ESF RETENTION COMMITTEE REPORT FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2009-10

Table of Contents

ESF Retention Committee 2009-10

Members

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Committee Charge

The Retention Committee provides a forum for the discussion of college-wide issues and strategic planning aimed at maximizing student success and retention to graduation. Committee members are actively engaged in conducting retention-related research, and in recommending and/or implementing retention-related programs and policies.

This is a standing advisory committee to the College President that is chaired by the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Marketing. Committee membership is determined by the Vice President on an annual basis (ESF Faculty and Professional Staff Handbook).

SECTION I

A REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF ESF RETENTION DATA

The administrative reporting system developed by the Office of Governmental Relations and Institutional Planning at SUNY-ESF can provide a variety of retention-related reports using student registration data. The Retention Committee examined data from a number of these reports covering the fall 2002 to fall 2010 semesters to identify statistical patterns and trends related to the attrition, persistence, and graduation of entering freshman and transfer student cohorts. Data tables and related observations are presented below.

RETENTION AND GRADUATION OF ESF FRESHMEN

Table 1 presents an overview of the retention and graduation rates for eight freshman cohorts entering ESF from fall 2002 to fall 2009, showing the data for each cohort as of the fall 2010 semester. The Attrition column shows the number and percent of the entering cohort that is no longer enrolled. The Persisters column shows the portion of the cohort registered for fall 2010 classes. The Degrees Received column shows the number completing an undergraduate degree (AAS, BS, or BLA) and the cohort graduation rate within the specified time period.

ESF uses a six year graduation rate as its primary assessment metric. This is the standard metric required for most government reports, and it provides an appropriate graduation metric for students in four or five year (e.g. BLA) degree programs. Our Committee offers the following observations:

- The six year graduation rates for the 2002-2004 cohorts range from 64% to 72% and average 67%. The College's Strategic Plan (Vision 2020) sets a goal for the College to achieve an 80% freshman graduation rate by the year 2020.

- It will not be possible for the 2005-2008 cohorts to achieve an 80% graduation rate target given the attrition that has already taken place. The "best case" projections for these cohorts put their six year graduation rates in a 67% to 73% range.

- The average six year graduation rate for SUNY four year college campuses is 58% and the comparable rate for publicly funded universities in the U.S. is 45%. The six year graduation rate for SUNY's doctoral campuses averages 65% (source: http://www.suny.edu/sunynews/ efficiency3.cfm).

- The six year graduation rates for the 2003 freshmen cohorts at SUNY's four University Centers (students graduating by fall 2009) were: Binghamton 80%, Stony Brook 67%,

Albany 65%, and Buffalo 63%. ESF's six year graduation rate for the 2003 cohort was 64% (source: http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator).

TABLE 1: FRESHMAN COHORT RETENTION AND GRADUATION 2002 – 2010				
Fall Entry	**# Entering Freshmen**	**Attrition**	**Fall 2010 Persisters**	**Degrees Received**
2002	198	49 (25%)	2 (1%)	147 (6 yr = 143 = 72%)
2003	228	79 (35%)	0 (0%)	149 (6 yr = 147 = 64%)
2004	227	79 (35%)	1 (<1%)	147 (6 yr = 65%)
2005	260	86 (33%)	8 (3%)	166 (5 yr = 64%)
2006	242	76 (31%)	62 (26%)	104 (4 yr = 43%)
2007	250	66 (26%)	183 (73%)	6 AAS + 1 BS
2008	310	85 (27%)	225 (73%)	2 AAS
2009	284	35 (12%)	249 (88%)	0

(Source = IR004I)

RETENTION AND GRADUATION OF ESF TRANSFER STUDENTS

Tables 2A and 2B present an overview of the retention and graduation rates for lower division (freshman/sophomore) and upper division (junior/senior) transfer student cohorts entering ESF from fall 2002 to fall 2009. Data is shown for each cohort as of the fall 2010 semester. While the College has not set a specific goal for transfer student retention or graduation, the Retention Committee believes that an analysis of transfer statistics is appropriate given the relatively large number of ESF's entering students who have transferred from another college.

It is important to note that the transfer students in each fall cohort have entered ESF with varying numbers of transfer credits. The majority enters with sophomore level class standing, but many enter as juniors and smaller numbers enter as freshmen or seniors. Data reports have not been developed to track the retention of each year level separately, but a comparison of the combined freshman/sophomore and junior/senior year levels shows some differences in those two groups. Our Committee offers the following observations:

- The five and six year graduation rates for freshman/sophomore level transfer students entering ESF in the fall semester are very similar to the graduation rates for entering

freshmen (Table 1), even though these transfer students enter ESF with previous college experience and with some number of transfer credits.

- The five and six year graduation rates for junior/senior level transfer students entering ESF in the fall semester are significantly higher (averaging 74%) than the graduation rates for freshman/sophomore level transfers (averaging 66%).

- A significant number of ESF transfer students enter during the spring semester each year. No attempt has been made here to study the attrition data for those students.

- A search of the SUNY website has produced only one benchmarking study of graduation rates for full-time transfer students enrolled in baccalaureate programs at SUNY doctoral campuses, using fall 2003 registration data to examine the four and five year graduation rates for transfer cohorts entering in fall 1998 and 1999. ESF outperformed most SUNY doctoral campuses in this study, but it does not provide data comparable to the data presented in Tables 2A and 2B.

- A comparative study of the academic qualifications (e.g. GPA) of entering freshmen and transfer students at ESF would provide a context for comparing their respective graduation rates, but admission criteria and academic records for ESF's freshman and transfer cohorts are not comparable.

TABLE 2A: RETENTION OF FR/SOPH LEVEL TRANSFER STUDENTS

Fall Entry	Year Level	# Entering Transfers	Attrition	Fall 2010 Persisters	Degrees Received
2002	FR/SOPH	134	45 (34%)	1 (<1%)	88 (6 yr = 66%)
2003	FR/SOPH	140	46 (33%)	0 (0%)	94 (6 yr = 91 = 65%)
2004	FR/SOPH	135	47 (35%)	1 (< 1%)	87 (6 yr = 64%)
2005	FR/SOPH	122	40 (33%)	3 (2%)	79 (5 yr = 65%)
2006	FR/SOPH	165	72 (44%)	9 (5%)	84 (4 yr = 51%)
2007	FR/SOPH	144	43 (30%)	39 (27%)	62 (3 yr = 43%)
2008	FR/SOPH	109	28 (26%)	70 (64%)	11 (2 yr = 10%)
2009	FR/SOPH	150	27 (18%)	123(82%)	0 (1 yr = 0%)

(Source = IR004)

TABLE 2B: RETENTION OF JR/SR LEVEL TRANSFER STUDENTS					
Fall Entry	**Year Level**	**# Entering Transfers**	**Attrition**	**Fall 2010 Persisters**	**Degrees Received**
2002	JR/SR	30	9 (30%)	0 (0%)	21 (6 yr = 70%)
2003	JR/SR	52	12 (23%)	0 (0%)	40 (6 yr = 76%)
2004	JR/SR	48	12 (25%)	1 (2%)	35 (6 yr = 73%)
2005	JR/SR	26	7 (27%)	0 (0%)	19 (5 yr = 73%)
2006	JR/SR	30	6 (20%)	1 (3%)	23 (4 yr = 77%)
2007	JR/SR	20	4 (20%)	1 (5%)	15 (3 yr = 75%)
2008	JR/SR	33	6 (18%)	8 (24%)	19 (2 yr = 58%)
2009	JR/SR	40	7 (18%)	32 (80%)	1 (1 yr = 2%)

(Source = IR004)

FIRST YEAR ATTRITION OF ENTERING FRESHMEN

Colleges and universities typically lose the largest number of their entering freshmen to attrition prior to second year registration, so first year attrition is a commonly used metric in retention studies. Table 3 presents first year attrition data for eight freshman cohorts entering the College from fall 2002 to fall 2009. Our Committee offers the following observations:

- Freshman to sophomore year retention at ESF has averaged 85% during these years.

- A small percentage of entering fall semester freshmen (averaging 5.4% of the cohort) does not register for the following spring semester. Freshman attrition during or following the spring semester is significantly higher (averaging 9.3% of the cohort). Difficulties associated with transferring to another college at midyear may be a factor, and academic dismissals or suspensions from ESF are more likely to occur following the second semester.

- The average freshman to sophomore year retention rate at SUNY's University Centers (Binghamton, Buffalo, Albany, Stony Brook) for the 2008 cohort was 88%, with

Binghamton the highest at 90%; SUNY Geneseo had the highest rate among the comprehensive campuses, also at 90%. (source: http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator).

- Freshman to sophomore year retention for the 2008 cohort was significantly lower than average, and unexpected based on that cohort's strong admission metrics (Tables 6 and 7).

TABLE 3: FIRST YEAR ATTRITION OF ENTERING FRESHMEN

Fall Entry	# Entering Freshman	Fall Attrition	Spring/Summer Attrition	Second Year Persisters
2002	198	8 (4%)	17 (9%)	173 (87%)
2003	228	18 (8%)	20 (9%)	190 (83%)
2004	227	12 (5%)	20 (9%)	195 (86%)
2005	260	10 (4%)	32 (12%)	218 (84%)
2006	242	11 (5%)	22 (9%)	209 (86%)
2007	250	10 (4%)	17 (7%)	223 (89%)
2008	310	26 (8%)	35 (11%)	249 (80%)
2009	284	13 (5%)	23 (8%)	248 (87%)

(Source = IR004I)

FIRST YEAR ATTRITION OF ENTERING TRANSFER STUDENTS

Table 4 presents first year attrition data for transfer student cohorts entering ESF from fall 2002 to fall 2009. It is important to note once again that each transfer cohort includes students entering ESF with varying amounts of college experience and transfer credits. The largest number enters the College with sophomore level class standing and has transferred from a SUNY community college or technology college. Most live off-campus and commute to ESF. Our Committee offers the following observations:

- First to second year retention of entering transfer students has averaged 78% during these years.

- The fall (first) semester attrition rate for new transfer students typically exceeds the rate for new freshmen (Table 3). The combined fall and spring/summer attrition for new transfer students typically exceeds the first year attrition for new freshmen as well.

- Entering transfer students have had an inconsistent pattern of participation in ESF 132/332 "orientation" courses over these years. Living off campus may be an additional negative factor in their successful first year transition to ESF. Additional research should be conducted to examine these factors (and others).

TABLE 4: FIRST YEAR ATTRITION OF ENTERING TRANSFER STUDENTS

Fall Entry	# Entering Transfers	Fall Attrition	Spring/Summer Attrition	Second Year Persisters or Degrees Received
2002	164	16 (10%)	20 (12%)	128 (78%)
2003	192	22 (11%)	26 (14%)	144 (75%)
2004	183	16 (9%)	18 (10%)	149 (81%)
2005	148	24 (16%)	15 (10%)	109 (74%)
2006	195	32 (16%)	19 (10%)	144 (74%)
2007	164	19 (12%)	15 (9%)	130 (79%)
2008	142	14 (10%)	15 (11%)	113 (80%)
2009	190	13 (7%)	21 (11%)	155 (82%)

(Source= IR004I)

ATTRITION AND GRADUATION BY DIVERSITY GROUP

Colleges are often interested in comparing the attrition and graduation rates of white and diverse student populations to help determine the need for targeted retention programs.

The top portion of Table 5 presents attrition and graduation data for four freshman cohorts that entered ESF from fall 2002 to fall 2005. Data for these cohorts has been aggregated to provide reasonably sized cells for each of the diverse student populations, and to allow for a meaningful examination of graduation rates after five or more years of enrollment. The bottom portion of Table 5 presents similar data for four freshman cohorts entering in 2006 or later, who have been enrolled for less than five years. Our Committee offers the following observations:

- The attrition rates for diverse students from the 2002 to 2005 freshman cohorts have been higher than the attrition rates for white students, and their graduation rates have been lower across all diversity groups.

- Data for the more recently enrolled 2006 to 2009 cohorts presents a more optimistic picture of diverse student retention at ESF, with attrition rates for four out of five diverse populations (all but AIA) lower than the attrition rate for white students as of fall 2010. Admission profile reports indicate that average GPA and SAT scores have been stronger for diverse student cohorts entering since 2006, which may be a factor in their improved retention.

TABLE 5: ATTRITION AND GRADUATION BY DIVERSITY GROUP

Freshmen Entering 2002 – 2005 (Enrolled >5 Years)

	AIA	API	BLK	HSP	NRA	DIVERSE	WHITE	TOTAL
Total Students	7	26	10	39	3	85	828	913
Total Attrition (Attrition Rate)	3	10	8	13	2	36 (42%)	258 (31%)	294 (32%)
Total Persisters (Persistence Rate)	0	1	0	0	0	1 (1%)	10 (1%)	11 (1%)
Total Degrees (Graduation Rate)	4	15	2	26	1	48 (56%)	560 (68%)	608 (67%)

Freshmen Entering 2006 – 2009 (Enrolled <5 Years)

	AIA	API	BLK	HSP	NRA	DIVERSE	WHITE	TOTAL
Total Students	7	44	11	35	9	106	980	1086
Total Attrition (Attrition Rate)	3	5	3	9	1	21 (20%)	247 (25%)	268 (25%)
Total Persisters (Persistence Rate)	4	36	8	25	6	79 (75%)	634 (65%)	713 (66%)
Total Degrees (Graduation Rate)	0	3	0	1	2	6 (6%)	99 (10%)	105 (10%)

(Source = IR004) AIA = Native American or Alaskan Native; API = Asian or Pacific Islander; BLK = Black or African American; HSP = Hispanic or Latino; NRA = Non-Resident International; DIVERSE = Total of the diverse/under-represented student groups.

ENTERING FRESHMAN QUALITY METRICS

Many college retention studies indicate that students who are better prepared for college level studies are also more likely to complete a degree program. Tables 6A and 6B present admission data for eight freshman cohorts entering ESF from fall 2002 to fall 2009. This data shows the number of entering freshmen and the percentage of each entering cohort that met specific quality metrics based on their high school grades (Table 6A) and SAT/ACT college entrance examination scores (Table 6B). Our Committee offers the following observations:

- ESF's 2004 and 2006 entering freshmen had the weakest grades and SAT/ACT scores of the eight cohorts, but their attrition and graduation rates are similar to other cohorts (Tables 1 and 3).

- ESF's 2008 and 2009 entering freshmen had the strongest grades and SAT/ACT scores of the eight cohorts. The 2008 and 2009 cohorts also had the largest numbers of entering students. Sophomore year retention has been very strong for the 2009 cohort, but very weak for the 2008 cohort (Table 3).

TABLE 6A: ENTERING FRESHMAN QUALITY METRICS
High School Grade Point Average

 # IN ENTERING COHORT

HS GPA	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
90 – 100%	89	92	72	107	95	128	173	194
85 – 89%	61	73	109	103	105	89	109	73
80 – 84%	32	45	35	47	37	33	27	12
70 – 79%	3	7	10	3	5	0	1	0
Unknown*	12	11	0	0	0	0	0	4
Total	197	228	226	260	242	250	310	283

*International or other students without calculable GPA.

% IN ENTERING COHORT

HS GPA	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
90 – 100%	45%	40%	32%	41%	39%	51%	56%	69%
85 – 89%	31%	32%	48%	40%	43%	36%	35%	26%
80 – 84%	16%	20%	15%	18%	15%	13%	9%	4%
70 – 79%	2%	3%	4%	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Unknown	6%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

(Source = NYSED-1)

TABLE 6B: ENTERING FRESHMAN QUALITY METRICS SAT Verbal Plus Math Scores (or ACT Equivalent)								
# IN ENTERING COHORT								
SAT V+M	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**
1200-1600	66	73	74	88	57	88	124	130
1100-1199	68	61	66	77	72	65	98	89
1000-1099	42	66	57	64	76	72	63	53
< 1000	22	28	29	30	37	25	24	11
Unknown*	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
Total	198	228	226	260	242	250	310	284
*International or other students without calculable scores.								
% IN ENTERING COHORT								
SAT V+M	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**
1200-1600	33%	32%	33%	34%	24%	35%	40%	46%
1100-1199	34%	27%	29%	30%	30%	26%	32%	31%
1000-1099	21%	29%	25%	25%	31%	29%	20%	19%
< 1000	11%	12%	13%	12%	15%	10%	8%	4%
Unknown	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

(Source = NYSED-1)

ENTERING TRANSFER QUALITY METRICS

Table 7 presents college grade point average information for transfer student cohorts entering ESF in the 2002 to 2009 fall semesters and presents the mean ESF grade point average for those who completed an ESF degree by fall 2010. The transfer GPA at time of entry reflects the transfer college last attended prior to enrolling at ESF, and may not reflect the student's full academic record in some cases. Our Committee offers the following observations:

- Transfer students enrolling at ESF will generally earn lower grade point averages than they earned at their transfer institution. This may impact individual student expectations and retention. This could be addressed in orientation and academic advising sessions.

- Entering transfer GPA's have risen each year since 2004, but these cohorts have not been enrolled long enough to fully assess the impact on final GPA and graduation rates.

TABLE 7: ENTERING TRANSFER AND FINAL ESF GPA COMPARISON				
Fall Entry	**# Entering Transfers**	**Entering Transfer GPA**	**Degree Recipients**	**Final GPA at ESF**
2002	164	3.05	109 (6 yr = 66%)	2.97
2003	192	3.03	134 (6 yr = 70%)	2.99
2004	183	3.00	122 (6 yr = 67%)	2.95
2005	148	3.04	98 (5 yr = 66%)	2.97
2006	195	3.09	107 (4 yr = 55%)	3.00
2007	164	3.15	77 (3 yr = 47%)	3.14
2008	142	3.25	30 (2 yr = 21%)	3.08
2009	190	3.23	1	--

(Source = IR004H)

REASONS FOR STUDENT ATTRITION

ESF attempts to collect data to describe the primary reasons for undergraduate attrition. Many students complete a withdrawal form or an exit interview to provide this information, while data for other students is based on their class registration status or suspension/dismissal status. Tables 8 and 9 present this information for eight freshmen cohorts and eight transfer cohorts entering ESF from fall 2002 to fall 2009. Our Committee offers the following observations:

- Freshman cohort attrition due to academic suspension or dismissal averaged 10% over this eight year period, but the differences between years are substantial. Transfer cohort attrition for academic reasons averaged 10% but also varied substantially from year to year.

- A larger percentage of transfer students than freshmen appear to withdraw for personal reasons (averaging 6% versus 3%). ESF Student Life staff members are working to provide more descriptive data to better understand the personal reasons involved.

- Half of the freshmen and 43% of the transfer students who leave ESF do not complete a formal withdrawal process. They simply do not re-register for their next semester.

TABLE 8: REASONS FOR FRESHMAN COHORT ATTRITION					
Fall Entry	**# Entering Freshmen**	**Academic Dismissal or Suspension**	**Withdrew for Personal Reasons**	**Did Not Re-Register**	**Total Attrition**
2002	198	16 (8%)	9 (5%)	24 (12%)	49 (25%)
2003	228	34 (15%)	9 (4%)	36 (16%)	79 (35%)
2004	227	39 (17%)	6 (3%)	34 (15%)	79 (35%)
2005	260	29 (11%)	12 (5%)	43 (17%)	86 (33%)
2006	242	28 (12%)	6 (2%)	39 (16%)	76 (31%)
2007	250	21 (8%)	8 (3%)	36 (14%)	66 (26%)
2008	310	29 (9%)	7 (2%)	44 (14%)	85 (27%)
2009	284	7 (2%)	3 (1%)	23 (8%)	35 (12%)
Total	1999	203 (10%)	60 (3%)	279 (14%)	555 (28%)

(Source = IR004I)

TABLE 9: REASONS FOR TRANSFER COHORT ATTRITION					
Fall Entry	**# Entering Transfers**	**Academic Dismissal or Suspension**	**Withdrew for Personal Reasons**	**Did Not Re-Register**	**Attrition**
2002	164	18 (11%)	15 (9%)	21 (13%)	54 (33%)
2003	192	20 (10%)	11 (6%)	25 (13%)	56 (29%)
2004	183	18 (10%)	8 (4%)	32 (17%)	59 (32%)
2005	148	15 (10%)	15 (10%)	17 (11%)	47 (32%)
2006	195	26 (13%)	18 (9%)	31 (16%)	79 (41%)
2007	164	20 (12%)	5 (3%)	22 (13%)	47 (29%)
2008	142	16 (11%)	6 (4%)	12 (8%)	34 (24%)
2009	190	9 (5%)	7 (4%)	18 (9%)	34 (18%)
Total	1378	142 (10%)	85 (6%)	178 (13%)	410 (30%)

(Source = IR004I)

SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS FROM RETENTION DATA

The data presented in Tables 1 through 9 (along with related research) allow us to offer a few summary observations regarding student retention at ESF:

- ESF's six year graduation rate for entering freshmen (67%) is comparable to the rates at other doctoral campuses in SUNY, with the exception of SUNY Binghamton. Binghamton has the highest graduation rate in SUNY at 80% (Table 1).

- ESF's Vision 2020 strategic plan sets a goal for the College to have the highest freshman graduation rate in SUNY. No currently enrolled freshman cohort is expected to reach the targeted 80% rate (Table 1).

- Retention-related research suggests that there are several institutional characteristics which may provide a retention advantage to SUNY Binghamton when compared to ESF. These include:

  - Higher freshman SAT scores (+100 points on average CR+M)
  - Higher percentage of students living on campus (over 50%)
  - Lower percentage of students in STEM majors (approx. 20%)

  ESF's chances of matching Binghamton's graduation rate would likely improve if these differences were smaller (see http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/; http://www.insidehighered.com//layout/set/print/news/2010/02/17/stem/; http://www.connection-collegeboard.com/home/programs-and-services/513-sat-3)

- Transfer students entering ESF at the freshman/sophomore level have graduation rates very similar to entering freshmen, while transfers entering at junior/senior levels typically graduate at a higher rate. But only 20% of transfer students enter ESF with junior/senior level transfer credits (Tables 2A, 2B).

- First year attrition of ESF freshmen is slightly higher than the average of SUNY's University Centers (Table 3). First year attrition of ESF transfer students is higher than attrition for freshmen (Tables 3, 4), but transfer graduation rates are comparable (Tables 1, 2A, 2B).

- ESF has struggled to retain students from diverse populations, but we are showing improvement in recent classes. The persistence rate for diverse freshmen entering since 2006 is currently higher than the persistence rate for white freshmen (Table 5),

and this should result in improved graduation rates. College graduation rates for African-American, Hispanic, and Native American students are lower than rates for white students in national studies (see: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2007/2007161.pdf and http://trends.collegeboard.org/files/Education_Pays_2010.pdf)

- Freshmen entering ESF since 2007 have entered with substantially higher grades and SAT/ACT scores than earlier cohorts, but their early attrition patterns do not show consistent improvement (Tables 1, 3, 6, and 7).

- ESF loses an average 10% of each entering freshman and transfer class to academic dismissal or suspension (Tables 8, 9). We do not have data to compare this rate with other institutions.

- The largest percentage of students who leave ESF simply do not re-register for their next semester (Tables 8, 9). We lack data to identify the reasons for their attrition. Early contact with students who have not registered for their next semester in the expected time period could potentially resolve retention-related issues in time to retain some of these students. A personal contact at this time could also provide additional data identifying reasons for attrition.

SECTION II

PROGRAM ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUNY-ESF has developed a number of student life and academic support programs aimed at encouraging and facilitating student success and retention to graduation. The Retention Committee studied seven of these programs during the 2009-10 academic year to assess current program activities and to recommend appropriate additions or improvements. The following programs were assessed:

- Mathematics Assessment and Placement
- New Student Orientation
- Student to Student Mentoring
- ESF Learning Community
- ESF 132 and 332 Courses
- Academic Support Services – Peer Tutoring Program
- Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)

Our Committee's assessments and recommendations have been made based upon Committee presentations and written reports provided by ESF staff or faculty members responsible for each program. This report summarizes that information for each program below.

MATHEMATICS ASSESSMENT AND PLACEMENT

The purpose of the mathematics assessment and placement process is to review the level of mathematics preparation for entering freshmen and transfer students in order to place each student in an appropriate first-year mathematics course at ESF. Proper placement in mathematics courses has been identified as a factor in academic success and retention at ESF.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- The Office of Undergraduate Admissions coordinates the process working closely with the Office of the Registrar and with mathematics faculty from the Department of Forest and Natural Resources Management. The goal is to identify entering students who are not prepared for the mathematics course normally required in their program of study and to place them in an appropriate level mathematics course (adjusting their course schedule).

- All incoming fall semester freshmen (except Landscape Architecture) are asked to complete an online placement examination provided on the Syracuse University Mathematics Department website. Fall semester transfer students who have not met

the mathematics requirement for their program of study are also asked to take the exam.

- ESF mathematics faculty (e.g. Abdel-Azis or LaVie) review placement examination results along with each student's admissions file and send a mathematics placement recommendation to the Registrar prior to fall semester Orientation. Staff in the Office of the Registrar make schedule adjustments for incoming students.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

- Faculty and staff involved in mathematics assessment and placement indicate that the program improved significantly for the classes that entered in 2008 and 2009. The placement process is administered more consistently and the range of placement options is greater. The recent addition of an ESF course in Fundamentals of College Algebra (APM 101) has provided a fuller range of placement options and is expected to help more students succeed in meeting their mathematics requirement.

- For the class entering fall 2009, 98% of the freshmen required to take the mathematics placement exam completed it (253 of 258), but only 69% of the transfer students required to take the exam did (64 of 93).

- The fall 2009 placement process determined that 10% of entering freshmen were not prepared to enter the mathematics course required for their program, and that 35% of entering transfer students were not prepared for their required mathematics course. Mathematics preparation is generally weaker for transfer students and it is especially important for ESF to evaluate their skills prior to entry.

- The percentage of new students (freshmen plus transfer) entering ESF prepared to schedule their required mathematics course in the fall 2009 semester also varied according to academic department as follows:

  - Chemistry 100%
  - ERE 100%
  - PBE 100%
  - Env. Studies 95%
  - Env. Science 81%
  - EFB 78%
  - FNRM 77%
  - SCME 43%

  These differences are not only due to variations in student preparation, but to variations in the courses required by each major (also note LA students are not tested).

- Mathematics instructor Nasri Abdel-Azis has tracked mathematics course completion rates at ESF for more than a decade. Since the implementation of the mathematics placement process in fall 2004, the fall semester completion rate for APM 105 (the most often scheduled first semester math course) has averaged 88%, while completion rates for the period 2000 to 2003 averaged only 77% (see Appendix).

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Our Committee offers the following recommendations to improve mathematics assessment and placement:

- The mathematics placement process should be required for new students entering ESF in the spring semester. It is not required at this time. An online mathematics placement examination is available through Syracuse University for use with spring entering students, but ESF would need to provide appropriate faculty resources to undertake the additional assessment work. This could be especially helpful in advising, since spring entry students are most often transfer students who enter with a wide range of math skills.

- Incoming Landscape Architecture students should be required to take the math placement exam, unless they have already fulfilled their math course requirement.

- Students who meet the minimum math placement requirement in Landscape Architecture should be placed in APM 104 – College Algebra and Pre-Calculus. Students who are not ready for APM 104 should be placed in APM 101 – Fundamentals of College Algebra, which will also satisfy graduation requirements in Landscape Architecture. Students assessed to be ready at a higher level than the program requirement should be placed in APM 104 unless the Department of Landscape Architecture faculty decides differently.

- Currently, if a student's math placement is changed, they are not notified until they see their curriculum plan sheet at Orientation. We recommend that the Admissions Office notify all students prior to arrival what the outcome of their mathematics placement exam was. This is especially important if their mathematics course registration has been adjusted to enroll them in a course below their normal program requirement.

- The mathematics faculty should conduct a follow-up study to examine the validity of the math assessment and placement process and the resulting students' success. The study should compare grade distributions for students in the various entry-level courses with their placement scores.

- Faculty advisors should be better informed about how the math assessment and placement process works and who to contact if they have any questions. Faculty need to be reminded to check the math level on the curriculum plan sheet, advise students if it is below their program requirement, and assess the impact for curriculum planning.

- The change period for math courses should be expanded to two weeks to allow students greater flexibility to adjust their math course in consultation with the math faculty. Currently, petitions for math course changes are generally approved, and this would reduce the need for petitions.

NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION

The purpose of ESF's New Student Orientation program is to help students transition successfully to campus by introducing available student services, providing a variety of educational and informational programs, and encouraging peer-to-peer relationship building. The purpose is also to introduce family members to student services and to provide information that families can use to help ensure student success.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- Orientation programs are offered to entering freshmen, transfer students, and graduate students (this review is focused on undergraduate programming only). Orientation programs are offered for the fall and spring semesters. The fall semester freshman orientation is a five day program and the transfer orientation is a two day program (see program schedules in Appendix). The spring semester orientation is a two day program.

- Academic components include presentations on course registration and the "academic experience," along with time devoted to department meetings and academic advising sessions with faculty. There is also a Convocation and an introduction to ESF Learning Community expectations.

- Student Life components include campus tours, small group meetings with peers and Orientation Leaders, residence hall floor meetings, a financial aid and work study orientation, a health and wellness presentation, and a career services presentation. These and other sessions introduce students to the full range of student services provided at ESF.

- Social components include a variety of day and evening events to build student/student and student/faculty relationships. Several events are held in conjunction with Syracuse University students.

- Community awareness and responsibility is introduced through a community speaker and a freshman class community service project.

- Sessions for the parents of first year students introduce the range of available student services through staff presentations and a current student panel.

- Student mentors are introduced to new students during Orientation to begin the Student-to-Student Mentoring program.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

- Student life staff have used new student and faculty questionnaires, discussions with ESF faculty and staff (including the President's Cabinet and Academic Council), and focus groups of current students to assess overall satisfaction with Orientation programming and time/scheduling issues. The focus groups were facilitated by a graduate intern with information reviewed for emerging themes.

- In assessing the 2009 Orientation, first year students reported feeling:

  - Overloaded with Orientation activities; they wanted more time for settling into their residence halls, exploring the area on their own, and spending time with new friends;

  - Disappointed in their amount of contact with Syracuse University students, unfamiliarity with the SU campus (where some Orientation events are held), and unfamiliarity with the campus bus system;

  - Undecided about the benefits of a possible summer orientation program, with some feeling the additional time would be useful and others expressing concerns about summer travel and additional costs.

- In assessing the 2009 Orientation, commuter and transfer students reported feeling:

  - Segregated from first year/on-campus students during Orientation (e.g. separate bus for community service event);

  - Disappointed in the content of some events and presentations that were geared to first year students (e.g. time management, how to study) and disappointed in the short amount of time devoted to their orientation;

  - Concerned that they needed greater access to academic advisors and more time to deal with course scheduling and registration (which is provided to most students on the weekend before classes start);

  - Somewhat more positive than first year students about the potential benefits of an optional summer orientation program.

- Orientation assessment information from 2009 was used to implement several changes in the Fall 2010 Orientation:

  - Scheduled additional "down time" for freshmen on Wednesday evening and Sunday morning;

  - Provided more information about the campus bus system.

  - Planned activities to allow for a greater amount of interaction between freshmen, transfer students, and SU students;

  - Conducted a two day Transfer Orientation program that was more focused on getting to know the campus and culture of ESF rather than new college student issues (such as study skills).

- Assessment of Fall 2010 First-Year Orientation is ongoing. Eighty-six first year students completed Orientation surveys and their overall responses were quite positive (i.e. scoring 4 or higher on a 5 point scale).

- The 2010 Orientation survey for transfer students was completed by only 6 students and cannot provide reliable assessment information.

- The 2010 Orientation survey for family members was completed by only 4 people and cannot provide reliable assessment information.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Our Committee offers the following recommendations to improve the New Student Orientation program:

- Consider an optional summer orientation component for first year students, recognizing that not all students will be available to attend.

- Extend fall Transfer Orientation an additional day, or provide an optional summer orientation for transfer students. Some transfer students (e.g. those entering with freshman level credits or living in a residence hall) should be offered the option of attending fall semester Freshman Orientation.

- Consider an overnight summer experience for commuter students aimed at introducing and connecting those students with the campus.

- Increase efforts to collect reliable program assessment information by increasing survey response rates or implementing other feedback methods.

- Instead of a Transfer Orientation picnic held at the end of the day on Saturday, offer a breakfast prior to the first session on Saturday morning to make immediate connections prior to the program.

- Schedule a social event for transfer students to provide an additional opportunity for new transfer students to get to know each other, make connections and reflect on their first few days on campus. Inviting transfer students to freshman orientation events should also be considered.

- Based on recommendations from faculty and staff, the "Academic Experience" session should review the online registration process in greater detail.

- Improvements in New Student Orientation may require additional budget, faculty and staff support, and more appropriate large group meeting spaces (the new Gateway Building should resolve most space issues). An Orientation Committee should be charged with leading program improvement efforts.

STUDENT-TO-STUDENT MENTORING

This program links new freshmen to returning ESF students in a mentoring relationship. Student-to-Student mentors help new students adapt to the ESF community through informal interactions and by sharing their best tips for academic and personal success.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- Regular mentoring meetings provide a forum for questions and discussions. Email is also used. Two mentors are assigned to each residence hall floor and one mentor is assigned to work with commuting students.

- Mentors participate in the freshman retreat and in various community service and social events with their students, and they lead specific portions of ESF 132 courses.

- The program typically chooses 15 student mentors from the large group of Student Orientation Leaders to continue their interaction with freshmen for the year. Mentors are enrolled in a one credit seminar taught by the Director of Student Activities and an instructor from the Writing Program. The mentor role and related seminar help these upperclassmen develop further as student leaders.

- An estimated 90% of freshmen interact with a student mentor through this program.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

- Assessment of Student-to-Student Mentoring is linked to assessment of the Learning Community program because the two programs are closely related.
- The 2009 Learning Community survey asked freshmen to rate how helpful their student mentor was in their transition to ESF. This question received responses from 149 students providing the following ratings:

Poor	=	22 (15%)
Average/Poor	=	21 (14%)
Average	=	43 (29%)
Average/Exceptional	=	31 (21%)
Exceptional	=	32 (21%)

- Peer mentoring programs in U.S. higher education are growing in number, but research related to their effectiveness is ongoing. See (for example) the article by Stephanie Budge (2006) found at : http://eric.ed.gov/PDFS/EJ747773.pdf.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Our Committee offers the following recommendations to improve the Student-to-Student mentoring program:

- The distribution of poor to exceptional ratings for student mentors should be of some concern to program administrators, but the fact that 71% of survey respondents rated their mentor average or higher and one in five rated their mentor exceptional suggests that the program has the potential to impact retention in a positive way. The program should be continued, but program assessments should identify specific needs for program improvement. Early identification of "poor" rated mentors should result in additional training or mentor replacement before the start of the spring semester.
- The Director of Student Activities has suggested that the mentor training seminar could be improved by adding a more formalized leadership component and additional Student Life staff presentations.

ESF LEARNING COMMUNITY

The ESF Learning Community program is a comprehensive initiative focused on first-year students and their successful transition to ESF. Built upon a successful model developed at Syracuse University, the program seeks to integrate a number of academic and residence life experiences to build a broader sense of community and foster both academic and personal development.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- The program places students from specific residence hall floors into freshman level biology, chemistry and writing courses along with other students residing on their floor. Students have the opportunity to develop peer relationships inside and outside the classroom. Some courses have been taught within the residence hall setting. Participating faculty and staff have also offered group study sessions and academic support sessions in the residence halls. Purposeful links are made between the biology, chemistry and writing course content. Students are also encouraged to participate in community service projects that are connected to their first-year courses.

- The Office of Academic Support Services offers students a series of Academic Support Workshops as part of the Learning Community program, covering topics such as time management, study skills, and stress management.

- All freshmen participate in an off-campus retreat to begin the fall semester. This retreat is hosted at the Orenda Springs Experiential Learning Center in Marcellus, NY and helps develop the Learning Community through a ropes course, a GPS course, and other team building activities.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

- Learning Community evaluations are distributed prior to students' departure at the end of each semester. Feedback is summarized and used to make program adjustments.

- Focus groups are facilitated by graduate students enrolled in the Higher Education program at Syracuse University. These are held in November to gain anecdotal student feedback midway through the fall semester, which is then used to make program adjustments.

- The freshman retreat is evaluated immediately following the September event. The fall 2009 retreat received an overall average rating of 4.22 on a 5.00 point scale. Students gave their faculty/staff interactions during the retreat a 3.77 rating.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Our Committee offers the following recommendations to improve ESF's Learning Community program:

- The opening of ESF's Centennial Hall residence facility will provide an opportunity for Learning Community writing classes to be taught in the residence hall (a program component that was dropped in 2009 due to lack of space in the S.U. Sky Halls) and provide a faculty-in-residence type experience. Meeting spaces in Centennial Hall should also allow for a greater amount of Learning Community programming.
- The freshman retreat is currently divided into two groups meeting on back-to-back weekends due to the size of the class and the size of the local retreat site. The retreat should ideally involve the entire class in the same event. Additional faculty/staff participation in the retreat is also needed, and may require additional incentives.
- The Learning Community program should be closely coordinated with the student activities and student development sessions that will be offered by residence hall staff in Centennial Hall beginning in 2011-12.

ESF 132 COURSES

ESF 132 is a 1-3 credit extended orientation course required for all freshmen and many transfer students. The course is designed to introduce students to their academic department and to campus resources available to ensure academic success.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- Each academic department is responsible for offering its own 132 seminar course (i.e. EFB 132, EST 132, etc.) and each instructor is responsible for creating their own course syllabus. The seminar provides an introduction to the curriculum and to the academic department's expectations for students. Faculty members in the department are often "assigned" a day to discuss their research and/or courses taught.
- Additional portions of the 132 seminar have provided information about academic-related resources and services, such as academic advising, course registration, and

career success. These sessions have changed several times since 2004. Most recently, student mentors and student orientation leaders have been used to offer class sessions on academic and career success and advising and registration, while Student Life staff have delivered a session on classroom civility and academic integrity.

- The Student Life staff has also been responsible for offering an ESF 332 orientation course for transfer students. This has been offered as a non-credit course requiring participation in ESF's Transfer Orientation program and submission of a completed "Academic and Career Plan" form. Our Retention Committee has recommended removing ESF 332 from the College's course offerings, and allowing academic departments to include all or a selected population of transfer students in their department's 132 course as an alternative. The Committee on Instruction approved this recommendation in March 2010, and the ESF 332 course is no longer offered.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

- It is not clear that any standardized method for assessing the academic department-oriented content of ESF 132 courses is in place. Course assessment information has not been shared widely if any is available.

- The ESF 132 course components offered by Student Life staff and/or student leaders have been assessed for student satisfaction through the use of a student survey. The class sessions dealing with academic integrity, advising and registration, and academic and career success have each earned overall ratings of 4.0 or higher on a 5.0 scale. The advising and registration session was rated the most helpful (average response 4.15) and the academic integrity session was rated the least helpful (average response 2.9). The academic and career success session earned a 3.6 rating.

- Students suggested that the Student Life sessions be evaluated through surveys completed immediately following those sessions, rather than at the end of the semester.

- Some academic departments require all transfer students to enroll in their department's ESF 132 course (e.g. Environmental Studies). Following the elimination of the ESF 332 course for transfer students, each academic department has now been authorized to include ESF 132 as a program requirement for some or all of their transfer students.

- ESF 132 courses have for many years provided freshmen with an extended orientation to their academic department and to faculty expectations. There has been less consistency in setting ESF 132 course objectives for providing extended orientation topics such as course registration, study skills, career services, or alcohol abuse. These

topics have changed frequently over the years, and the time devoted to them has decreased overall.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Our Committee recommends consideration of the following changes in ESF 132 course offerings:

- The Provost should appoint a study group to identify the most effective and efficient approaches to delivering "extended orientation" information to entering students. The current academic focus of ESF 132 classes does not allow for sufficient time to present information on many important orientation topics (e.g. alcohol abuse, diversity, roommate and relationship issues, etc.) that are relevant to student success and retention. Current scheduling of ESF 132 sections (with many scheduled on the same day and time) also presents difficulties in scheduling presentations by Student Life Staff during regular class periods.

- All academic departments should develop and publicize transfer student requirements for their department's 132 course, detailing which transfer students (if any) must complete the course. Requirements could easily be based upon transfer year levels.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES – PEER TUTORING PROGRAM

The Office of Academic Support Services coordinates and supports a Peer Tutoring program aimed at helping undergraduate students succeed in difficult academic coursework through individual or group tutoring offered by other students. While this office is also engaged in providing other academic support services (e.g. Math Center, Writing Center, workshops), this report is focused only on the Peer Tutoring program.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- The program can provide peer tutoring for most undergraduate courses taught at ESF upon request. Students request a tutor by completing an online form. Appropriate tutors are identified and hired to provide tutoring in one of three ways:

  - One-on-One sessions are provided for students requiring academic accommodations approved by ESF's Office of Counseling and Disability Services.

  - Individual/Small Group tutoring sessions have one to four students meeting with their tutor for a two hour period each week. Students are assigned specific

times and tutors, and participation is monitored closely by staff. Students can be dropped from tutoring services for "no show" appointments.

- Large group tutoring sessions are offered in Biology, General Chemistry, Calculus, English as a Second Language or other subjects as needed. A tutor is available on a weekday night for two hours and students may drop in as needed to get assistance.

- Peer tutoring is provided for free under most circumstances. Tutors are paid an hourly wage and must have earned a grade of B or higher in the course they are tutoring. All tutors are required to complete tutor training seminars covering related skills, policies and procedures.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

- A review of Peer Tutoring activity for the fall 2009 semester (see Appendix) has provided the following assessment information:

  - Large group tutoring sessions were offered to assist students in Biology I (BIO 101), Biochemistry (FCH 530), Organic Chemistry (FCH 223), and Physics of Life (EFB 200). These sessions provided 148 hours of available tutoring time. A total of 944 student contact hours were provided with 109 students tutored (61 of those in Organic Chemistry).

  - A total of 82 small group or individual tutoring sessions were offered to provide assistance in 18 different courses. These sessions provided a total of 767 student contact hours with 173 students tutored. These students included 74 freshmen (43%), 21 sophomores (12%), 40 juniors (23%) and 38 seniors (22%).

  - The program served 22 students affiliated with the CSTEP, EOP or Disability Services programs at ESF and provided 191 contact hours with those students (included in the large and small group totals above).

- The program received applications from 57 students willing to serve as tutors for the fall 2009 semester and employed 33 students. All tutors attended at least one training workshop and 60% attended two workshops.

- Tutoring program evaluations are distributed near the end of each semester to students and tutors participating in the program. Evaluations are reviewed by

Academic Support staff and a summary report is provided to the Dean of Students and Provost.

- Fifty-one students completed the fall 2009 tutoring survey, with 74% indicating that their tutor increased their overall knowledge in the subject area taught, and 76% indicating they were confident that tutoring had helped them improve their grade. A large majority (82%) would recommend their tutor to others.

- Most students tutored during the fall 2009 semester (96%) reported that they had decided to seek tutoring on their own, without any faculty or staff recommendation to do so.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Our Committee offers the following recommendations to improve the Peer Tutoring program:

- This program appears to be serving students well and may have potential to become more proactive in assisting students who have been placed on academic probation, or have demonstrated academic weaknesses in other ways. This concept was piloted during the spring 2010 semester, when 140 undergraduate students were placed on probation with a condition that they meet with staff from the Office of Academic Support Services during that semester to learn about available services. This intervention produced some encouraging results.

  - Forty students (29%) met with Scott Blair, the Coordinator of Academic Support Services, and then participated in tutoring sessions and/or academic success workshops. Twenty-eight (70%) of those students are registered for fall 2010 classes; nine (23%) were suspended following the spring 2009 semester, and three (8%) have withdrawn.

  - Fifty-eight students (41%) met with Mr. Blair but did not participate in tutoring sessions or academic success workshops. Thirty-nine of those students (67%) are registered for fall 2010 classes; fifteen (26%) were suspended following the spring 2009 semester, and four (7%) have withdrawn.

  - Forty-two students (30%) did not meet their probation condition by meeting with Mr. Blair. Seventeen of those students (40%) are registered for fall 2010 classes; fifteen (36%) were suspended following the spring 2009 semester, and ten (24%) have withdrawn.

- Students placed on academic probation following the fall 2010 semester should be given a similar condition to meet with staff from Academic Support Services early in the spring 2011 semester to assess their need for services and learn about available options. In addition, the student's academic advisor should be made aware of this condition, and should be asked to consult with the student if he or she has not met the condition early in the semester.

- Faculty should be especially aware of Peer Tutoring sessions offered during the fall semester, and be proactive in encouraging students to attend these sessions as needed. Mid-semester grades provide one obvious indicator of potential need for support services.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM (EOP)

The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) is a New York State funded program meant to provide counseling, academic support, and financial assistance to New York State resident freshmen or transfer students who come from a socioeconomic and academically disadvantaged background defined by specific program eligibility guidelines. By definition, EOP students are not admissible under regular admission criteria, but they show significant potential for success in a full-time degree program if provided with appropriate assistance. They are a "high risk" group for student attrition prior to graduation.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- The College enrolled 25 EOP eligible students in 2009-10, representing all year levels and a variety of degree programs. The Director of Financial Aid, Scholarships and EOP is responsible for the direction of the program and provides individual counseling to students to complement the counseling provided by academic advisors and Student Life staff.

- The EOP program provides special funding to the Office of Academic Support Services to support the payment of peer tutors who work with EOP students.

- EOP grants provide financial assistance to supplement other aid programs, with a related goal of reducing the number of hours that students must spend in Federal Work-Study positions or work off-campus.

- Some EOP students schedule a reduced (often 12 credit) course load.

- Some EOP students (those who come from diverse populations) may attend a Summer Pre-Orientation program offered through the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

- The Educational Opportunity Program provides annual assessment reports to SUNY Central Administration, including a program financial audit.

- The academic qualifications of entering EOP students at ESF have improved in recent years, in keeping with the College's increased level of selectivity for admission.

- Twenty-one students (16 freshmen and 5 transfers) entered EOP from fall 2002 to fall 2005. By fall 2010, eight of these students (38%) have received a degree, eight (38%) have been suspended, and five (24%) have withdrawn from ESF.

- Twenty-nine students (22 freshmen and 7 transfers) entered EOP from fall 2006 to fall 2009. By fall 2010, one of these students has received a degree (AAS), 17 (59%) are currently enrolled, four (14%) have been suspended, and seven (24%) have withdrawn from ESF.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Our Committee offers the following recommendations to improve the Educational Opportunity Program:

- The opening of Centennial Hall will allow for the development of a residential "summer start" program to provide remedial mathematics and/or college level writing instruction for EOP students, and strong consideration should be given to offering this type of program. This is often an EOP component at other colleges, and additional state funding could be requested for this purpose.

- Department Chairmen should receive a list of EOP students enrolled in their department each fall. This information should be shared with each student's academic advisor. EOP students should, when possible, be assigned to academic advisors who have special ability or interest in working with students who are at "high risk" for attrition.

- The Coordinator of Academic Support Services should work with the Director of Financial Aid, Scholarships, and EOP to develop a comprehensive strategy for serving EOP students, to include the possible development of an EOP summer program.

SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS FROM PROGRAM ASSESSMENTS

The Retention Committee studied seven of ESF's retention-related programs during the 2009-10 academic year to better understand the activities and strategies associated with these programs, and to offer recommendations for program improvements. Section II of this report contains 27 specific recommendations meant to enhance the contribution that these programs can make in facilitating student success and retention to graduation for ESF undergraduates. Our Committee is also prepared to offer the following summary observations at this time:

- ESF has been proactive in its development of student life and academic support programs aimed at retention-related issues. SUNY's central administration produced a "white paper" in September 2007, which was submitted to the New York State Commission on Higher Education to outline system-wide efforts for improving student success and retention (see http://www.suny.edu/facultysenate/SUNY%20White%20Paper-9%2024%20071.pdf). That white paper identified eight "Best Practices for Student Success Employed by SUNY Campuses" including:

  - *Orientation and advising* to introduce students to the college, campus facilities and programs.

  - *First-year seminars* to encourage the formation of study groups and provide information ranging from study skills to club activities.

  - *Supplemental course instruction* offered by peer tutors in high risk courses under faculty supervision.

  - *Placement testing* to ensure students are in courses for which they are prepared.

  - *Intrusive advising* to provide special contact with students who have not developed a major, and those whose grades are low.

  - *Learning communities* to provide "common ground" for students in and out of the classroom and to provide skills needed to succeed in college.

- *Early warning and support systems* developed by academic advisors and student affairs professionals to identify and serve at-risk students.

- *Peer and professional mentoring* programs to connect students in meaningful ways with college activities or positive role models.

As this report demonstrates, ESF offers well developed retention programs covering at least seven of these best practice areas. We do not have a comprehensive early warning system in place at this time, though the College has taken some steps in this direction (including a mid-semester grade alert system that has been underutilized).

- George Kuh, a recognized research professor in the area of student retention, has identified ten "high impact educational practices" that increase rates of student retention and student engagement (see Appendix). These include several practices covered in this report, along with a number of additional practices that are embedded in ESF's undergraduate degree programs and should impact student retention:

  - *First-year seminars and experiences* (described above)

  - *Common intellectual experiences* such as a set of required common courses or a general education program with advanced integrative studies.

  - *Learning communities* (described above).

  - *Writing-intensive courses* emphasizing writing across the curriculum.

  - *Collaborative assignments and projects* such as study groups within a course, team-based assignments and writing, or cooperative projects and research.

  - *Undergraduate research* to provide early and active involvement in systematic investigation and research experiences.

  - *Diversity and global learning* programs to help students explore different cultures and life experiences, with studies frequently augmented by experiential learning and/or study abroad.

  - *Service learning* programs to provide community-based experience with issues studied in the classroom and to apply concepts in the field.

- *Internships* to provide students with direct experience in a work setting, usually related to their career interests.

- *Capstone courses and projects* that require students nearing the end of their academic program to create a project that integrates and applies what they have learned.

It appears that ESF has implemented the full range of these high impact educational practices in at least some fashion. It is reasonable to assume that these efforts are having a positive impact on student retention at ESF as well, and that continued engagement and improvement in these areas would be beneficial.

- The opening of our Centennial Hall residence facility in fall 2011 has the potential for a "game changing" impact on student life and student retention at ESF. It is critical that our transition from Syracuse University housing to ESF housing is handled well and that we take full advantage of this opportunity.

- The impact assessment of retention-related programs is difficult due to the complex and interrelated factors involved in student success, and to our limited ability to collect data on student satisfaction through our existing student survey methods. Continued attention must be given to identifying the reasons for student attrition and assessing the value of retention initiatives.

This report builds upon several of the observations and recommendations advanced by a Retention Team commissioned by President Murphy in January 2002 to examine student attrition at ESF and to propose appropriate interventions. That team produced a report in April 2002 (see Appendix) and was led by Associate Dean Julie White. Two current members of our Retention Committee also served in 2002 (Tom Fletcher and Roy Norton), and we have benefited from their earlier involvements and perspective.

Our Retention Committee will continue its work during the spring 2010-11 semester and beyond. Future agenda items will likely include a review of attrition patterns at the academic department level, an assessment of our early warning system capabilities, attrition patterns of out-of-state and international students, academic advising, and other topics of interest. We welcome comments and suggestions from ESF students, faculty, staff, and alumni as we move forward.

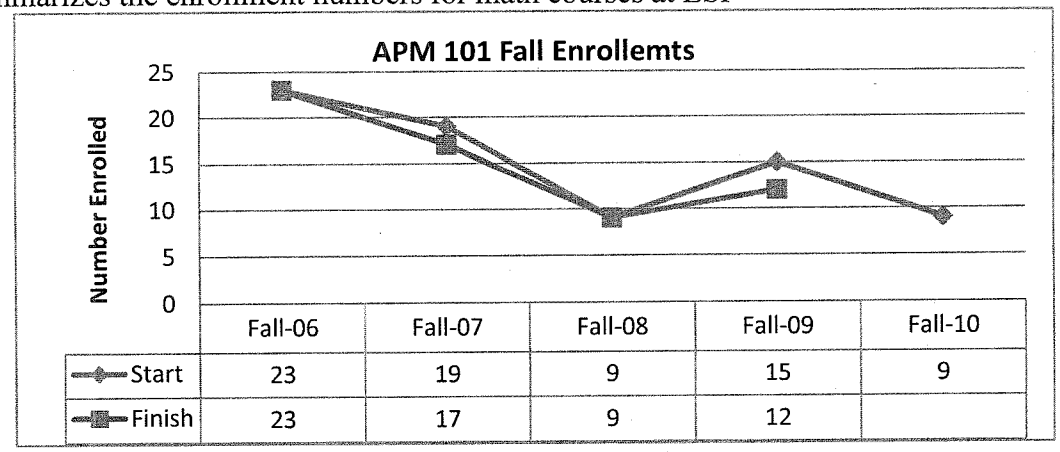
Appendices

MATH ENROLLMENT at ESF by Course Type

The following summarizes the enrollment numbers for math courses at ESF

APM 101 Fall Semesters

Year	Start	Finish	% Loss
Fall-06	23	23	0%
Fall-07	19	17	11%
Fall-08	9	9	0%
Fall-09	15	12	20%
Fall-10	9		

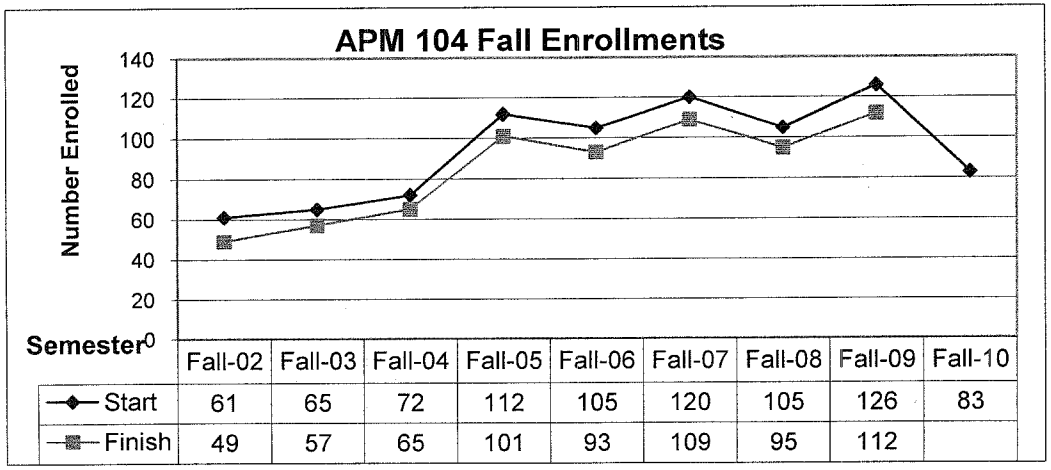


APM 101 SpringSemesters - Course no longer offered during the Spring Semester

Year	Start	Finish	% Loss
Spr-07	9	7	22%
Spr-08	1	1	0%

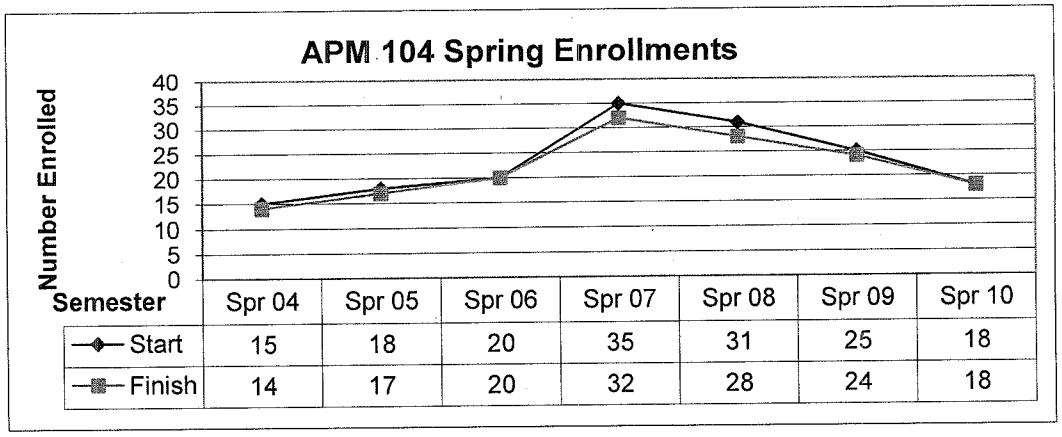
APM 104 Fall Semesters

Year	Start	Finish	% Loss
Fall-02	61	49	20%
Fall-03	65	57	12%
Fall-04	72	65	10%
Fall-05	112	101	10%
Fall-06	105	93	11%
Fall-07	120	109	9%
Fall-08	105	95	10%
Fall-09	126	112	11%
Fall-10	83		



APM 104 Spring Semesters

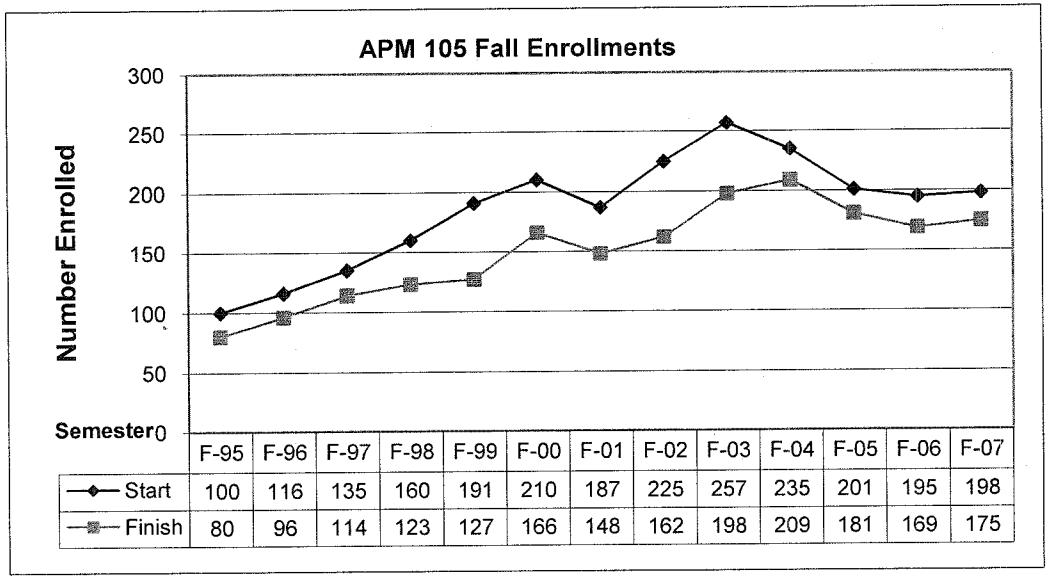
Year	Start	Finish	% Loss
Spr 04	15	14	7%
Spr 05	18	17	6%
Spr 06	20	20	0%
Spr 07	35	32	9%
Spr 08	31	28	10%
Spr 09	25	24	4%
Spr 10	18	18	0%



Semester	Spr 04	Spr 05	Spr 06	Spr 07	Spr 08	Spr 09	Spr 10
Start	15	18	20	35	31	25	18
Finish	14	17	20	32	28	24	18

APM 105 Fall Semesters

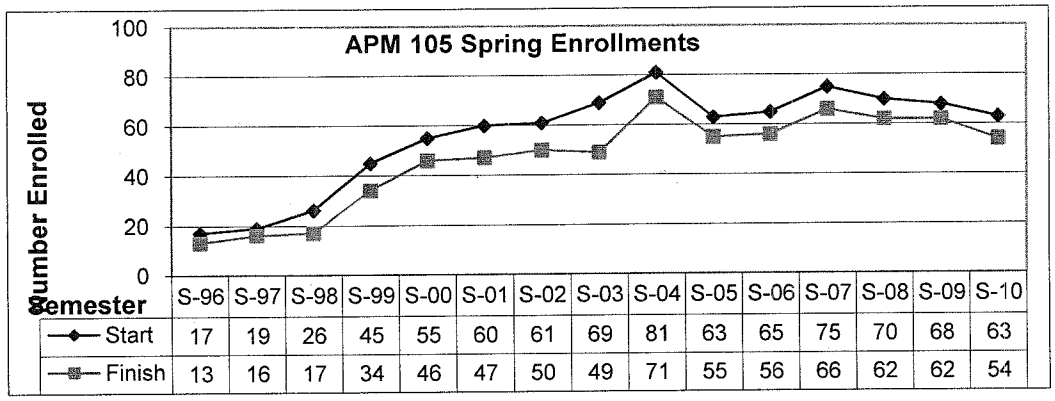
Year	Start	Finish	% Loss
F-95	100	80	20%
F-96	116	96	17%
F-97	135	114	16%
F-98	160	123	23%
F-99	191	127	34%
F-00	210	166	21%
F-01	187	148	21%
F-02	225	162	28%
F-03	257	198	23%
F-04	235	209	11%
F-05	201	181	10%
F-06	195	169	13%
F-07	198	175	12%
F-08	200	178	11%
F-09	208	181	13%
F-10	188		



Semester	F-95	F-96	F-97	F-98	F-99	F-00	F-01	F-02	F-03	F-04	F-05	F-06	F-07
Start	100	116	135	160	191	210	187	225	257	235	201	195	198
Finish	80	96	114	123	127	166	148	162	198	209	181	169	175

APM 105 Spring Semesters

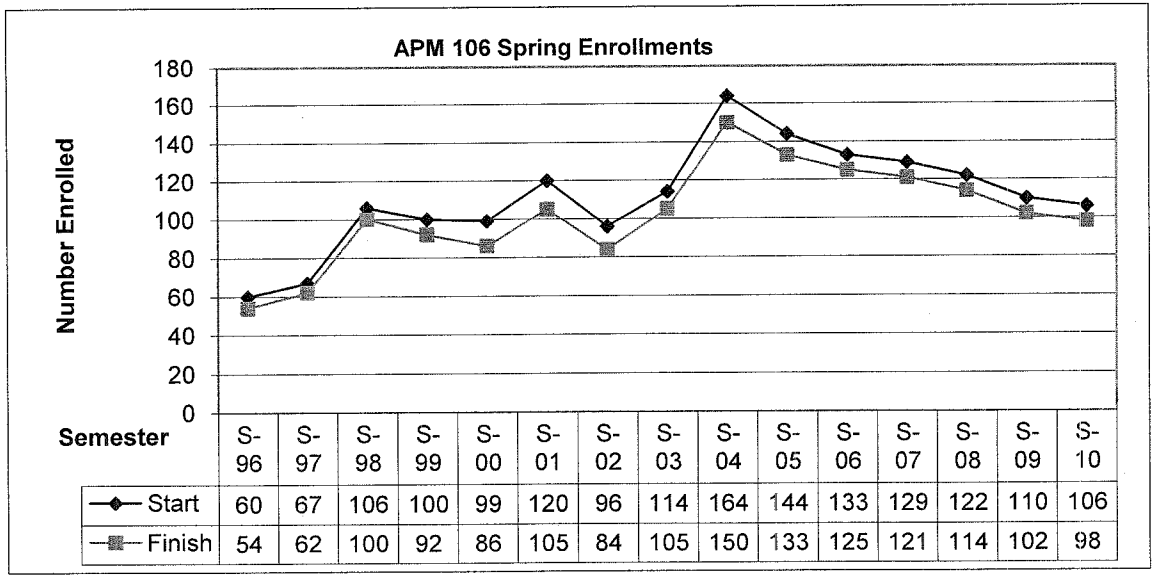
Year	Start	Finish	% Loss
S-96	17	13	24%
S-97	19	16	16%
S-98	26	17	35%
S-99	45	34	24%
S-00	55	46	16%
S-01	60	47	22%
S-02	61	50	18%
S-03	69	49	29%
S-04	81	71	12%
S-05	63	55	13%
S-06	65	56	14%
S-07	75	66	12%
S-08	70	62	11%
S-09	68	62	9%
S-10	63	54	14%



Again, the sharp decrease of enrollment for APM 105 during the Spring of 2005 is directly related to the sharp increase of enrollment into APM 104 thr previous semester.

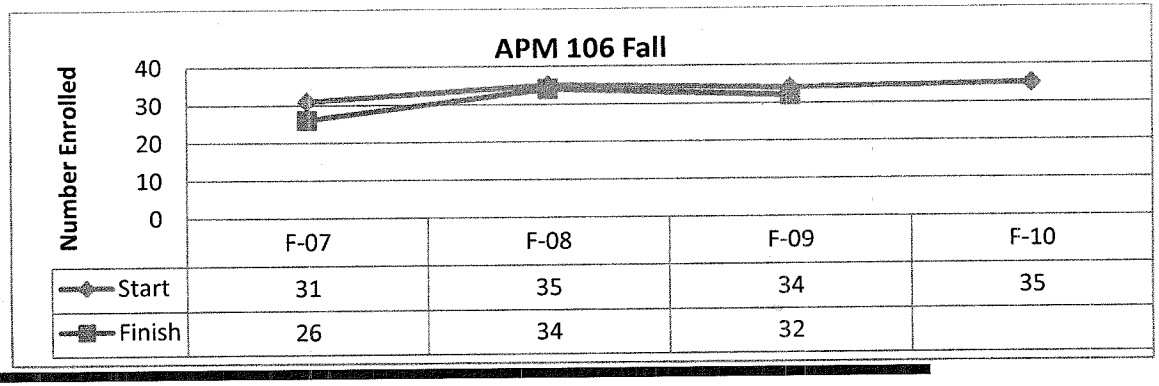
APM 106 Spring Semesters

Year	Start	Finish	% Loss
S-96	60	54	10%
S-97	67	62	7%
S-98	106	100	6%
S-99	100	92	8%
S-00	99	86	13%
S-01	120	105	13%
S-02	96	84	13%
S-03	114	105	8%
S-04	164	150	9%
S-05	144	133	8%
S-06	133	125	6%
S-07	129	121	6%
S-08	122	114	7%
S-09	110	102	7%
S-10	106	98	8%



APM 106 Fall Semesters

Year	Start	Finish	% Loss
F-07	31	26	16%
F-08	35	34	3%
F-09	34	32	6%
F-10	35		100%



APM 205 Fall Semesters

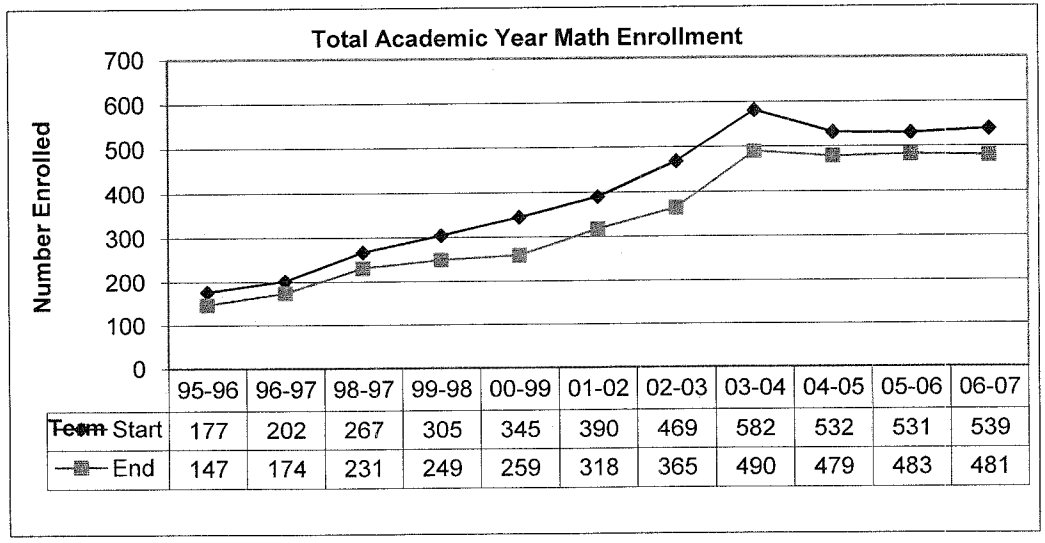
Year	Start	Finish	% Loss
F-08	48	44	8%
F-09	42	39	7%
F-10	43		

APM 206 Spring Semesters

Year	Start	Finish	% Loss
S-09	48	45	6%
S-10	42	39	7%
S-11			

Total Academic Year Enrollment of all math courses

Term	Start	End	% Loss
95-96	177	147	17%
96-97	202	174	14%
98-97	267	231	13%
99-98	305	249	18%
00-99	345	259	25%
01-02	390	318	18%
02-03	469	365	22%
03-04	582	490	16%
04-05	532	479	10%
05-06	531	483	9%
06-07	539	481	11%
07-08	541	488	10%
08-09	508	461	9%
09-10	521	463	11%



Total MATH ENROLLMENT at ESF by Semester and Term

The following summarizes the enrollment numbers for math courses at ESF

Total Academic Year

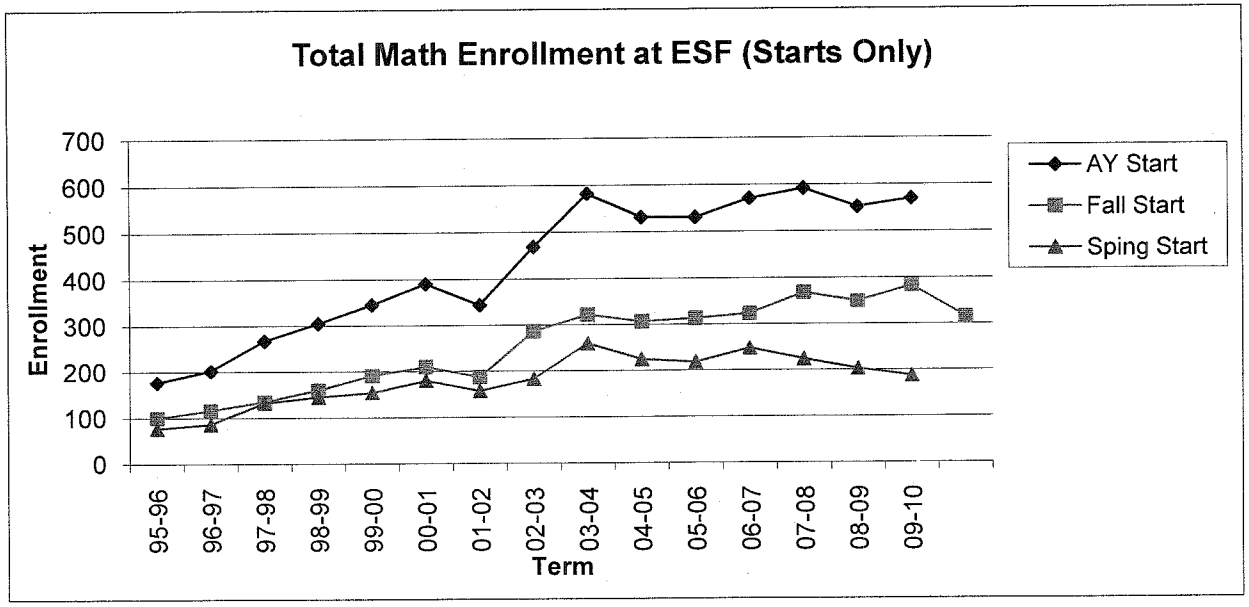
AY	AY Start	End	% Loss
95-96	177	147	17%
96-97	202	174	14%
97-98	267	231	13%
98-99	305	249	18%
99-00	345	259	25%
00-01	390	318	18%
01-02	344	282	18%
02-03	469	365	22%
03-04	582	490	16%
04-05	532	479	10%
05-06	531	483	9%
06-07	571	511	11%
07-08	592	532	10%
08-09	552	504	9%
09-10	570	507	11%

Fall Semesters

Semester	Fall Start	Finish	% Loss
Fall-95	100	80	20%
Fall-96	116	96	17%
Fall-97	135	114	16%
Fall-98	160	123	23%
Fall-99	191	127	34%
Fall-00	210	166	21%
Fall-01	187	148	21%
Fall-02	286	211	26%
Fall-03	322	255	21%
Fall-04	307	274	11%
Fall-05	313	282	10%
Fall-06	323	285	12%
Fall-07	368	327	11%
Fall-08	349	316	9%
Fall-09	383	337	12%
Fall-10	315		100%

Spring Semesters

Semester	Sping Start	Finish	% Loss
S-96	77	67	13%
S-97	86	78	9%
S-98	132	117	11%
S-99	145	126	13%
S-00	154	132	14%
S-01	180	152	16%
S-02	157	134	15%
S-03	183	154	16%
S-04	260	235	10%
S-05	225	205	9%
S-06	218	201	8%
S-07	248	226	9%
S-08	224	205	8%
S-09	203	188	7%
S-10	187	170	9%



2010

First-Year Students and Families Orientation Schedule

Date	Time	Program	Location
Wednesday, 8/25	8:00-2:00	Move in to Skyhalls	Residence Halls
	8:00am-4:30pm	Taking Care of Business (Offices are open for Business)	
	10:00am-2:30pm	Orientation Registration/Check-In	Bray Hall Rotunda
	2:00-3:00	Hospitality Hour	ESF Quad
	3:00-4:30	Welcome and Introduction	Hendricks Chapel
	4:30 -6:30	Dinner on Own	
	7:30-8:00	**Students Only:** Small Group Meetings	TBA
	8:00	Social Program – Hypnotist/Comedian	Marshall Auditorium
	9:30	Movie on the Quad " Iron Man II"	SU Quad
	11:00 -1:00 am	Late Night at the Gym	Archbold Gymnasium
Thursday 8/26	8:00-3:00	ESF Help Station	Bray Hall Rotunda
		Taking Care of Business (Offices Open for Business)	ESF Offices
		STUDENT SCHEDULE	
	9:00-11:00	Collegiate Life at ESF Welcome From the Dean ESF Academic Experience How To Register at ESF	Marshall Auditorium
	11:00-12:45	Small Group Meetings; Meet with peers and Orientation Leaders. Bring money for lunch	TBA
	1:00-2:30	Department Meetings and Academic Advising	TBA
	2:30-4:30	Registration (Computer Clusters Open) Work Study Orientation Walking Tours to the Bookstore	Baker Computer Labs 313 Bray Leaving from Bray Rotunda
		FAMILY SCHEDULE	
	9:00-10:00	Student Panel: Hear from the Experts!	Hendricks Chapel
	10:00-10:45	Conversation With The Dean	Hendricks Chapel
	10:45-11:30	Your Student Can Do it; We Can Help: Q&A with ESF and Syracuse University Student Services	Hendricks Chapel
	11:30-1:00	Parent Luncheon on the Quad	Nifkin Lounge (Marshall Hall) and ESF Quad
	1:00 – 2:00	Taking Care of Business (Offices Open for Business)	
		STUDENTS AND FAMILIES	
	2:00-4:30	Walking Tours to the Bookstore/Meet up with your Student	Leaving from Bray Rotunda
	4:30	Family Departure	
	5:00	Residence Hall Floor Meetings	Residence Halls
	8:00	"Everyday Heroes"	SU Schine Student Center
	9:15 – 11:00	From Home to the Dome	SU Carrier Dome
	10:00	Late Night at The Gym/Ice Skating at Tennity	Archbold Gym/Tennity
Friday, 8/27	8:00-3:00	Help Station Open	Bray Hall Rotunda
	8:15-9:00	First Year Commuter Breakfast	Nifkin Lounge, Marshall Hall
	9:00-10:00	Health and Wellness at ESF	Marshall Auditorium
	10:15-Noon	SU Convocation	Carrier Dome
	Noon-1:00	Lunch on the Quad	ESF Quad
	1:00-3:00	Small Group Meetings	TBA
	3:00	ESF Olympics	ESF Quad
	5:00	Dinner	SU Dining Halls
	7:30	"There is More to My Story"	Schine Student Center
	8:30	"Orange Blast"	SU Quad
	10:00	Late Night at the Gym	Archbold Gym
Saturday, 8/28	10:00-11:00	Breakfast/ Community Speaker	Goldstein Student Center, South Campus
	11:00-3:30	Making a Difference! Community Service Projects	Leaving from SkyHalls
	5:00	Mentor Introductions	TBA
	Evening	"Feel The Pulse of Syracuse" and or Late Night at the Gym	Downtown Syracuse/ Archbold Gym
Sunday, 8/29	10:45-11:30	Evolutions: The ESF Learning Community	Marshall Auditorium
	11:30-12:30	The Ultimate Road Trip: Campus to Career	Marshall Auditorium
	12:30-2:00	Lunch with your mentor!	Residence Students –Sadler Commuters - TBA
	2:00-3:00	Convocation (Freshmen & Transfer students)	Marshall Auditorium
	3:00-4:00	Ice Cream Social – sponsored by the ESF Alumni Assoc.	Nifkin Lounge (Marshall Hall)
	8:00-9:30	Residence Hall Floor Meetings	Residence Halls

2010

Transfer Students: Your orientation begins on Saturday, August 28. The first session, the Welcome Session, will begin at 8:30 a.m. It is imperative that prior to the beginning of this session, you pick up your orientation packet in the Bray Hall Rotunda. You can do this Friday afternoon or as early as 7 a.m. on Saturday.

If you happen to arrive earlier than Saturday, please consult the online schedules for more activities going on prior to Saturday. We also encourage you to attend the transfer breakfast on Saturday morning. It is a great way to meet new transfer students!

Transfer Student Orientation Schedule			
Date	**Time**	**Program**	**Location**
Saturday, 8/28	7:00-8:15	Check-In	Bray Hall Rotunda
	7:30-8:30	Transfer Breakfast	Nifkin Lounge
	8:30-9:00am	Welcome and Introduction to ESF!	Marshall Auditorium
	9:00 – 10:15am	Collegiate Life at ESF: Welcome from the Dean and the ESF Academic Experience	Marshall Auditorium
	10:15 -11:00am	How to Register at ESF	Marshall Auditorium
	11:00 – 12:30pm	Small Group Meetings and Lunch	TBA
	12:45 – 2:00 pm	Department Meetings and Advising	TBA
	2:00 – 5 pm	Work Study Orientation	313 Bray Hall
	2:00 – 5:00 pm	Registration and Adjusting Schedules	Baker Computer Clusters
	5:30pm	"Feel The Pulse"	Downtown Syracuse
Sunday, 8/29	8:00-Noon	On-Line Schedule Adjustment	Baker Computer Clusters
	8:00-2:00 pm	ID Cards	206 Steele Hall
	11:00 -2 pm	Manley Field House Open for Parking Passes	Manley Field House, Syracuse University
	11:00-1:00	Trips to Bookstore every ½ hour	Depart from Bray Rotunda
	2:00 – 3:00 pm	ESF Convocation: All New Students	Marshall Auditorium
	3:00 – 4:00 pm	Ice Cream Social: All New Students	ESF Quad
	8:00 – 9:30 pm	Residence Hall Floor Meetings (On-Campus Residents Only)	Residence Halls

ESF TUTORING: A REVIEW OF THE FALL 2009 SEMESTER

I. Courses Tutored:

- **Large Group Sessions were facilitated in:** Biology I (BIO 101), Biochemistry (FCH 530), Organic Chemistry (FCH 223), Physics (EFB 200)
- **Small Group and Individual Sessions were facilitated in:** College Algebra and Precalculus (APM 104), Calculus I (APM 105), Calculus II (APM 106), Calculus II: Science & Engineering (APM 205), Probability and Statistics (APM 391), General Biology: Cell Biology & Genetics (EFB 101), Global Environment (EFB 120), Introduction to Microbiology (EFB 303), Principles of Genetics (EFB 307), General Ecology (EFB 320), Cell Physiology (EFB 325), Toxic Health Hazards (EFB 400), Plant Developmental Biology (EFB 427), Engineering Mechanics Statics (ERE 221), General Chemistry (FCH 150), Physical Chemistry I (FCH 360), Introduction to Economics (FOR 207), Dendrology (EFB 336)
- **An *organizational tutor* was facilitated through Heather Rice, Senior Counselor (Counseling and Disabilities Services) for students with disabilities. This service was provided by Scott Blair and accounted for 25.5+hrs of individual meetings during the fall semester for nine students.**

A. Instructors:

- **21 instructors had students in their class receive tutoring assistance:** Bachand, Beal, Caluwe, Chatterjee, Conahan, Donaghy, Embry, Fierke, Horton, Kiernan, Kyanka, La Vie, Leopold, Nakas, Castello, Nakatsugawa, Nomura, Powell, Maynard, Wagner, Fernando

B. Number of Sessions and Contact Hours:

- Large group sessions began the week of September 3, 2009. All sessions ran for two to three hours a week and ended on December 14, 2009. In total, up to **fourteen weeks** of group sessions were offered with **148 hours** of available tutoring provided. **944+ contact hours were made.**
- Small and individual group sessions began the week of September 3, 2009. All sessions ran for one to two hours a week with most ending the last day of classes, December 14, 2009, while a few groups met during finals week to assist with preparation for the exam. **82 small and individual group sessions** were offered. **766.5+ contact hours were made.**
- In total, **1,710.50+ hours** were made in the fall semester.

II. Number of Students Tutored:

- The large group sessions make it difficult to arrive at an exact number of students tutored, but we are able to estimate the average attendance at these sessions over the course of the semester and combine it with the number of individual requests received and matched successfully. Overall, the tutoring program served **109+ students via large group tutoring** during the spring semester.
- **Large Group Sessions:**

Course	# of session	Avg. # of students per session	Largest session	Total students tutored	Total contact hours
Organic Chemistry	22	13.74	38	61	604.5
Bio I	22	4.62	8	23	120
BioChem	25	6.09	14	19	207
Physics	5	.4	1	2	4
Plant Dev. Bio	2	3	4	4	8.5

- **Small/Individual Group Sessions:**
  - There were **195 individual requests in 21 subjects**, of which:
    - 40 requests were not met. This was due to either a lack of available tutors for specialized courses (15) or no response from those that requested the tutoring (24) and one request was not met because it was a course offered at Syracuse University (Fluid Mechanics).
    - **154 requests were met.**

  - Of the 195 individual requests, **173 students** requested tutoring:
    - 74 Freshmen (43%)
    - 21 Sophomores (12%)
    - 40 Juniors (23%)
    - 38 Seniors (22%)
    - 0 Graduate – All graduate requests are being referred to the professor

- **Special Population Breakdown:**
  - The following is a break down of the total number of tutoring hours provided to CSTEP, EOP, and Disability Services referred students.
    - CSTEP – 11 students, 114.5 hours for Fall '09
    - EOP – 4 students, 69.5 hours for Fall '09
    - Disability Services – 7 students, 41 hours for Fall '09.
      - Please note that Disability students may be higher. Numbers are based on roster received from ESF Disability Services that only contained Fall 2009 identified students. List did not include students with disabilities that have yet to identify as of Fall 2009 or students who identified in prior years that are still enrolled at ESF.

III. Number of Tutors:

- 57 applications were received from potential tutors to tutor in the fall semester. From this pool, **33 tutors** delivered tutoring support. All 33 of these tutors attended at least one tutor training workshop and one potential tutor attended in hopes of working next semester.
- For the Fall 2009 term, out of our total active tutors of 33, 60% (20 tutors) attended two tutor training workshops. The remaining were willing, but unfortunately had time conflicts preventing them from attending. Additional workshops and times will be provided next Spring to cut down on this issue.

IV. Data from Student Assessment (Tutees):

Tutee's Evaluation of Tutor Performance and Effectiveness of Tutoring Services

150 paper evaluations were distributed to tutees via their tutor, starting the week of November 30, 2009. 66 completed evaluations were received from tutees actively using the program during the last three weeks of school. The data received suggests that the Peer Tutoring Program had a positive impact on students' academic experiences at ESF. To follow are highlights of the assessment.

Part I.

As noted on the chart below, a majority of students who participated in individual/small group sessions attended multiple tutoring sessions during the semester:

	Once	2-4	5-10	More than 10	No Answer
Approximate number of sessions attended	0 0%	7 10.6%	46 69.7%	12 18.2	1 1.5%

Of the 51 tutees that completed our assessment, we see that the largest percentage of students self-reported that it was their decision to begin attending tutoring (respondents are able to circle all fields that apply):

	Teacher	Academic Advisor	Counselor	Friend	Decided I needed it	Didn't understand an assignment	Other
How did you make the decision to come for assistance?	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	3 5.9%	49 96.1%	7 13.7%	4 7.8%

Part II. (Represents a subset of statements from the section)

51 Tutors were evaluated by their tutees on a number of statements. The following data was compiled from the individual/small group surveys collected. Five statements are represented below and without exception, as a cohort tutors received high praise in all areas:

Tutor Evaluation	NA	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Subject Knowledge	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 3.9%	4 7.8%	45 88.3%
Ability to Communicate	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	3 5.8%	6 11.8%	42 82.4%
Overall, tutor increased my understanding	0 0%	0 0%	1 2.0%	2 3.9%	10 19.6%	38 74.5%
Overall, satisfaction with group	1 2.0%	0 0%	0 0%	3 5.8%	9 17.7%	38 74.5%
I would recommend this tutor	0 0%	0 0%	1 2.0%	3 5.8%	5 9.8%	42 82.4%

While final grades were not out at the time the evaluations were completed, 76.4% reported confidently, that tutoring had helped them to raise their grade in the course. Two students reported increases of 20 points or more in their final grade. A majority of students reported an increase of at least a grade or 10 points. 97.8% of the student who attended to get help on a particular assignment reported improved grades on the homework or test for which they received assistance.

V. Data from Academic Support Workshops-Attendance:

Time Management/Procrastination Workshop on 9/22/09 – facilitated by Scott Blair:
10 students (10 freshmen, all from the Sky Halls)

Improving Study & Note Taking Skills Workshop on 9/30/2009 – facilitated by Scott Blair:
7 students (1 Sophomore, 4 Juniors, 2 Graduate Students)

Plagiarism Prevention Workshop on 10/7/2009 – facilitated by Dr. Sarah Vonhof * Dawnelle Jager:
11 students (9 freshmen, 2 graduate students; 7 of the freshmen were from Sky Halls)

Exploring the Moon Workshop on 10/14/2009 – facilitated by Linda Galloway:
4 students (1 senior, 3 juniors - 1 senior is also a tutor)
* Tutor recommended adding this workshop as a Tutor Training event. Will occur for Spring 2010.

Anxiety and Stress Workshop on 11/17/2009 – facilitated by Ms. Heather Rice:
19 students (3 graduate students, 3 seniors, 5 juniors, 6 sophomores & 2 Sky Hall freshmen)

Save Your Semester Workshop on 12/9/2009 – facilitated by Scott Blair & Heather Rice:
20 students (2 seniors, 7 juniors, 8 sophomores, 2 Sky Hall freshmen, & 1 off-campus freshmen)

Overall workshop attendance for Fall 2009: 71 students

VI. Additional Academic Support Services Notes:

- It should be noted that the contact hours this semester are up by 400+ contact hours from last fall. This is a direct and positive result of the demand we have received from Organic Chemistry and more specifically, our tutor for that course, Shannon Carpenter. Dr. Caluwe has given her high praise over the past couple semesters and her work and care has attracted a large tutor request following. Shannon alone accounted for over 600 contact hours this semester, which equates to 35% of our total hours for the semester. Our Fall 2009 total contact hours are the highest our office has had since the Fall 2007.

- Our office has standardized our placement of General Chemistry and General Biology tutor requests, which follows the pattern that was set last Spring. Each request for tutoring in these two subjects is referred to the General Chemistry and General Biology large group sessions that are run in conjunction with Dr. Donaghy and Dr. Whipps/Fierke's TA groups. We urge students to participate in these sessions primarily because they receive credit from their instructor for regular attendance. Students are informed that if they believe they need additional support after trying out these workshops, we will then place them after receiving such notice from them.

- Our program re-instituted the "Tutor of the Semester" Award and our Fall winners were recognized on December 14, 2009 during our Tutor Appreciation Reception held in 110 Moon. Our Fall 2009 winners are as follows: Eugene Law, James Johnson, Jennifer Ma, Chelsae Radell, Shannon Carpenter, and Robbie McDonald. Award winners were nominated by fellow tutors and students that utilized our program during the Fall semester.

- It was rather unusual to have seen as many tutees request tutoring, but never followed up on their request by ignoring the various communications regarding their status from our office and their tutor. Many phone calls were never returned and numerous emails were never answered. This was the case for 24 students who requested tutoring.

- We struggled slightly to fill requests in upper division courses. While this is not our focus, we still strive to support students in this way to the best of our ability. Often these requests are attempted to be filled by contacting the Registrar's office to obtain a record of students that took the course and performed well in the past. This process is also done for lower division courses that we received little to no tutor applications for in that respective area. After reviewing the potential tutors identified by the Registrar's office and faculty, it appears as though many of our "go to" tutors in these areas have graduated or stopped tutoring to focus on other things. We also observed that those who have performed well in the upper division courses we were in need of tutors for, were individuals who received tutoring themselves. When approached to tutor in these upper division courses, they often decline the offer to tutor because they do not the confidence to perform the task when they themselves succeed by having to use a tutor. Better advertising and solicitation from faculty/staff for a new group of tutors will help remedy this situation for the future.

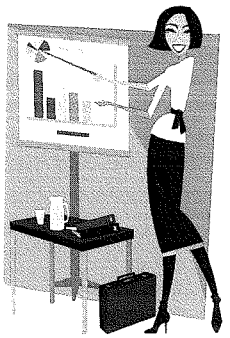
- Our Academic Support workshops were well received and our attendance is slowly growing. Last Spring 2009 was our first semester of providing this service and we saw a total attendance of 56 for that semester. This Fall 2009, our numbers rose to 71 students. Although that number is only a small increase, we did see a large shift once we received the ability to advertise our workshops on the Undergraduate student list serve. Once this request was granted, we averaged 20 students/workshop for the remaining seminars that we provided for the Fall semester. With this change, we are hopeful that our numbers will again increase for the Spring 2010 semester, where we have 10 total Academic Support workshops scheduled on the following subjects: Time Management & Procrastination Avoidance, Improving Student & Note Taking Skills, Exploring the Moon Library, Anxiety & Stress Management, Textbook Reading, and Final Exam Preparation (Save Your Semester).

- Along with our Academic Support workshops, our office will continue to offer Tutoring Training seminars for our tutoring staff. As mentioned on page two of this report, 100% of our active tutors for the Fall 2009 semester attended one training seminar and 60% of our staff attended two sessions. To allow for a larger variety of seminars for tutors to choose from, plus after visiting with the SUNY-Brockport Student Learning Center staff and learning about the types of sessions they offer their tutors, we have expanded our seminar series. Our training topics will explore the following areas this Spring 2010 term: Tutor Services Paperwork & Policy Training, Building Trust/Understanding your Student, Leadership 101, Exploring the Moon Library (by Linda Galloway), Tutoring Across Cultural & Ethnic Boundaries (by Dr. Raydora Drummer Francis), Tutoring Students with Disabilities (by Heather Rice), and Marketing Your Tutoring Experiences (by John Turbeville).

- Our service should also see an increase during the Spring 2010 semester, for we have teamed up with Dean Shannon's office to work with our students in Academic Probation. Those students are required to meet with Scott Blair and are encouraged, during their required meeting, to use the tutoring services program to assist in the academic success and attempts to return to 'good academic standing.'

- Finally, we are continuing to uphold our policy regarding the service of graduate students. During my tenure, every professor we interacted with about supporting a graduate student tutoring requests, felt strongly that the student will be supported directly by the graduate professor or their TA's instead of a tutor.

Academic Success Center Workshops



Spring 2010 Schedule
- Academic Support Workshops -

Series I Seminars

Time management and Procrastination	Improving Study and Note Taking Skills	Moon Library Workshop
Tuesday, January 26 6-7pm Sky Hall 3, Floor 2 Lounge Thursday, January 28 Noon-1 pm 110 Moon	Thursday, February 18 7-8pm Sky Hall 3, Floor 2 Lounge Wednesday, February 17 Noon-1pm 110 Moon	Wednesday, March 3 Noon-1pm 110 Moon

Series II Seminars

Anxiety and Stress	Textbook Reading
Wednesday, March 24 4:30-5:30pm 110 Moon	Wednesday, March 31 6-7pm Sky Hall 3, Floor 2 Lounge Thursday, April 8 Noon- 1pm 110 Moon

'Save Your Semester' Seminars

Tuesday, April 20 5-6pm Sky Hall 3 , Floor 2 Lounge	Tuesday, April 27 5-6pm 110 Moon

Provided by: Office of Academic Support Services— Moon Library, Room 109A

Student Life & Experiential Learning

"Students First"

Academic Success Center Workshops

Spring 2010 Schedule

~ Tutor Training Seminars ~

Paperwork & Policy Revisited	**Building Trust... Understanding the Student**	**Leadership 101**
Thursday, January 21 5-6pm Friday, January 22 3-4pm Tuesday, February 2 Noon-1pm	Monday, February 8 5-6pm Wednesday, March 3 5:30-6:30pm	Thursday, March 11 5-6pm Wednesday, April 14 4:30-5:30

Moon Library Workshop	**Marketing Your Tutoring Experiences**
Wednesday, March 3 Noon– 1pm	Thursday, March 25 Noon-1pm

Tutoring Across Cultural & Ethnic Boundaries	**Tutoring Students with Disabilities**
Monday, March 29 Noon-1pm	Wednesday, March 31 4-5pm

All Tutor Workshops Held in 110 Moon Library

Provided by: Office of Academic Support Services—Moon Library, Room 109A
Student Life & Experiential Learning
"Students First"

High-Impact Educational Practices

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

First-Year Seminars and Experiences

Many schools now build into the curriculum first-year seminars or other programs that bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students' intellectual and practical competencies. First-year seminars can also involve students with cutting-edge questions in scholarship and with faculty members' own research.

Common Intellectual Experiences

The older idea of a "core" curriculum has evolved into a variety of modern forms, such as a set of required common courses or a vertically organized general education program that includes advanced integrative studies and/or required participation in a learning community (see below). These programs often combine broad themes—e.g., technology and society, global interdependence—with a variety of curricular and cocurricular options for students.

Learning Communities

The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with "big questions" that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors. Many learning communities explore a common topic and/or common readings through the lenses of different disciplines. Some deliberately link "liberal arts" and "professional courses"; others feature service learning.

Writing-Intensive Courses

These courses emphasize writing at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum, including final-year projects. Students are encouraged to produce and revise various forms of writing for different audiences in different disciplines. The effectiveness of this repeated practice "across the curriculum" has led to parallel efforts in such areas as quantitative reasoning, oral communication, information literacy, and, on some campuses, ethical inquiry.

Collaborative Assignments and Projects

Collaborative learning combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one's own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences. Approaches range from study groups within a course, to team-based assignments and writing, to cooperative projects and research.

LEAP

Undergraduate Research

Many colleges and universities are now providing research experiences for students in all disciplines. Undergraduate research, however, has been most prominently used in science disciplines. With strong support from the National Science Foundation and the research community, scientists are reshaping their courses to connect key concepts and questions with students' early and active involvement in systematic investigation and research. The goal is to involve students with actively contested questions, empirical observation, cutting-edge technologies, and the sense of excitement that comes from working to answer important questions.

Diversity/Global Learning

Many colleges and universities now emphasize courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies—which may address U.S. diversity, world cultures, or both—often explore "difficult differences" such as racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power. Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by study abroad.

Service Learning, Community-Based Learning

In these programs, field-based "experiential learning" with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students have to both *apply* what they are learning in real-world settings and *reflect* in a classroom setting on their service experiences. These programs model the idea that giving something back to the community is an important college outcome, and that working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life.

Internships

Internships are another increasingly common form of experiential learning. The idea is to provide students with direct experience in a work setting—usually related to their career interests—and to give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field. If the internship is taken for course credit, students complete a project or paper that is approved by a faculty member.

Capstone Courses and Projects

Whether they're called "senior capstones" or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they've learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of "best work," or an exhibit of artwork. Capstones are offered both in departmental programs and, increasingly, in general education as well.

Table 1

Relationships between Selected High-Impact Activities, Deep Learning, and Self-Reported Gains

	Deep Learning	Gains General	Gains Personal	Gains Practical
First-Year				
Learning Communities	+++	++	++	++
Service Learning	+++	++	+++	++
Senior				
Study Abroad	++	+	++	
Student-Faculty Research	+++	++	++	++
Service Learning	++	+++	+++	++
Senior Culminating Experience	++	++	+++	++

+ $p < .001$, ++ $p < .001$ & Unstd B > .10, +++ $p < .001$ & Unstd B > .30

Table 2

Relationships between Selected High-Impact Activities and Clusters of Effective Educational Practices

	Level of Academic Challenge	Active and Collaborative Learning	Student-Faculty Interaction	Supportive Campus Environment
First-Year				
Learning Communities	++	+++	+++	++
Service Learning	++	+++	+++	++
Senior				
Study Abroad	++	++	++	+
Student-Faculty Research	+++	+++	+++	++
Service Learning	++	+++	+++	++
Senior Culminating Experience	++	++	+++	++

+ $p < .001$, ++ $p < .001$ & Unstd B > .10, +++ $p < .001$ & Unstd B > .30

Source: *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter* by George D. Kuh, (Washington, DC: AAC&U, 2008). For information and more resources and research from LEAP, see www.aacu.org/leap.

TO:	President Neil Murphy
CC:	Provost Bill Tully Retention Team Members: Janine DeBaise, Theodore Endreny, Maureen Fellows, Thomas Fletcher, ~~Carmen McCoy Harrison,~~ Robin Hoffman, Steven Keller, Roy Norton, George Kyanka, Thomas Slocum, Mark Teece, John View
FROM:	Julie R. White, Associate Dean
RE:	Retention Team Recommendations
DATE:	April 18, 2002

On January 7, 2002 you commissioned the above group of individuals to examine the attrition of our students and to propose interventions to increase retention. On behalf of members of the Retention Team, I submit the following recommendations. We believe these suggested interventions not only will enhance ESF's retention, but they will also lead to greater student satisfaction. The recommendations presented were informed by quantitative data, qualitative information received directly from students, and the years of experience represented by members of the retention team.

Overview of Recommendations (explained in more detail later in document):

- Smaller class sizes in Botany, Calculus, and Chemistry
- Break up the currently required freshman "triad" of Botany, Calculus and Chemistry
- Formalize a Freshman Year Experience (therefore increasing the sense of connection)
- Enhance ESF 132 with "student success" sections
- Provide Hands-On/Field Experience in the first year
- Develop an "Early Alert" System for student in academic jeopardy
- Improve academic advising and information sharing
- Increase opportunities for student success
- Provide more flexibility for elective courses
- Address issues of incongruence in messages students hear versus what they experience
- Create a formalized opportunity for maintaining a dialog about student satisfaction

Process

Upon review of the data, we focused our attention on the lower division. The attrition of upper division students 1996-1999 was just under 17%. In addition to our focus on the lower division, we also addressed the issues of retention and attrition at the college level. While we did examine the data by program, we decided that there was enough variance of numbers and possible reasons for attrition, that each faculty should examine their individual data and identify appropriate interventions. We do believe that our examination of the issues college-wide could serve as a useful model for the Faculties to replicate.

Bottom line: In assessing our current mode of operation, we asked a simple question: Is ESF a "sink or swim" or a nurturing place? The answer is "yes" to both. We believe that lower division students are often subjected to academic Darwinism while juniors and seniors are actively engaged while their skills and interests are cultivated.

Overview of Quantitative Data

- As enrollment of first year students has grown, so has the rate of attrition.
- An average of nearly 30% of students who entered as freshmen 1997-2000 departed.
- Students who enter ESF as freshmen and depart, primarily do so within the first four semesters: ~40% after first year; ~ 35% after second year (data: 1990-1996).
- About 35% of the freshmen that departed 1997-2000 were academically dismissed (though may have appealed).
- While the attrition of students of color is a concern at the college level, the numbers are too small in any given program (except EFB) for this to be statistically significant.

Entering Freshman Year	Overall Attrition	Minority Attrition
1995	30%	63%
1996	29%	38%
1997	36%	50%
1998	41%	28%
1999	41%	47%

- Performance by first year students in botany, calculus, and chemistry is a concern. We examined this performance relative to admissions tiers and SAT scores and found nothing surprising in this comparison. Essentially, students who performed better in high school, performed better in these courses. While this is the case however, overall performance in these courses, especially botany is troublesome.

Course	Total Freshman Enrollment	Number of Freshmen Receiving Grades D-F
Botany	176	76 (43%)
Calculus	92	23 (25%)
Chemistry	123	34 (27%)

Overview of Qualitative Data

- While we found the quantitative data to be quite informative, we also decided to talk to students. We conducted two focus group meetings with students varying in class standing, program of study, and ethnicity. We also used the notes from the February 21 "Meal with Neil" to inform our recommendations. Findings are outlined below.

  - Learning communities are viewed positively
  - Need help with time management and study skills
  - Taking Botany, Calculus and Chemistry at the same time is too much
  - Botany is too big/no personal attention
  - TA's inconsistent / Lab needs to be better linked with Botany
  - Need for formalized peer tutoring
  - Expectations need to be communicated more clearly
  - Marshall Auditorium is inadequate as a learning/ teaching environment.
  - Need more homework assignments and graded projects. Just two exams = no opportunity to improve grade
  - Chemistry II is not going well
  - More hands-on/field experience wanted in lower division
  - Smaller classes
  - Student life/social reasons often cited as reasons why students stay
  - Connections with faculty, staff, and student colleagues is very important

- We also examined academic appeal letters of students who were academically dismissed. We summarized the reasons given by students for their poor performance.
    - Totally Overwhelmed (scope and sense of needing to go it alone)
    - New Situations (change in environment; first time away from home)
    - Residence Hall Living (drugs/alcohol; noisy/inconsiderate neighbors; SU/ESF differences)
    - Lack of Program Engagement (lecture v. field experience; disheartened; no connection; no interest)
    - Immaturity/Lack of Discipline (break up of a relationship; family death; medical; psychological)
    - Academic Reasons (too heavy a course load; weak in subject; un-communicated learning disability; lack of timely feedback from instructors)

- We also examined exit interview notes compiled by Tom Slocum and the reasons given for voluntary departures mirror those listed above for academic dismissals.

Recommendations

- **Smaller class sizes** in Botany, Calculus, General Chemistry I & II, and Zoology and appropriately assigned teachers. We recognize this suggestion has budgetary implications but believe it to be among our most powerful recommendations. It could provide a more solid start especially for first semester freshmen.

- **Break up Botany, Calculus, and Chemistry.** These three requirements for first semester freshmen is too much. This workload coupled with other significant transition issues often results in poor academic performance and deflated self esteem (and therefore college satisfaction).

- **Formalize a Freshman Year Experience (and therefore increase sense of connection and community).** The learning communities are approaching this suggestion, but efforts need to be broadened to include all first year students. This would begin with orientation and continue through the learning communities and a suggested enhanced ESF 132.

- **Enhance ESF 132** (orientation course). This course would continue to serve as a brief introduction to each individual field of study, but it would also serve a more universal purpose. This course is ideally place to address students' transition issues, needed skill development, and introduction to possible careers. It should also incorporate interaction with upper-class students (a la peer advisors). Suggested topics in addition to faculty specific sections: Time Management and Study Skills (week 4-6); Alcohol and Other Drugs (week 4-6); Community and Diversity (any time during semester); Civic Participation and Service (any time during semester); and 2-3 field trips.

- **Early Hands-On Field Experience.** Many students come to ESF with the expectation that they will be out in the field learning their lessons. In some cases this doesn't happen until the junior year. We can begin this experiential learning in the enhanced ESF 132 but each faculty should be encouraged to incorporate this component into more lower division courses.

- **Early Alert System.** While a few of ESF's traditional first year classes participate in SU's Mid-Semester Progress Report program, these results are not received in a timely manner such that students can turn their grades around. We propose a reporting of grades 1/3 of the way through the first semester. Along with these reports, we can provide students with resource information, study tips, and contact information for assistance.

- **Improve Active Advising and Information Sharing.**
  - Many students come to ESF "at risk" of not performing to their potential. Academic advisors should be made aware of this information and act on accordingly. For example, many students could take summer courses to better prepare them for calculus. Math deficiency appears to be a concern, with active advising prior to their arrival, students could ESF's ground running rather than lagging behind.
  - Required advisor training to include specific how-to information and academic requirements and policies. Dr. Tully has already begun this with the initiation of advisor handbooks for each faculty.

- **Increase Opportunities for Student Success.** First year students have not previously experienced the rigor of college study. It would be helpful for them to clearly understand the expectations of courses including suggested time commitments for given assignments. Also, it is suggested that instructors consider the incorporation of more graded "assignments" rather than giving 2-3 "sink or swim" exams. Again, this issue of study skills could be incorporated into the enhanced ESF 132.

- **Provide More Flexibility for Elective Courses.**

- **Address Issues of Incongruence in Message Students Hear Versus What They Experience.**
  - Ability to take courses at SU
  - Class size

- **Create a Formalized Opportunity for Maintaining a Dialog About Student Satisfaction.**
  - Students were very pleased to be asked about their opinions and experiences
  - Could institute some sort of "Freshman Challenge" to improve the campus community—make them part of the solution so they then have ownership in ESF's success

In addition to these recommendations, I have enclosed an interesting book (and executive summary) that details a qualitative study regarding students' perceptions of the college experience. The findings of this research support many of the interventions we've suggested. Also included here are notes from John Gardner's presentation at recent SUNY Retention Symposium.

Neil, this was a great team with which to work. Each individual is dedicated to student success and is invested in providing the best educational experience possible. The charge given to this team has been completed and I stand ready to assist in the implementation of the recommendations presented.