

Communicating Clear Expectations for Student Success

# The IOWA Challenge

HLC Annual Meeting  
April 10, 2011

# Agenda

- **Context:**
  - **Research on Student Success**
  - **Student Success Initiatives at The University of Iowa**
- **The IOWA Challenge**
- **Questions?**

# Current Context for Attention to Student Success

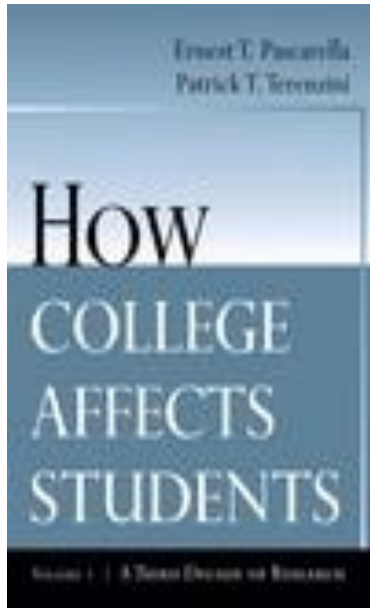
- *The Iowa Promise*, a Strategic Plan for the University of Iowa
- Goal #1: To create a University experience that enriches the lives of undergraduates and helps them to become well-informed individuals, lifelong learners, engaged citizens, and productive employees and employers.
- New retention and graduation goals.

# What Matters for Student Success

## Pre-college Characteristics Associated with Student Success:

- Academic preparation
- Family support (first-generation? parent?)
- Financial wherewithal (family, student resources)
- Part-time/Full-time attendance; employment (30+ hours)

# What Matters Most for Student Success: Student Engagement

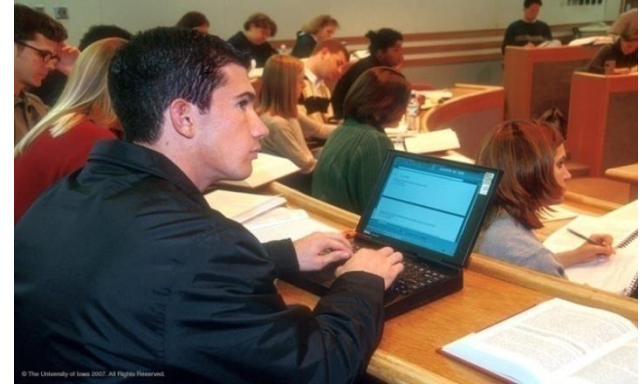


*The greatest impact appears to stem from students' **total level** of campus engagement, particularly when academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular involvements are **mutually reinforcing**...*

Pascarella & Terenzini, *How College Affects Students*, 2005, p. 647

# What Matters Most for Student Success: Student Engagement

1. What **students** do -- time and energy devoted to educationally purposeful activities
2. What institutions do -- using effective educational practices to induce students to do the right things



# What Matters Most for Student Success: Student Engagement

## “High-Impact” College Experiences\*

- Learning Communities
- Study Abroad
- Research with a Faculty Member
- Culminating Senior Experiences

\*National Survey of Student Engagement, 2007;  
AAHE, 2008



# Research on Iowa Student Experiences

Center for Research on Undergraduate Education, 2005-2006

<http://www.education.uiowa.edu/crue/publications/documents/RISE.Report.9-06.COMPLETE.pdf>



# **RISE Research Questions**

## **What matters for UI undergraduates?**

- What outcomes do UI undergraduates achieve and how?**
- How do UI undergraduates describe their experiences and the impact of college?**
- In what ways, if any, do the experiences and outcomes differ from those desired by the university?**
- Sample: first-year students and seniors**
- Methods: quantitative and qualitative**

# RISE Results: Outcomes

- **First-year Students and Seniors – key experiences associated with desired outcomes:**
  - **Worked on a research project with a faculty member**
  - **Tutored or taught other students**
  - **Participated in a racial or cultural awareness workshop**

# RISE Results: 1<sup>st</sup>- to 2<sup>nd</sup>-Year Retention

- Variables predicting return of 1<sup>st</sup>-year students for a 2<sup>nd</sup> year at UI (w/controls for ACT, UI gpa, work, race, sex, residence, financial aid, parents' education, other experiences):
  - ✓ Participation in a living-learning program
  - ✓ Perceptions of overall quality of teaching received (e.g., clarity and organization)

# **RISE Results: Engagement**

- **Results of analyses for first-year students:**
  - **57% of first-year students were involved in 'extracurricular activities' 0 hours per week in the current semester (Spring '06).**
  - **81% of first-year students worked 0 hours per week for pay on campus; 82.3% worked 0 hours for pay off campus.**
  - **62% of first-year students were involved in community service activities 0 hours per week in the current semester**

# RISE Results: Engagement

- **Results of analyses for first-year students:**
  - **34% of first-year students spent 0-10 hours per week preparing for class during the current semester; 0-15: 57%**
  - **Assigned books and readings read this academic year (as of the end of March/1<sup>st</sup> of April): 0-4 19.5%; 5-10 43.5%; 0-10 63%**

# RISE Results: Interviews

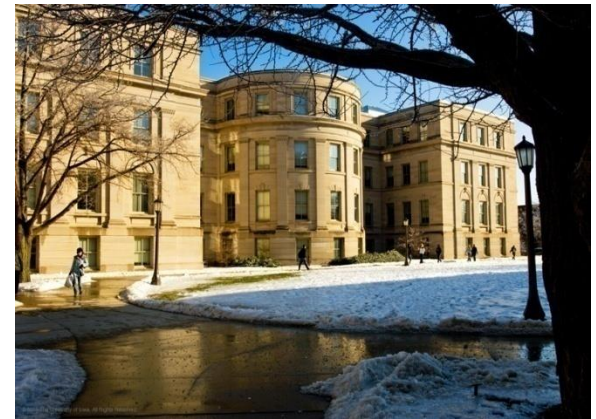
- **Themes across both frosh and seniors:**
  - **General satisfaction with UI and interactions with faculty, staff, and other students**
  - **“You’re on your own”**
  - **Lack of academic challenge**
  - **Alcohol use: “A culture of drinking,” including excessive consumption and underage drinking.**

# Student Success at Iowa

- **“We offer an impressive range of major programs and other opportunities for specialized study, and an equally impressive array of opportunities for educationally purposeful co-curricular activity. We might not be doing all we can, however, to guide students to these programs or to help students make good choices among them . . . We can [and should] do more to encourage meaningful student engagement.” (UI Self-Study, 2007-08)**

# What Matters for Student Success

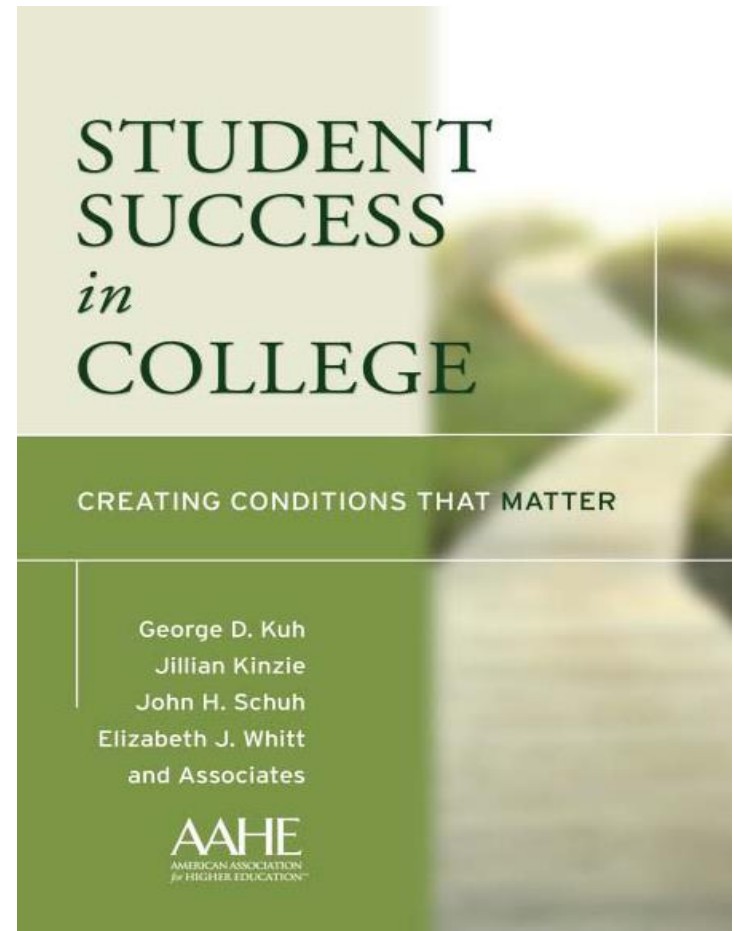
1. What students do -- time and energy devoted to educationally purposeful activities
2. What **institutions** do -- using effective educational practices to induce students to do the right things





# Project DEEP

**What does an educationally effective college look like at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century?**



# DEEP: Six Shared Conditions

- 1. “Living” Mission and “Lived” Educational Philosophy**
- 2. Clearly Marked Pathways to Student Success**
- 3. Improvement-Oriented Ethos**
- 4. Shared Responsibility for Educational Quality**
5. Environments Adapted for Educational Enrichment
6. Unshakeable Focus on Student Learning



# Implications for the University of Iowa

# Student Success Agenda at Iowa

- **Key Components, informed by DEEP:**
  - “Lived” – clear, shared –mission
  - Clear pathways for success
  - Shared responsibility and collaboration: “We’re all responsible for Iowa students’ success.”
  - “Positive Restlessness”
    - Build on what’s going well, address what’s not; Do more of what works, do less of what we can’t demonstrate does.
    - Research and assessment

# Student Success Agenda at Iowa

- **Student Success Team (SST)**
  - More than 200 faculty, staff, students
  - Ten member executive committee (incl. from student government, Staff Council, Faculty Council)
  - Annual retreat --> projects --> committees, task forces
  - Budget decisions: Investment in SST initiatives, undergraduate student success

# Defining Student Success (UI SST, 2007)

*University of Iowa students succeed when they achieve personal and institutional educational goals.*

*Successful students develop skills and knowledge, become more mature in their thinking, assume greater responsibility for their own lives and learning, develop understanding of diversity and multiculturalism, and become effective leaders.*



# Defining Student Success at Iowa

- *Student success at . . . Iowa is **a shared enterprise**.*
- *Students succeed by active engagement in educationally-purposeful activities. Faculty, staff, and students create . . . learning opportunities [and] policies, programs, and practices that foster student engagement.*

# SST's Body of Work

## SST PROJECTS

- The "Message" (now called The IOWA Challenge)
- Pick One!
- Learning Communities
- Early Intervention
- New Traditions (Convocation)
- SST Ambassadors
- "Moving Forward Together"
- One Community, One Book

## SST REPORTS

- Learning Communities
- Barriers to Student Success
- Centralizing Research & Assessment Resources
- Student Academic Engagement
- Peer Educators



# The IOWA Challenge

**EXCEL  
STRETCH  
ENGAGE  
CHOOSE  
SERVE**



# What is The Challenge?

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- **Goal: To communicate clear expectations for student success for UI undergraduates.**
  - A mission statement for our students
  - A set of expectations for what it means to be a Hawkeye
  - A message pointing students to clear pathways to student success

# History and Development

- Started as “The Message”: *Let’s just write one!*
- Email feedback from thousands
- Drafts vetted with >500 UI community members
- Title: by SST

# The IOWA Challenge

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**Preamble:**

**As a University of Iowa student, you become part of the Hawkeye family—students and alumni transformed by their experiences at Iowa. The University asks you to follow their example and rise to the challenge of these five expectations:**

# The IOWA Challenge

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- *Excel.* Set high standards—push yourself academically.
- *Stretch.* Learn from diverse people, ideas, and experiences.
- *Engage.* Get involved and be a leader.
- *Choose.* Make decisions that support your goals.
- *Serve.* Contribute to a community that's a great place to live and learn.

# Phased Implementation

- **Major implementation with Class of 2013**
  - Summer Orientation
  - “Signing the Herky”
  - Pledge at Convocation
  - Admissions materials, including President’s welcome letter
  - Campus Visit Days
  - “College Transition” Course
  - RA/Orientation Leader training
  - Residence hall programming model
  - Learning outcomes for the first year
  - First-Year Seminar instructors

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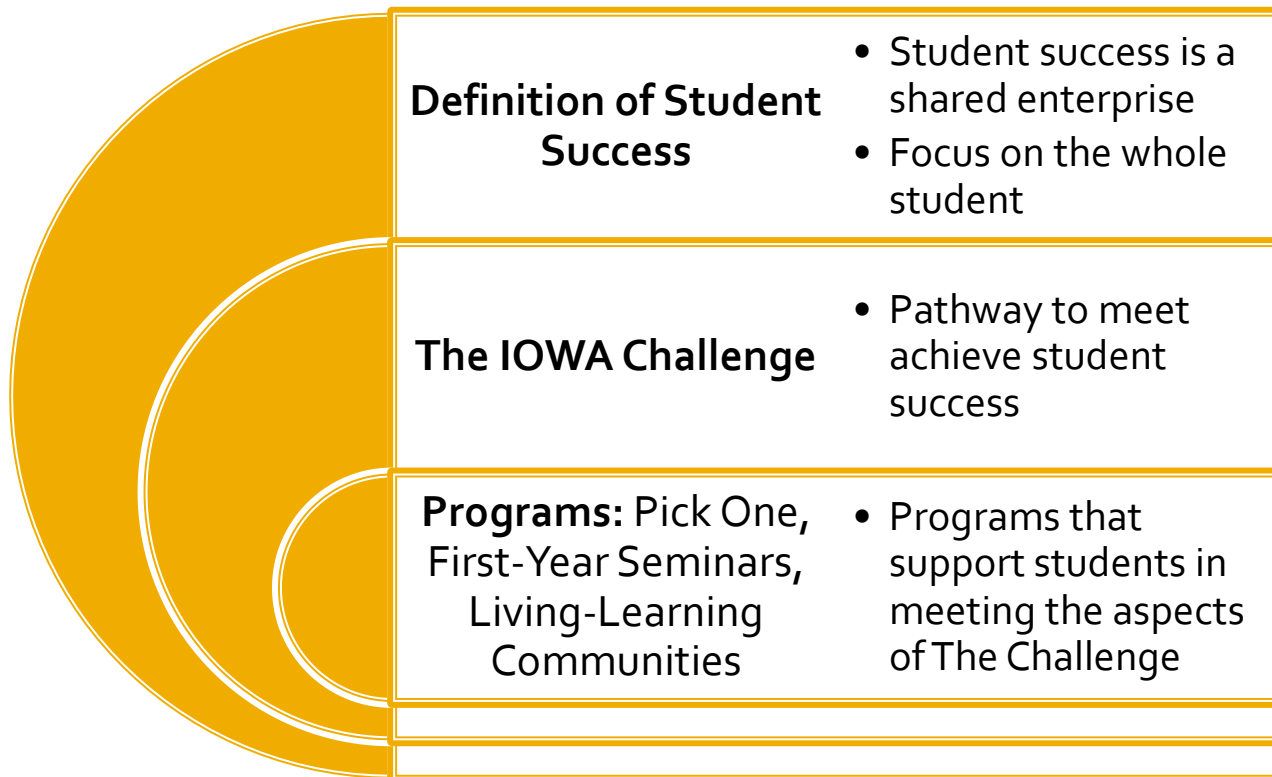
# Phased Implementation

- Focus on earlier adopters and “carriers”
- Embedded within other structures
  - On Iowa! immersion program – learning outcomes and sessions based on The Challenge
- Looking outside and beyond the first year
  - Within the Colleges
  - Transfer orientation and transition course
  - UI Annual Report



# Knitting Things Together

- Working hard to make sure that students see the connections among SST efforts.



# Assessment of Our Efforts

- **Two approaches so far:**
  - **Focus-group interviews 2009-2010**
  - **Senior Survey 2010-2011**

# Assessment of Our Efforts

- **Focus Groups**

- **Three main questions:**

- **Where are students learning about The IOWA Challenge?**
- **What are students hearing about The IOWA Challenge?**
- **What meaning are they making of The IOWA Challenge?**

# Assessment of Our Efforts

## ■ Focus Groups

- Main themes – What are students hearing about The Challenge?
  - Sometimes confused the Challenge with programming or strategies that help them meet the Challenge
  - Adjectives students used to describe The IOWA Challenge: academic, competition, challenge, general, glamorous, goals, graduation, involvement, new, and succeed.

# Assessment of Our Efforts

## ■ Focus Groups

- Main themes – What meaning are students making of The Challenge?
  - Tells us how to graduate
  - Communicates what to do to be successful
  - Common sense guidelines
  - Things we already do in our lives
  - “It’s a solid foundation for who you are going to be for the rest of your life.”
  - New mission statement
  - Guidelines for our college experience

# Assessment of Our Efforts

- **Senior Exit Survey: Incorporate IOWA Challenge as of Fall 2010**
  - As we assess the Challenge, we have begun to use the Challenge to assess UI undergraduate experiences.
  - Survey: to students filing for graduation
  - More than 2000 responses to open-ended questions still to analyze.

# Assessment of Our Efforts

## Senior Exit Survey: Most Frequent Responses for Each Challenge

	Very Often	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
<b>Excel</b>	38%	47%			
<b>Stretch</b>		33%	30%		
<b>Engage</b>	30%	35%			
<b>Choose</b>	35%	51%			
<b>Serve</b>		34%	37%		

# Assessment of Our Efforts

## Senior Exit Survey: Other Initial Observations

Highest Modal Response (5)	<b>“I took part in a student organization, community group, or volunteer service outside of my regular classes.”</b>	<b>(Engage)</b>
Lowest Mean Response (3.5)	<b>“I took part in a student organization, community group, or volunteer service outside of my regular classes.”</b>	<b>(Engage)</b>
Lowest Modal Response, Weakest Correlations, Low Means	<b>“I took advantage of opportunities to help make the university a better place for others in the UI community.”</b>	<b>(Serve)</b>
	<b>“I took advantage of opportunities to give something back to the community outside of the university.”</b>	<b>(Serve)</b>



# Taking Care of The Challenge

- Continued focus on “small wins”

**“Renewal may be a big deal, but it is often accomplished by small changes that influence integration, sense, and attention. My basic assumption is that renewal is more successful when people do less, but do it more often, than when they do more, but do it less often. “**

**--Karl Weick**

# Taking Care of The Challenge

- **Focus on students and on those who work with students**
  - Provide examples for students and “Challenge language” and resources for staff
- **“Meet The Challenge” Awards**
  - Sponsored by Office of the Provost and Office of Student Life
  - \$500 award given to a student in each of the five Challenge areas (Excel, Engage, Stretch, Choose, Serve)

# The Risks

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- “Inorganically developing a tradition”
- Aspirations v. “Reality”
- Risks:
  - The language wouldn’t resonate
  - The expectations wouldn’t be supported
  - The Challenge would be viewed as another marketing campaign (“Be Remarkable”)
  - It wouldn’t “stick”

# The Reward: Students on The Challenge

*"Put yourself out there in ways that pull you out of your comfort zone. Interact with people you might not otherwise get to—it'll help you better understand yourself and the world around you."*

Derek Baerenwald, Chemical and biochemical engineering major  
Rockton, Ill.

*Meeting the Challenge is "a solid foundation for who you are going to be for the rest of your life."*

-- Focus Group student

*"When you're a student, it's easy to forget that there's a larger community around you. Getting involved on and off campus builds respect for where you live and affects the choices you make here. You realize so many different people call this place home."*

Briana Byrd  
Journalism and elementary education major  
Davenport, Iowa

# Resources

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- Website containing:
  - Downloadable graphics
  - Short and long versions of the Challenge
  - Usage guidelines
  - Student testimonials
  - Programming ideas
  - Ways to “teach the Challenge”

**EXCEL  
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ENGAGE  
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# Questions & Discussion



# Contact Us

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- The IOWA Challenge Website:  
<http://thechallenge.uiowa.edu>