The Residential First-Year Experience

February 26, 2009

Laura Giles, Associate Director
Anjali Cadena, Community Development Director
Kelly A. Gray, First-Year Experience Specialist
Overview of Presentation

- History
- Mission and Goals
- Themes
- RAPs
- Highlighted Initiatives
- Assessment
- Questions
History of the Residential First-Year Experience

- Started in 2 residence halls – “Epoch”
- 4 year expansion plan
- Evolution to Residential First-Year Experience (RFYE)
- Collaboration with Academic Affairs
- Creation of Themes
Mission of RFYE

- **Mission:** The Residential First Year Experience (RFYE) is a year-long, structured, residentially-based program for first year students, designed to smooth the transition to UMass Amherst. Participation in RFYE builds connections with the campus and pride for the University community. We encourage our students to be involved and participate in campus events and activities, while preparing students to take ownership for their academic and personal development.
  
  - UMass Amherst Connections
  - Transitions
  - Academic, Career, and Life Planning
  - Civic and Community Engagement
  - Leadership Skills and Involvement
First Year Themes (Southwest)

- Enterprise and Action (Melville/Thoreau)
- Global Thought and Action (Pierpont/Moore)
- Fitness & Recreation (James/Emerson)
- Health, Science, & Humanity (Kennedy)
- Pop Culture (Cance)
- Our Society, Our World (John Adams)
First Year Themes
(Orchard Hill/Central & Northeast)

- Writing and Literature (Butterfield)
- Culture and the Arts (Van Meter)
- Science, Innovation, & Leadership (Dickinson)
- Society and Leadership (Webster)
- Discovery (Crabtree/Mary Lyon/Knowlton)
RFYE Staff

Professional Staff
- Residence Directors (RD)
- First Year Experience Specialists (FYEs)

Graduate Staff
- Assistant Residence Directors (ARD)
- Residential Learning Graduates (RLGs)

Student Staff
- Resident Assistants (RA)
- Peer Mentors (PM)
- Cluster Office Staff
Residential Academic Programs

- RAPs – Linked courses
  - Declared
  - Undeclared
  - Honors
  - Isenberg

- 45% of our students are enrolled in RAPs that are tied to the themes
Highlighted Initiatives

- Peer Mentors and Academic Mentoring
- Residential Academic Success Center (RASC)
- RASC Workshops (example: SPIRE, SPARK, OWLS, Learning Styles, etc.)
- Faculty/Instructor Chats and RAP Socials
  - Dr. Wilmore C Webley – Biology of Cancer and AIDS
  - Dr. Tomaskovic-Devey – Sociology of Love
  - Dr. Tatishe Nteta – Does Racism Still Exist?
- Off-Campus Trips
  - Six Flags
  - Salem
  - Stephen King at Mt. Holyoke
  - NYC – December 6th
Highlighted Initiatives (Cont.)

- Theme-Based Initiatives
  - Webster and John Adams – Pizza and Politics
  - Butterfield – First-Year Student Journal
  - Van Meter – Steph Taylor and the State of Show

- Study Groups

- RFYE Incentives and Awards
  - Trivia (we had 5 faculty/instructors play as well!)
  - Student Choice and Academic Achievement Awards

- Career Services – First-Year student geared presentations
Demographic Differences
First Year – RFYE versus Not

- 61.1% of RFYE are female vs. 54.8% of Non-RFYE

- 5.6% of RFYE self-identified as Asian/Middle Eastern/Pacific Islander vs. 13.5% of Non-RFYE

- 84.0% of RFYE self-identified as White/Caucasian vs. 75.5% of Non-RFYE
# RFYE Halls – 2007/2008

## ID Hall of RYFE First-Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Dickinson</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Webster</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Emerson</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>James</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Melville</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Moore</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>49.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Pierpont</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>57.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Thoreau</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>63.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>JF Kennedy</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>80.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Butterfield</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>86.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Van Meter</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>1350</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results
Residence Hall Programs

How often do you participate in programs/activities sponsored by your hall/apt. complex?

- Never or Rarely: 30.9%
- Sometimes: 53.5%
- Often or Very Often: 40.8%
- RFYE
- NOT

15.7%
11.9%
Results
Residence Hall Programs

How satisfied are you with programs sponsored by your hall regarding:

- Quality of Programs
- Variety of Programs
- Athletic/Recreational
- Social/Educational/Cultural

Mean Satisfaction Rating

[1.0 = Very Dissatisfied - 7.0 = Very Satisfied]
Results
Learning Outcomes - Social

To what extent has living in on-campus housing enhanced your ability to:

- Respect other races/ethnicities
  - Mean Rating: NOT 5.4, RFYE 5.6
- Improve interpersonal relationships
  - Mean Rating: NOT 5.2, RFYE 5.6
- Resolve conflict
  - Mean Rating: NOT 5.0, RFYE 5.4
- Live cooperatively
  - Mean Rating: NOT 5.4, RFYE 5.8
- Meet other people
  - Mean Rating: NOT 5.1, RFYE 5.8

[1.0 = Not at All - 7.0 = Extremely]
Results

Diverse Interactions

To what degree have you:

Benefitted from interactions with residents who are different from you (i.e. race/ethnicity, beliefs, etc.)

Interacted with residents who are different from you (i.e. race/ethnicity, beliefs, etc.)

Mean Rating

[1.0 = Not at All - 7.0 = Extremely]
Results Learning Outcomes - Academic

To what extent has living in on-campus housing enhanced your ability to:

- Improve your communication skills
- Solve your own problems
- Manage your time more effectively
- Study more effectively

Mean Rating

[1.0 = Not at all - 7.0 = Extremely]
Results
Overall Experience

To what degree:

Will you recommend this college/university to a friend

Did your on-campus housing experience fulfill your expectations

Has living in on-campus housing enhanced your learning experience

Are you satisfied with your on-campus housing experience this year

Are you satisfied with your overall academic experience on this campus

Mean Rating
[1.0 = Not at All - 7.0 = Extremely]
Assessment & Evaluation Plan
Spring 2009

- February – 2008/2009 EBI
- March – Van Meter/Butterfield Focus Groups
- April – RFYE Web Survey (conducted by SAREO)
- April – RFYE Student Staff Focus Groups
- Peer Mentor Exit Evaluation
Thank You!

Questions

or

Thoughts