

Assessment of First-Year Engagement Plans

INTRODUCTION

Assessment of the effectiveness of first year engagement initiatives is an important requirement of the Faculty Senate legislation. As specified in the legislation, units' Engagement Plans are intended to address two goals and five accompanying objectives. The goals provide overall direction for engagement plans, and objectives specify desired outcomes to help accomplish the goals. The goals are:

- To engage students in learning and orient them to the scholarly community from the outset of their undergraduate studies in a way that will bridge to later experiences in their chosen majors, and
- To facilitate students' adjustment to the high expectations, demanding workload, increased liberties, and other aspects of the transition to college life.

To assist units in developing assessment plans to examine the extent to which goals and objectives are being addressed, we provide below examples of measurable student learning outcomes associated with the five objectives identified in the Faculty Senate legislation (no need to assess goals separately). In some cases, faculty might include assessments within courses that would serve the dual purpose of assessment for the course as well as for First-Year Engagement. In other cases, units may develop surveys or similar instruments. For example, the measure "students will describe the meaning of academic integrity," if chosen, might be assessed at a small campus through student focus groups and at a large college through a survey. ***Note that these are only examples; they can be modified as appropriate for a unit's specific discipline and situation.***

OBJECTIVES WITH EXAMPLE LEARNING OUTCOMES

To introduce students to university study

- Students will describe the structure of the baccalaureate degree.
- Students will describe the purpose of General Education.
- Students will identify characteristics of university study that differ from high school study.

To introduce students to Penn State as an academic community, including fields of study and areas of interest available to students.

- Students will demonstrate understanding of at least three disciplinary areas.
- Students will articulate the goals of General Education in relation to their personal educational plans.
- Students will identify three majors of interest and the reason(s) for these choices.
- Students will discuss at least three minor programs that interest them.
- Students will explain how a specific course satisfies requirements for one or more majors.
- Students will show evidence of participation in at least three out-of-class activities relating to their field of study (e.g., disciplinary club meeting, volunteer hours with a service organization, and academic program/department lecture).

To acquaint students with the learning tools and resources available at Penn State.

- Students will describe how each of the following resources will be used to help them navigate the University: Undergraduate Degree Programs Bulletin, Advising@ PSU, eLion, Learning Centers.
- Students will describe at least two learning tools available to help support their academic success (e.g., iStudy for Success modules, Study Abroad opportunities, undergraduate research experience).
- Students will identify at least three learning resources that will enhance their Penn State experience (e.g., University Fellowships opportunities, internship possibilities, range of foreign language study availability, international study opportunities).
- Students will complete at least one activity demonstrating their use of the library.
- Student will have at least one meeting with a faculty member (i.e. one of their instructors or another faculty member) outside of class hours to experience ways in which the University's faculty constitute a crucial resource.
- Students will describe at least three attributes about the faculty, department or program, centers or institutes, etc. of an area of interest to them.

To provide an opportunity for students to develop relationships with full-time faculty and other students in an academic area of interest to them

- Students will identify at least one faculty member who knows them well enough to provide a reference.
- Students will meet with at least one full-time faculty member, besides from the instructor of their first-year seminar, if they are taking one, who is in an academic area of interest to them.
- Students will identify another student who shares interest with them in the same academic area.
- Students will participate in at least one study group with others students enrolled in the same course.
- Students will participate in at least one collaborative project, where they need to consult each other, as part of their coursework.

To introduce students to their responsibilities as part of the University community

- Students will describe the meaning of academic integrity.
- Students will identify at least three forms of academic dishonesty.
- Students will outline the components of the code of conduct.
- Students will identify at least three behaviors that are infractions to the code of conduct.
- Students can describe how to use ANGEL in at least one course.
- Students can describe at least three characteristics of courteous and civil discourse in the context of learning interactions.