty
 - b. timely assessment of whether students are progressing toward them
 - c. clear referrals to be made in cases of difficulty, including difficulty short of crisis
2. Define the goals of the various forms of academic support services (TAs, tutoring, supplemental instruction) clearly align particular goals with particular course offerings, make offerings known through stable myASU information pathways, and assertively coordinate the ASR system with academic support services. That is, report of a particular kind of academic trouble should result in referral to a particular kind of support.
3. Create committee/regular meetings for primary contacts across administrative structures to brainstorm, and share ideas and activities (same as PI 2.1; repetition reflects the committee's sense that coordination, rather than the creation of new structures and initiatives, will improve all areas of "organization.")

PI 2.5 Faculty/Staff Development

Which of the following statements best describes the role of the first year structure noted in PI 2.1 in providing faculty/staff development to increase understanding of first-year issues?

xxxx	Is very limited (or not attempted at all).
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Current situation / committee discussion

The committee noted that faculty are not as aware of distinctive first year needs as they might be, and that faculty knowledge of first year students' challenges, when it is present, is difficult to channel in a way that provokes a response. First year success course instructors, perhaps working in tandem with advisors, are a critical connection point for students that can be made even more powerful. Finally, when many students are in large general education courses in their first year, students and faculty may be at a remove from each other.

Recommendations:

1. Create set expectations of what first year success course instructors and advisors should know (university resources, university and college initiatives etc.).
2. Provide information regarding critical resources and support services in clear, concise manner for faculty. Create mechanism(s) to provide first year success course instructors and advisors with necessary knowledge (website; Salesforce knowledge articles; regular email newsletters, list of designated contacts).
3. Provide monthly or quarterly updates/information regarding student success/progress for college/school/department/unit and/or timely communication for behaviors to watch for at specific points in time based on academic calendar.
4. Make sure faculty understand the importance of communicating with first year students when they are not meeting goals and that faculty know to report concerns to their undergraduate director or advisors (or first year success colleagues if that position is augmented as suggested) who can follow up with the student.
5. Discuss first year teaching as we discuss, for example, graduate teaching: a distinctive endeavor that has its own rewards, methods, and challenges, and that requires appropriate faculty. Encourage faculty who teach a significant number of first-year students to share observations about first year students' needs in general at the end of each semester, through some low-key, easy form. Include this work on the FAR, as honors thesis work is included, for example.

PI 2.6 Financial Resources

Which of the following statements best describes the financial resources to support the first-year?

x	Funding is adequate and reasonably consistent from year to year to support the first year.
xxxx	Funding varies somewhat from year to year and/or is not fully adequate to support the first year.
	Funding is either highly inconsistent from year to year, clearly inadequate, or fails in some other way to support the first year.
x	Insufficient evidence exists to judge the adequacy and consistency of funding (e.g., the structure(s) is/are newly established or highly dependent on external grant funding.)

Current situation / committee discussion

The committee discussed how first-year initiatives are funded. The sense is that the funding varies from year to year, and across academic units and other offices.

Recommendations:

1. Convey to academic units that work with first year students is a College priority and that their devotion of faculty and advising time to those students (the beginning strugglers, rather than the graduating stars) is appropriate and valued.

2. Assess, to the extent possible, financial resources the College allots to first year students. Are there needs in terms of people, tools, materials, training, or time for advisers or faculty to focus on first year students?
3. Consider whether the traditional model of large, less expensive introductory courses is appropriate if our first year students tend to be the least self-reliant, least sophisticated students we teach.

PI 2.7 Policies

To what degree are each of the following policies enforced?

(No policies listed to review, so committee did not address this, except for discussion of W's below.)

Current situation / committee discussion notes:

- Drop/Add
- Course Attendance
- Assessment and Placement (is this just Math and English?)
- D, E, W Courses—is this a course problem? Or student demographics?
- Housing Policy (expect FTF to live on campus)
- Financial Aid

Recommendations:

1. Investigate the use of “W’s” by first year students. Assess whether first year students’ use of W correlates with good or impaired progress.