

Student Success Team Retreat Questions

September 2012

Academics/Faculty Contact

- How might we individualize academic experience for students in large classes or programs? How do we make large classes seem smaller?
- How do we assess variations in perceptions, connections, etc., across academic programs, particularly large programs versus small?
- - Why don't we facilitate more meaningful one on one experiences with faculty when we see on the survey that this is the most impactful experience students are having? (potentially require a faculty advisor for student orgs/more experiences with learning communities/fraternity and sorority life). How do we reach out to more faculty with this message? (message from Tom Rocklin)?
- What is holding students back from not reaching out to faculty? How do we best collect this data and respond?
- How do bring faculty into the equation? Bring into SST?
- Will student's high satisfaction change after midterms?
- How do the students gain the study skills in order to be successful?
- Did you feel the workload was too light? About right? Too heavy? How much did you have to read, etc.?
- How are we helping students transition into their majors and helping them get connected?

Alcohol Culture

- How can we get non-drinkers engaged in activities with one another? How do students find students with similar values?
- Could we use the alcohol/party scene responses from MAP-Works to create a more targeted social norming approach on campus?
- How do we highlight the "non-drinking voices" and opportunities?
- How might we learn more about alcohol and pressure, including whether it's a bigger problem for students from certain demographics, how long it persists, etc.?
- How do we validate those students who do not want to drink?
- Are we asking the students concerned with the party cultural about what they would like to do instead?
- Is homesickness related to alcohol use?
- If you are not drinking, what are you doing to make connections?
- Do students choose to come to Iowa because of the reputation as a party school?
- Is the Iowa experience truly indicative of a #2 party school scene?
- Does the party scene change as you advance through your years at Iowa?
- How do we reach the students who feel pressured to go to the party? Health Iowa just ran a report that about 67% of students report the best way they hear about events is from their friends. UI website is 2nd. How can we get out the information about events?
- Would be able to pair upper classmen with first year students who don't want to drink to promote events.
- Why do students feel pressured to drink when from an outside perspective there seem to be a lot of alternatives? When the risks are high, why is there still pressure?
- How might we learn more about alcohol and pressure, including whether it's a bigger problem for students from certain demographics, how long it persists, etc.?
- What are common professional staff responses to supporting a "green student" who self-reports challenges with navigating the alcohol culture on campus?
- In what ways can we support the students that choose not to drink? How do we make their voices heard more by students?
- What is the spectrum of our students that choose to drink? How can we make a larger focus on responsible behaviors?

- What more can we do to further combat the alcohol culture (#2 party school)?
- What are the resources that we are characterized as #2?
- How can we educate students on the credibility on our standings as #2 party school?
- Has the institution challenged the reviews and expressed dislike of the ranking?
- How does #2 party school impact the student's decision making regarding alcohol use?
- What can Iowa do to show education/programs/services/reports to emphasize in healthier/safer alcohol use?

Connection/Social Integration

- How is our message of creating a sense of belonging communicated?
- When do students feel acclimated?
- What can we do to better reach off campus first year students?
- How do we engage students to ensure sense of belonging?
- Students are immersed in electronic culture, what does that tell us about how to reach out and provide messages to students? How do we use technology that connects yet isolates students to help them succeed (and connect)?
- What can we do to connect students who express they are lonely with others and activities on campus?
- Are out-of-state students from outlying states (states other than Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin) reporting an increased or decreased sense of belonging, commitment to Iowa, intention to return?
- How do students who did not have On Iowa as an immersion experience report their sense of belonging, and experience at the University with those who did have On Iowa in order to see the impact the On Iowa program is having on our students' experience?
- On Iowa! does such a good job of connecting staff and students. Once it's over, that connection seems to lessen. How can we keep it going?

Communication

- Where does each of us fit into the bigger picture?
- Is there a better way to communicate amongst staff? Is there better technology to keep everyone in the department updated? We are doing a better job of connecting/communicating. How can we make this better?
- What are the trends of communication for students? Are we overwhelming students with the amount of emails? Are we actually reaching our students?
- SST and Town Hall meetings are extremely beneficial. It gives staff an opportunity to learn about what is going on and connect to larger initiatives. Is there a way to provide more opportunities to connect?
- How are we providing information about resources to students up front?
- What are ways we can better inform students and families about financial aid before orientation and coming to college? Is there more we can do to outreach about the "money end of things," example those that apply for application fee?
- How do we send the message to younger students about what we learned from seniors (on the senior survey) about how to make the most of their time at Iowa?

Demographics

- Is there a difference in students' experience if they are academically underprepared?
- How does the international student experience differ from the domestic students?
- For first generation college students, how is the data falling in relation to students who are involved in programs like Iowa Edge, etc. and those who are not involved in those programs?
- In what ways are transfer students supported? How can we better help them in their transition?

- How can we support transfer students? What else can we be doing?
- How does the impact of belonging depend on demographic – ethnicity, rural, urban?
- In what way is the demographics impact the sense of belonging–GLBTQ, student of color, international?
- How can we include transfer/2nd year students in On Iowa or MAP-Works?
- How are we looking to engage international students as that population grows?
- How can we support/educate domestic students to engage in conversation with international students?
- What support/assessment can we provide to transfer/2nd year students?

General

- Do we engage students in helping them define their success? (similar to the Wheezer video)
- Where does each of us fit into the bigger picture?
- At the end of your first term, how will you know if you were successful?
- What's been the impact of flood on campus culture and engagement?
- What do we hear from juniors who are on the verge of leaving Iowa?
- What are the top three factors that made you select Iowa?
- Did you have moment at which you realized that you needed to change the direction of your college career in order to be successful?
- Are you considering going on to graduate school after Iowa?
- How important do you believe it is to graduate in four years from Iowa?
- How do you customize programs or events for students who are introverted?
- Are there tensions between out of state and in state students around the issue of tuition costs?
- How involved are the parents in the day to day activities of a student's life?
- Where are students spending their time? How are they spending their time?
- Why are students feeling so lost when there is a great deal of help available? Where is the disconnect? Where are they falling through the cracks?
- What are ways we can support students who have gone through a loss of a parent?
- If a student needs to go home for reasons such as a loss of a parent or take time away from school, how can we keep them connected to the university and still help them feel support?
- How can we better maximize the family involvement for students today?
- How can we make On Iowa something students want to do?

High Impact Practices

- How can the UI offer capstone courses similar to FYS?
- What are other schools doing differently when it comes to service, high-impact activities?
- What would be a culminating and fulfilling experience for seniors? What are departments (the University) doing? What do seniors want? How do we collect feedback from all undergraduates throughout their entire Iowa experience?
- What is an “enriching educational experience” (EEE) and how is it defined? Why are first-year students having an EEE and not seniors? How might we best track this experience throughout the undergraduate years?
- Are students looking for capstone type experiences and courses throughout their career? Are we supplying enough of them?

Honors

- What is the experience honors students expect when they come here? Are there barriers to their success that aren't academic in nature? What is their connection? Is it with honors?

Involvement/Pick One

- Are there initiatives in addition to Pick One! to help students get involved at Iowa? Could there be more follow up with students who choose an organization via Pick One! to gauge their actual level of campus involvement?
- How do we measure impact of multiple points of engagement—can we quantify impact of varied touch points?
- How are questions regarding engagement and service being asked on MAP-Works and NSSE? Are students understanding what it means to be engaged or involved in community service? Are they selling themselves short?
- Since we have implemented Pick 1, has our engagement data increased from NSSE? We have been behind our peer institutions, so since implementation, have we closed the gap?
- How can we better support/collaborate Pick 1, MAP-works, and Pick 1 follow-up?

MAP-Works

- Are the results from MAP-Works skewed based on the number of responses that students are asked to give? Does the length result in survey fatigue?
- Are there ways in which we can create more points of contact for students via MAP-Works? How can we continue to educate faculty and staff to use the system to have conversations with students indicating a specific need?
- How are the 49 students who opt-out of MAP-Works being followed/tracked?
- Can we pull lists of students who have left the university at end of fall and spring semesters to go back and review MAP-Works data to find themes that may fall within their results, or to confirm each student had a very specific challenge they faced which ultimately led to their departure?
- How can we better market the value to taking MAP-Works? Explain why you don't want to rush the assessment?
- How can we include transfer/2nd year students in On Iowa or MAP-Works?

Mentoring

- How are students connecting with peer and adult mentors? Do we appropriately advertise to students? How can we raise awareness of the benefits of mentors?
- Is there a way to utilize a campus wide peer-mentoring program for first year students? It would be a way to connect off campus students (upper classmen) with first year students.
- Would it be valuable to have a formalized process or program for finding student mentors? (Wayne's report shows if students find this mentor naturally they have more success, so do we make it more formal?)
- Should we create programs where we connect students to a mentor in their academic program? Ex: find faculty members in Psychology volunteer as a mentor for students interested in Psychology

Methodological questions

- Is MAP-Works too early?
- Is there any kind of follow up with cohort (like second semester)? Need academic info.
- Is "belonging" the question we should be asking, especially at three weeks?
- Exit survey—can we track over time?

- What's covered in census of departments?
- Data seems rosy: what can we do to maintain this level? What is contributing to the high sense of belonging? What is the medium data (between rosy and negative)?
- With the senior exit service, how do you control for "graduation goggles" and students feeling happy to be done and the 90% response rate? How is this survey distributed to the seniors? Email with a list of other graduation "to-do's" ??

Service Learning/Community Engagement

- Why are community engagement involvement activities low? How do students perceive those activities? What is preventing students from being engaged in those activities? Why is community service not seen as important for many of our students? What type of service do they value?
- Can we more intentionally integrate service-learning into the undergraduate student experience to more intentionally expose them to the Serve component of The IOWA Challenge? What other opportunities are there to encourage students to participate in service?
- How can we engage more students in community service?
- Why is there disconnect with students in community service participation? What are the challenges? (Seems odd as Iowa is the #2 leading state in volunteerism.)
- Do you feel like the community services opportunities are not available at Iowa? What experiences would you want to participate in?
- How much community service should you do in college?
- How much community service have you actually done?
- Is there a way to make service a requirement for graduation?
- Why are the numbers of seniors reporting engagement for SERVE so low?
- How can we help/encourage more students take advantage of "experiential learning" opportunities? Ex: internships, job shadowing
- How many students take advantage of service learning experiences?
- How can help students recognize all of the ways they have SERVED?
- Why students are not seeing themselves engaged in service if they are engaged in campus?
- Is there a difference in the past five years and students participation in service?
- How do we make service learning appealing to students?
- How can service be a campus effort?
- How are we connecting service/engagement to their academic experience?
- How can we better link service opportunities and our students? Can we simplify the process?
- How do improve the % of students engaged in service?

Social Justice/Diversity

- What are student perceptions of social justice/diversity? How do they define it? We don't know how to best engage them with these issues.
- How can we create for more opportunities for meaningful conversations from the differing backgrounds? (NSSE references "serious" discussions. What is the definition of "serious" and how are our students interpreting that in the survey.)
- What do students feel would help enable them to step out of their cultural comfort zone?
- How can we intentionally foster interaction across cultures?
- How do we expand cultural/ethnic experiences to make a connection with students?

- How can we get intentional conversations (that are also meaningful) to occur with those different from them?
- How do we help students cross that divide of being uncomfortable and speaking to others that are different from themselves?
- How we ensure that those students that are identifiably different don't then feel like tokens?
- Do students know what diversity includes (including invisible differences)? How do we help them understand the broader definition of diversity?
- How do we focus and build more on the Stretch component?

Sophomore Experience and beyond

- Are we doing a good job preparing students for their sophomore year when they typically live off campus and have a faculty advisor?
- How are our sophomores doing?
- How are we supporting students in their second, third, fourth years?
- What data do we have for 2nd 3rd year?
- What support/assess can we provide to transfer/2nd year students?

Spirit and tradition

- Is the Hawkeye spirit overdone for some of our students? Do we offer enough other traditions that are non-sports related? What brings the non-sports students here?
- When you think of traditions you think of at Iowa, what are your top three traditions?
- How do non-athlete fans engage in On Iowa don't value Kinnick/tailgating/athletic events?

Spirituality/Religion

- We should ask students if they find a religious connection? Do students who don't fit a majority denomination in IC find community? How does their spiritual connection impact their ability to find community?