

Goal: *To facilitate appropriate student transitions through policies and practices that are intentional and aligned with ASU's mission.*

1. Provide a comprehensive inventory of the communication from all ASU offices to first year students and their families – from application to the conclusion of the first year.
2. Analyze the effectiveness of how the university and college's expectations of first year students are communicated to them – the institution's mission, academic expectations and requirements, availability of academic support, availability of co- and extracurricular opportunities, financial aid policies, etc.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of communication mechanisms in connecting first year students to other new students, upperclassmen, faculty, staff, and to the institution.
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of academic advising in helping first-year students navigate academic expectations and requirements, and take advantage of the various curricular and co-curricular opportunities available.
5. Provide suggestions as to ways we can prepare students more effectively for the transition to college life and communicate more clearly ASU's curricular and co-curricular expectations.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Communication Methods: *To what degree does the institution effectively communicate the lived experience of first year students through institutional website, online technologies, admissions materials, marketing?*

Recommendations

While the majority of these elements are centrally administered at the University level, the committee recommends the following enhancements:

1. CLAS Dean's Office should re-design websites and create associated materials to more effectively communicate the lived experience of first-year students.
2. First year students should receive some kind of virtual "Welcome" message from the Dean or Associate Dean during welcome week that highlights expectations (class attendance, academic integrity, etc.), resources (Disability Resources Center, tutoring services, etc.) and key contacts (advisors, success coaches, etc.).

Communications to Students: *To what degree does the institution communicate effectively with first-year students about the institutional mission; academic expectations; disciplinary policy, process and consequences; engagement and employment opportunities; cost and financial aid?*

Recommendations

The majority of these elements are centrally administered at the University level but the committee recommends the following for CLAS:

1. First Year Success Courses:
 - a. Rethink First Year Success Courses so that all intro classes are related to a discipline or have a tie to academic content as well as skill building content. The sentiment was that the courses that are embedded in the units are more successful than the general LIA 101 courses.
 - b. Use faculty instead of students as course lecturers. Upper-class students could be mentors/TAs/etc.

- c. Create intentional mechanisms for tracking the progress of students while they are in the First Year Success Courses (reporting absences, using coaches for students who are struggling in this course or others, ASR reports as early warning indicators at mid-semester for intentional engagement).
 - d. Tie coaches (First Year Success Center) to First Year Success Courses classes so that they coaches are more visible and can develop relationships with a cohort (maybe one coach for two LIA classes).
2. “Boiler Plate” Syllabus:
 - a. Create a video or email from the college that goes to every student upon the start of classes and outlines/reiterates general content that is in the syllabus such as academic integrity expectation, class attendance, DRC accommodations, what are office hours, etc. This could be a video of upper-class students giving advice to the incoming class about how to be successful at ASU while covering the basics that many students don’t pay attention to.
 3. Develop mechanism to insure that faculty and advisors are aware of various resources. This may involve a single-point of contact for each academic unit, combined with a focused web resource.
 4. Identify students who are “at risk” (CI score, financial need, first-generation, out-of-state, commuting) and specifically share information about resources with them.

Connections with Families: *To what degree does the campus establish connections with families of first-year students?*

Recommendations

The primary resources for families (Sun Devil Family Association and Family Programs) are administered at the University level and the committee did not have any recommendations.

Communication to Others: *To what degree does the campus communicate to secondary school personnel their role in facilitating student success in the first year of college?*

Recommendations

The committee did not really discuss any of these elements as the primary connections with secondary school personnel are at the University level (Admission Services and Access ASU).

Facilitating Student Connections: *To what degree does your campus structure and implement a first year in which students establish connections between first year students and faculty, upper-level students, student affairs professionals, and academic support services?*

Recommendations

1. First Year Success Courses:
 - a. Require students to meet with instructors of each of their courses.
 - b. Investigate success of academic unit based student mentor programs. Share and encourage use of successful best practice programs.
 - c. Encourage students to meet with instructor/attend office hours – by credit or course requirement
2. Academic Advisors:
 - a. Take specific steps at Orientation to insure that students know who they are and how to contact them.
3. Faculty outside the classroom:
 - a. Build out faculty programs as part of CLAS Residential College
 - b. Offer meal cards for First Year Course instructors to encourage them to dine in the residential college with students.

4. Community Mentors:
 - a. Take specific steps to insure that first year students view Community Mentors as an academic resource, not solely social and disciplinary.
 - b. Create networks of first year students and Community Mentors by major.
5. Identify students who are “at risk” (CI score, financial need, First Generation, out-of-state, commuting), and specifically share information about resources with them.

Academic Advising: *What is the overall quality of academic advising with regard to first year of college and preparation for second year success?*

Recommendations

1. Implement systematic use of Retention Dashboard as an advising tool across all first year advisors in the college.
2. Look at advisor/advisee ratio across college and consider standardizing a manageable advisor to student ratio in order to create broader expectations for advisors regarding the type and frequency of advising they have with first year students.
3. Develop a skill series for CLAS advisors to provide connection across the departmental advisors, draw upon best practices of strong advisors, and implement consistent expectations across the advisor group. Perhaps a few strong, seasoned advisors could develop this program under the leadership of Dean’s office staff.
4. For students who are unsure about their choice of major, develop a structure of trained advisors and Career Services resources.
5. For students who are “at risk” (CI score, financial need, first generation, out-of-state, commuting), develop a team of specifically trained advisors to address their needs beyond regular academic advising.