Inspire Success:
College Transition Driven by High Impact Practice in Summer Session
98th Annual NASPA Conference
Indianapolis -- March 2016
It’s Better in the Summer:

Building a successful transition to college and fostering student success driven by high impact practice with an early start in summer session

Dr. Lowell K. Davis
Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Success

Ms. Glenda Hensley
Director of First Year Experience
About Us

• Founded in 1889, Western Carolina University is a regional comprehensive university in Cullowhee, North Carolina, US.
• The 600 acre campus includes 13 residence buildings; residency requirement for first and second year students.
• Enrollment is 10,340 students with 8,821 undergraduate and 1,519 graduate students.
• Citizenship: 99% are US citizens; 91% are in-state.
• The student body is 55% female and 45% male.
• Ethnicity:
  – 78% White; 5.4% Black or African American; 6.6% Hispanic; 6% Multiracial; 1.4% Asian; .7% Native (American Indian, Hawaiian, Pacific Islander); 1.5% Unknown.
• 57% of all classes have fewer than 30 students; average 16 to 1 faculty/student ratio.
• 489 full-time faculty; 74% hold terminal degrees.
• Freshman retention rate is 80%; 6-year graduation rate is 58%.
FYE Summer
A summer learning experience for new first-year students

Academic Success Program
Catamount GAP
Overview

• WHAT
  – Students earn 6-8 credits in a learning community framework.
• WHO
  – New freshmen who have been accepted to WCU for the fall via regular admission criteria and elect to get an early start.
  – New freshmen who have been granted conditional admission, pending a successful summer.
• WHERE
  – A residential living-learning program.
  – Programs and activities help students connect with the local region and community.
• WHEN
  – A 5-week summer session preceded by a 3-day orientation.
  – June 27: classes begin & July 29: classes end.
Overview

• **WHY**
  
  – Fulfill the university strategic plan to increase and enhance summer offerings.
  
  – Provide a transition experience for students who will benefit from the added support and smaller class size afforded by a summer program.
  
  – With 6-8 credits completed before fall semester, students make room in their future schedules for opportunities such as study-abroad or internships and still be able to finish in four.
Where we began

• **Academic Success Program Timeline**
  - In 1975 WCU established a summer bridge program for conditionally admitted students.
  - In the mid-1990’s, the program moved from Student Affairs to become jointly coordinated by the Advising Center and Residential Living.
  - In 2001 program coordination moved completely to Advising under a newly created coordinator position.
  - In 2007 ASP became a distinct entity with a report line to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs & expanded to become a full-year support program.
  - In 2011 ASP moved to First Year Experience as part of a larger reorganization in Academic Affairs.
  - In 2013 amidst a second reorganization, FYE (and along with it, ASP) moved to a newly created Division of Student Success.
Where we began

- **Academic Success Program Data**
  - Enrollment trends have followed Admissions decisions & Administrative directives. Average yearly student enrollment:
    - 164 during 2007-2009
    - 102 during 2010-2011
    - 132 during 2012-2014
    - 170 during 2015
  - Funding for the program derives completely from summer revenue, except for professional staff. The program maintains 90% of net and 10% is shared with the colleges.
A new vision emerges

• **Summer 2014 – Inaugural year for Catamount GAP**
  – Enrollment = 62 (divided into 3 class groups)
  – Introduction of Catamount GAP with 45 students.
  – Invited College of Education to offer a summer version of their learning community for future teachers.

• **Summer 2015**
  – Enrollment = 96 (a 55% growth divided into 6 class groups)
  – General enrollment cohorts = 3 groups.
  – Cohort for teaching majors.
  – New cohort designated for Honor’s students
  – New cohort for Engineering majors aimed at mathematics readiness (recommended by placement criteria).
High Impact Practice
For a successful transition experience in summer

First Year Seminars & Experiences
Common Intellectual Experiences
Learning Communities
Collaborative Assignments & Projects
Service Learning
Transition with High Impact
Intentional Planning

- Involve campus partners across Academic and Student Affairs.
- Identify faculty and support teams for each learning community.
- Schedule time for team planning and discussion.
- Design a cohort plan that addresses student needs.
- Integrate course & programming schedules.
- Plans for common intellectual experiences.
Leadership & Partners

- Office of the Provost
- Division of Student Success
- Undergraduate Studies
- Division of Student Affairs
- Academic Colleges & Departments
- Graduate School
- Marketing Department
- Institutional Planning & Effectiveness

- First Year Experience
- Tutoring Centers
- Advising Centers
- Registrar
- Service Learning
- Admissions
- Financial Aid
- New Student Orientation
- Residential Living
- Campus Activities
Learning Community Design

It takes a village…

“… those initiatives that involve intentional restructuring of the curriculum to foster intellectual and social connections…”

Engstrom in Hurd & Stein
Faculty & Staff
Hire the rock stars....
Summer Curriculum

• **Not all courses are equal in the summer!**
  – Maintain a course list that fits within the liberal studies requirements.
  – Identify courses that are less likely to have already been earned via Early College credits, etc.
  – Pair courses that are complimentary for a learning community approach.
  – Keep it simple!
  – Review – Refine - Release!

• **In 2016 FYE Summer will include nine different themed groups.**
  – Students accepted to the Honors College
  – Engineering students
  – Pre-Nursing students
  – Teacher education students
  – Students with an interest in the Health Sciences fields
  – General studies (4 unique cohorts)
2016 courses for Catamount GAP & ASP

- Political Science: Global Issues
- Health and Wellness
- Engineering First Year Seminar
- College Algebra
- Pre-Calculus
- Calculus
- Chemistry
- Introduction to Nursing
- Introduction to Psychology
- Introduction to Communication
- Anthropology: Cultural Systems
- First Year Seminar in English Literature
- University Studies: ‘College 101’
Total Student Experience

• Learning Community Design
• Common Intellectual Experiences
• Community Engagement
• Service Learning
• Academic Intervention
• Experiential & Active Learning
Campus Life

- Residential Living
- Campus Activities & Programs
- Campus Rec Center
- Base Camp Cullowhee
- Student Leadership & Involvement
- Intercultural Affairs
Building a case for Student Success

- Writing & Learning Commons
- Mathematics Tutoring Center
- Case Management Teams
- Disability Services
- Academic Advising & Coaching
- Health & Counseling Services
Peer Leaders

Come WaLC with me....

- Supplemental Instruction Leaders
- Peer Academic Leaders
- Writing Tutors
- Resident Assistants
- Summer Interns
Overview:
Supplemental Instruction (SI)

• **WHAT**
  – Supplemental Instruction places a trained peer tutor in the classroom. SI leaders model good student behavior; communicate with the course professor; and facilitate sessions offered outside of class.

• **WHO**
  – New freshmen who attend the 5-week summer session for an early start (enrolled in Catamount GAP or ASP).
  – SI Leaders are upper-class students with a proven track record of success for the course to which they are assigned. They are trained in an intensive 2-week session in advance of the summer session.

• **WHERE & WHEN**
  – SI Leaders attend class during the 5-week session and facilitate out of class sessions in scheduled classroom spaces.
Outcomes

What we know – what we have learned – answers we seek
### Outcomes: Student GPA & Retention

#### Summer 2014

**Catamount GAP (62 students)**
- Average Entry GPA (UW) = 3.64
- Average Summer GPA = 3.69
  - 79% earned a 3.5 or above
  - 13 students (21%) earned a 4.0
- Fall14-Fall15 Retention = 87.1%

**ASP (122 students)**
- Average Entry GPA (UW) = 3.23
- Average Summer GPA = 3.17
  - 25% earned a 3.5 or above
  - 9 students (7.3%) earned a 4.0
- Fall14-Fall15 Retention = 77.0%

#### Summer 2015

**Catamount GAP (95 students)**
- Average Entry GPA (UW) = 3.135
- Average Summer GPA = 3.55
  - 64.58% earned a 3.5 or above
  - 32 students (33.68%) earned a 4.0

**ASP (170 students)**
- Average Entry GPA (UW) = 2.99
- Average Summer GPA = 3.31
  - 39.41% earned a 3.5 or above
  - 20 students (11.76%) earned a 4.0
Building good habits

• ATTENDANCE
  – 228 students (82%) participated in at least one SI session
  – Total visits made to SI Sessions = 947
  – Student average attendance = 4.2 sessions over the 5 weeks

• BY POPULATION
  – ASP: 147 students (86%) attended 431 visits
  – GAP: 76 students (99%) attended 516 visits

• PERSISTENCE
  – Students demonstrated overall behaviors known to contribute to student success:
    • accessed resources
    • developed strong relationships with peers and faculty/staff
    • engaged with campus and regional opportunities
Outcomes:
Case Management 2015

Totals for both summer groups: 269 students
• 91 students → 219 contacts
• 41.5% were directly served
• Average contacts each = 2.4

BY GROUP

ASP: Conditional Admission
172 students:
• 73 students → 178 contacts
• 42% were directly served
• Average contacts each = 2.4

SLC: Regular Admission
97 students:
• 18 students → 41 contacts
  (excluding one student who received numerous points of contact before taking a university withdrawal)
• 18.5% were directly served
• Average contacts each = 2.3
## Outcomes:

### Student Satisfaction with Classes & Schedules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>% agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Schedule/times was good</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liked the class combination for my group</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoyed being part of a learning community</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoyed my class field trip</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising Session helpful</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoyed my service learning experiences</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study hall helpful</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outcomes:
Student Perceptions of Faculty & Staff

QUESTION

- My professors were helpful 96%
- My USI Class was helpful 81%
  - Felt supported by Faculty (ASP) 83%
  - Felt supported by USI instructors (ASP) 67%
  - Felt supported by Faculty (GAP) 97%
  - Felt supported by USI instructors (GAP) 100%
- Felt supported by Advisor 86%
- Felt supported by RA 93%
- Felt supported by Peer Mentor 94%
- Felt supported by FYE office 83%
### Outcomes: Student Satisfaction with Programming

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>% agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participated in at least 1 weekend program</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in 2-3 weekend programs</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in 4+ weekend programs</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liked weekend program options</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer to plan my own weekend options</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend programs helped me discover area</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend programs helped me make friends</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I used the Campus Rec Center at least once</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I used the Campus Rec Center regularly</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liked building-wide programs in Residence</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUESTION</td>
<td>% agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Glad I participated in summer session</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Summer session helped me feel ready for fall</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Summer session helped prepare me for success</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I would recommend this program to other students</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What did you like best? (top 3)**
- The ability to make friends on campus – 32 responses
- Meeting new people and feeling confident to start fall – 21 responses
- I was able to have a good early start on college – 20 responses

**What did you like least? (top 3)**
- Having classes so close together and every day – 15 responses
- Work load – 13 responses
- Waking up at 7am every morning – 8 responses
Time to Talk
Concepts – Questions - Discovery
Design can transform stairs, bridges and other transitional spaces into sensory journeys, filled with adventure.
Designers & Builders

Creating the architecture to organize and support a sustainable learning environment

- Philosophical Challenges
- Practical Challenges
- Opportunities
Thank YOU for joining the conversation!