The First-Year Experience Project
At IU South Bend

The goal of the First-Year Experience, most broadly speaking, is to improve student retention and graduation rates. Approximately 35% of students who matriculate at IU South Bend as freshmen do not persist into their second year. National data tell us that through specifically designed first-year seminars and good advising, student persistence rates can be improved.

A model for FYE seems to have emerged that can be called a hybrid.

1. Hybrid because there would be two types of First-Year Seminars (FYS): U100 and a modified 190 that would be designated as a FYS. U100 would continue to be taught by instructors, who work at IU South Bend in Student Services and other non-academic branches of the university. The 190 instructors would be faculty members.

2. Both types of FYS would have peer mentors who would use assessment data to refine and effectively target their advice to and support of the students. Additionally, the instructors teaching the FYS courses will receive faculty development training together and separately.

3. FYE Advising will weave the various components of the project into an effective whole. FYE advising is imagined as a collaborative effort between professional advisor and faculty; both groups would receive professional development training. Advisors will be assigned to the students in their 1st semester at IUSB and will continue to work with the students for 3 semesters. Exploratory students will be assigned to a CLAS Advising Center advisor, and students with a declared major will be assigned to an FYE advisor in the department or unit that houses their major. To ensure the continuity and consistency of the advising experience, the same primary advisor will stay with the student for the first 3 semesters. If a student changes majors or an exploratory student declares a major, a 1st year advisor from the major department will be assigned in addition to the primary advisor. FYS-X190 instructors will function as supplementary advisors to the students in their classes.

I. HISTORY OF FYE AT IU SOUTH BEND

Sometime during 2011, Executive Vice Chancellor Alfred Guillaume convened a study group to begin thinking about whether a First-Year seminar would be beneficial for our students. Dr. Guillaume brought together the campus
stakeholders:  faculty, deans, student service administrators and the registrar’s office. Many good and interesting ideas were exchanged.

These groups continued to meet throughout the AY of 2011-12 resulting in a planning document, “First Year Experience Plan,” crafted by Dean Dunn in May 2012.

In continuous consultation with Dean Dunn, Lesley Walker took on the leadership of this project as an outgrowth of her experience at the HERS institute. During the AY 2012-13, Dr. Walker convened the subgroups (logistics, assessment, and pedagogy) to determine how to move forward on the project. Through extensive consultation with these three groups, a proposal for the First-Year Experience (FYE Proposal) was designed (document is available on the Oncourse site; it has been previously distributed to this body).

Summer 2013

The FYE proposal makes it clear that our ambitions are not limited to one stand-alone course. Central to our conception of FYE is that it be integrated with advising and student services and occur over two or three semesters. To this end, a workshop was held in May that assembled faculty, CLAS’s Associate Dean of Students, Monika Lynker, plus Kathy Sullivan and Virginia Heidemann from Student Services. The topics of the workshop were: effective use of peer mentors, commonalities that U100 and 190 courses could share, and an assessment report from Carolyn Schult on Reacting to the Past courses.

At the workshop, it was agreed that the faculty who teach 190 courses, through a series of additional meetings, would design a set of common elements that would be shared by U100 courses and an eventual First Year Seminar 190 class.

The faculty working group included: Betsy Lucal, Henry Scott, Lyle Zynda, April Lidinsky, Steven Gerencser, Jane Cera (Arts), and Gary Hawkins (BUSE) and Lesley Walker. We met three times to create a set of “Required Common Elements” (RCE) and the FYS Proposal. Additionally, faculty discussed practical ways to integrate the RCE into their syllabi, assignments, and overall course designs. Below are the required common elements.

**U100/FYS-X190 Required Common Elements**

The First-Year Seminar employs peer mentors and high impact practices to spark beginning students’ creativity and intellectual curiosity. The seminars will be capped at 20 students. They will share at least four common elements:
1. Encourage and provide opportunities for students to understand how the course fits into the General Education Program and its relationship to major fields of intellectual inquiry: the sciences, the social sciences, the arts and the humanities, and the professions.

2. Encourage and provide opportunities for students to examine personal beliefs and preconceptions and to develop strong critical-thinking and decision-making skills for college and beyond.

3. Encourage and provide opportunities for students to become involved in campus life. Examples of such activities are: participating in collaborative learning; cultivating relationships with professors; joining clubs; attending lectures, performance or events; studying abroad or going on field trips.

4. Encourage and provide opportunities for students to reflect on and assess their growth as learners and, thus, develop an awareness of the transferability of academic skills and knowledge to new contexts. A student would, for instance, understand how what was learned in a FYS course is applicable to another class or a career.

**Fall 2013**

Elizabeth Dunn, Monika Lynker, and Lesley Walker presented these documents and a timeline for moving forward on the project to Interim Executive Vice Chancellor, John McIntosh, and Interim Associate Vice Chancellor, Linda Chen. They both believed that the Chancellor would endorse the project.

**II. IMPELEMENATION OF FYE**

Faculty teaching FYS courses will be designated as FYE Faculty. Regularly scheduled meetings of the FYE Faculty will provide a structure for professional development and discussions of assessment data leading to continual improvement of the program. A separate area in Weave Online will be established for the FYE assessment program and data.

An Associate Dean of Students in CLAS will be recruited and appointed to a renewable 3-year term with 50% reassignment and a yearly stipend to direct the FYE Program. A position description will be developed for the Associate Dean who will join with the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Dean of CLAS to function as a management team for FYE. We will seek approval from the Senate to add the Associate Dean as a non-voting ex officio member of the General Education Committee. Duties will also include keeping the Weave Online site updated, organizing professional development for FYE faculty,
establishing a meeting schedule for FYE faculty, and establishing agenda. A full position description will be developed in consultation with Academic Affairs and other interested parties.

The FYE program will be administered like the current MLS program that has no dedicated faculty but has faculty associates. It is envisioned that a cohort of faculty who teach and advise in the program will be developed. The Associate Dean of Students will additionally form an advisory board.

We envision that faculty could pilot a set of FYS- X190s during fall 2014. To move toward implementation, we need to attend to the following items:

**Fall 2013**

1. **Logistics:**
   a. Most pressingly, how can we ensure that the FYS 190s be populated by first-year students? (An initial experiment in which we only allowed freshman to enroll in the RTTP proved unsuccessful in 2011). Can we pre-enroll students in these classes? What about the idea of block scheduling?
   b. Schedule: we should have identified folks willing to pilot these 190s by early November. Initially, these classes can go into the schedule as a T/N/B 190 with the idea that they will be converted to FYS once we have all the approvals.
   c. The CLAS Advising Center, with the addition of a new professional advisor specializing in Exploratory and 1st Year students, and in collaboration with the other units on campus, will be able to provide advising to FYE students and training for FYE faculty.

2. **Professional Development:**
   a. UCET workshops for faculty to convert their 190 into FYS 190s. We envision at least 3 UCET workshops that would mirror the type of work that we did this summer to retrofit syllabi for the FYS designation. The faculty who worked on this project over the summer are ready to lead this effort. The workshops would be divided along discipline lines: B, N, and T190s.
   b. Workshops for faculty advisors and professional advisors who will be working with 1st year students. Advisors will be assigned to the students in their 1st semester at IUSB and will continue to work with the students for 3 semesters. Exploratory students will be assigned to a CLAS Advising Center advisor, and students with a declared major will be assigned to an FYE advisor in the department or unit that houses their major. To ensure the continuity and consistency of the
advising experience, the same primary advisor will stay with the student for the first 3 semesters. If a student changes majors or an exploratory student declares a major, a 1st year advisor from the major department will be assigned in addition to the primary advisor. FYE-X190 instructors will function as supplementary advisors to the students in their classes.

3. Assessment
An assessment committee for FYE already exists. It was decided to begin collecting assessment data on the “Reacting to the Past” classes. Fall 2012, the RTTP instructors administered a survey of student attitudes before and after playing the games. Carolyn Schult is currently analyzing the data. Similarly, there is another faculty working group that is collecting data on our current high impact classes. Once the FYE project is approved and funded, these efforts will be expanded.

Fall/Spring 2014

4. Recruitment and design of peer-mentor training for the FYS 190. We will need to work with Kathy Sullivan to recruit new peer mentors and train them (we’ll need to design our own curriculum) along with the U100 peer mentors in May and August of 2014. A faculty member will probably need to be designated to lead this effort.

5. Approval of FYS-X190 courses by the General Education Committee and then the Faculty Senate

6. Recruitment of faculty advisors from all units to work with the FYE Program

Spring 2014

7. Professional development for the cohort of instructors teaching in the FYE program—U100 instructors, advisors, and 190 faculty. To do this, we would begin with a workshop on the specificity of the “first year” experience. We would invite an expert in the field to lead the workshop. We would follow up with two more meetings to discuss readings and ideas for developing good practices.

8. Faculty begin developing their FYS-X190 during the spring and into the summer
9. Begin working on initial assessment activities for the fall courses. What are meaningful metrics?

**Fall 2014**

1. FYE Pilot begins

2. Continue working on the integration of student services (through U100), advising across the campus, and the FYE courses. The goal is to build out the First-Year Experience so that it touches students’ lives in multiple ways: in the classroom, during advising sessions, and in their extra-curricular activities.

3. Continued focus on faculty and staff development in view of creating a cohort that is dedicated working with first-year students

**Spring 2015**

1. Continue Pilot of FYE

2. Assess our initial results from the fall courses

3. Adjust FYE plans accordingly

**Summer 2015**

Begin welcoming our first cohort of FYE students!

**III. BUDGET**

**Under revision 10/3/13**

**APPENDICE**

**I. The Players**

1. **Logistics and Funding**
   - John McIntosh
   - Rob Ducoffe
   - Elizabeth Dunn
   - Lesley Walker
   - Jeff Jones
   - Jeff Johnston

2. **Learning Outcomes and Assessment**
   - Carolyn Schult
   - Linda Chen
II. DRAFT PROPOSAL TO APPROVE COURSE AS A FYS-X190

Proposal for a Course in First-Year Seminar 190

Name

Email

Campus Phone

Dept/ School

Course Number: FYS190 Include course prefix:

Variable Title of Course:

First Semester to be offered:

Please provide a brief course description (paragraph length):

Please answer the following questions:

The First-Year Seminar employs peer mentors and high impact practices to spark beginning students’ creativity and intellectual curiosity. These courses share at least four common elements; briefly discuss ways in which the proposed course meets the specific expectations listed below.

1. Discuss how the course will encourage and provide opportunities for students to understand how the course fits into the General Education Program and its relationship to the major fields of intellectual inquiry: the sciences, the social sciences, the arts and the humanities, and the professions. How will the course help students to reflect upon the
significance of General Education classes? How will the course help students gain an understanding of major fields of intellectual inquiry?

2. Discuss how the course will encourage and provide opportunities for students to examine personal beliefs and preconceptions and to develop strong critical-thinking and decision-making skills for college and beyond. What are some ways in which the course prompts students to reflect on their personal beliefs and preconceptions? How does the course provide opportunities for the development of critical-thinking skills that lead to effective decision-making in college and beyond?

3. Discuss how the course will encourage and provide students opportunities to become involved in campus life. Examples of such activities are: participating in collaborative learning; cultivating relationships with professors; joining clubs; attending lectures, performances or events, studying abroad or going on field trips. How will the course be structured to incorporate this aspect of the First-Year Seminar? Supply one or two examples.

4. Discuss how the course will encourage and provide opportunities for students to reflect on and assess their growth as learners and, thus, develop an awareness of the transferability of academic skills and knowledge to new contexts. A student would, for instance, understand how what was learned in a FYS course is applicable to another class or a career. Describe how the course will provide opportunities for this type of reflection. Supply one or two examples.

Please include a sample syllabus.

III CLAS Advising Learning Objectives

Freshman (0-30 credit hours)

(Includes new admit advising, orientation, 1st & 2nd semester advising appointments, FYE course)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advising Goals</th>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>How</th>
<th>Who</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| University Structure and Culture | - Demonstrate understanding of IUSB culture, rules, policies, & procedures in meetings with advisors  
- Demonstrate familiarity with university offices and resources  
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate appropriately with faculty and staff  
- Demonstrate understanding of the importance of advising by making and keeping advising appointment(s) each semester | -orientation  
-Student Handbook  
-1st year seminar  
-1st semester advising | COND admits: Student Success Specialist (staff)  
AFQL majors: Faculty advisors  
Exploratory: Exploratory/Career Specialist (staff)  
Transfers (in & out): Transfer Specialist (staff) |
| Structure of Curriculum | - Demonstrate understanding of General Education while scheduling courses, discussing possible majors, and planning their path to graduation  
- Demonstrate understanding of their Academic Advisement Report (AAR) and other online resources  
- Demonstrate the ability to create a | -My Academic Plan  
(M.A.P.)  
-Advising Syllabus  
-Advising Timeline  
-CLAS website  
-2nd semester advising | NOTE—College policy states advising is required each semester |

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### Sophomore (31-60 credit hours)

(Includes 1st & 2nd semester advising appointments)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Advising Goals</th>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>How</th>
<th>Who</th>
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</table>
| **University Structure and Culture** | - Encourage and provide opportunities for students to deepen their knowledge of institutional structure and resources  
- Know which campus schools house majors or programs of interest  
- Know where to go for student service and major information  
- Use language of culture | -Dept. advisor  
- Bulletin  
- Student Handbook  
- Campus school websites | Transfers (in & out): Transfer Specialist (staff)  
Probation: Student Success Specialist (staff) |

- Field of Study (Major/Minor)
  - Encourage and provide opportunities for students to develop strong decision-making skills as students weigh majors, and face academic, financial, and social choices.
  - Demonstrate the ability to create plan to graduation
  - Periodic feedback on academic progress and major exploration
  - Access to career counseling

- Experiential Learning/Student Engagement
  - Encourage students to get engaged through clubs, research, travel, internships, etc.
  - Demonstrate understanding of the importance of experiential learning through participation in clubs, research, travel, internships, etc.
  - Get to know faculty members (attend office hours, talk to them outside of class)

- Reflection
  - Encourage and provide opportunities for students to understand their transition to IUSB and their eventual transition to a community of scholars in graduate school and/or productive careers in the world of work
  - Demonstrate ability to make effective decisions concerning study habits, work hours, physical health

- Degree Progress Report (DPR)
- CLAS website
- Bulletin
- 1st semester advising

- CLAS website
- Student Handbook
- Course/instructor info
- 2nd semester advising

- High School experience/record
- Student Handbook
- 1st semester advising
| Structure of Curriculum | -Encourage and provide opportunities for students to deepen their knowledge of campus, college, and department requirements | -Understand purpose and scope of General Education -Identify requirements for campus and LAS gen ed -Understand course sequencing -Plan remaining semesters -Begin to recognize interdisciplinary connections between various classes | -Dept. advisor -Bulletin -Degree Progress Report (DPP) -Dept. websites -CLAS advising website | All: CLAS faculty 

**NOTE**—College policy states advising is required each semester |

| Field of Study (Major/Minor) | -Encourage and provide opportunities for students to become familiar with the scope of the discipline— inquiry, practices, theory, subjects | -Articulate what the discipline is, use appropriate vocabulary of discipline -Identify core courses for major -Know faculty areas in discipline -Know of career & grad school options | -Dept. advisor -Bulletin -4 year plans -Degree Progress Report -Academic Advisement Report (AAR) in SIS | |

| Experiential Learning /Student Engagement | -Encourage and provide opportunities for students to understand of how co-curricular activities support academic goals -Encourage students to understand how academic work ties into environment and global issues | -Identify opportunities relevant to major (campus clubs, undergrad research, internship, study abroad, community service) -Participate in at least one activity -Attend talks & lectures organized by the department | -Student Handbook -Campus/CLAS websites -Dept. advisor -flyers, magazines, listserve | |

| Reflection | -Encourage and provide opportunities for students to reflect on their first year college experience | -Use experience to guide major/minor choices and career plan -Continue to make effective decisions concerning study habits, work hours, physical health | -Dept. advisor -ePortfolio - resume | |