

University of Toledo First-Year Experience (UT-FYE) Program Request for Funding Proposals (RFP) – Fall 2007

Proposals are invited for projects in support of the University of Toledo First-Year Experience (UT-FYE) Program.

Goals of UT-FYE Program

The University of Toledo is committed to the development and implementation of a comprehensive, integrated, first-year experience for undergraduate students. The goal of UT's FYE program is to increase the success of UT's first-year students, including direct-from-high-school (DHS), adult, and transfer students.

There are several desired outcomes for this initiative:

- Retention to second year of first-time, full-time, degree-seeking first-year students is expected to increase for future entering classes.
- Six-year graduation rates (the percent of an entering cohort of first-time, full-time, degree-seeking first-year students) are expected to increase.
- Failure rates of first-year students in previously high-failure courses will decrease.
- First-year student awareness of and participation in support services such as tutoring, focused advising, and peer mentoring will increase.
- Prospective first-year students and their families will report higher levels of awareness of UT's FYE program.
- Surveys will indicate increased awareness of FYE initiatives and increased student satisfaction in areas covered by FYE initiatives.

Timeline

Proposals are to be submitted to the Provost (Main Campus) according to the timeline described below:

November 5, 11:30 AM–12:30 PM, GH 4600: Discussion and open forum for potential proposers with FYE Committee members and current directors of FYE funded projects. The purpose of the discussion will be to address any questions about the RFP and to provide additional background on proposal preparation by highlighting current successful FYE programs.

November 30, 5:00 PM: Proposals due at Provost's office [**submit 10 copies of proposals to Donna Belkofer, Office of the Provost**]

January 2008: Announcement of awards

Proposals should describe activities to begin January 2008 or fall 2008 and continue through June 30, 2009.

Funding Intent: New or Expanded Activities

This RFP is for new or expanded FYE activities. No funds in this request should supplant or replace current base-budgeted activities, and applicants are discouraged from applying for funds to seek restoration of funding for activities discontinued due to UT budget cuts. We encourage proposals for collaboration with new or existing activities, as well as proposals that involve collaborations among colleges or divisions across the University (e.g., Academic Affairs and Student Affairs).

Projects to be Funded and Anticipated Funding Levels

Two types of projects are anticipated:

Pilot Projects = relatively small-scale using samples to test a project; emphasis on assessment and application to larger student population

Full Implementation Projects = Encompasses entire target population and full scope of project; results have immediate and direct impact on FYE goals

Type of Project	Anticipated Funding Levels
Pilot-Demonstration Projects	up to \$50,000
Full Implementation Projects	\$50,000 - \$75,000

Approximately \$250,000 has been set aside for new or enhanced FYE programs in this round of competition. While this new funding should not be automatically be considered base-budgeted, it is hoped that funding for successful proposals can be continued if the program performs successfully (see assessment section below).

Assessment

Palomba and Banta's *Assessment Essentials* (1999) defines assessment as "...the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development." The assessment section in each proposal must describe a process by which enhanced student success will be measured and reported. *All FYE programs must undergo rigorous annual assessment by the principal investigator(s), and these assessment results be reported to the FYE Director. FYE and the Office of the Provost may discontinue or reduce funding for any program that fails to file a timely assessment report or whose assessment reports do not show evidence of success.*

Oversight

UT's FYE program is overseen by the FYE Committee (membership list attached). Proposals submitted for funding will be reviewed by members of the FYE Committee (possibly with additional members included to increase student/faculty involvement) which will make funding recommendations to the Provost (Main Campus) who will make final decisions on proposals to be funded and their levels of support.

Proposal Guidelines

- 1) Abstract of Project
- 2) Project Proposer(s)
- 3) Rationale for Project
- 4) Description of Project Activities
- 5) Project Timeline
- 6) Assessment (see descriptive paragraph above)
- 7) Staffing of Project, with a clear organizational structure and delineation of responsibilities
- 8) Project Budget
 - a) Personnel Costs (one-time and base-budget)
 - b) Travel Costs
 - c) Supplies & Equipment (one-time and base-budget)
 - d) Other

- NOTES:
- 1) Project budgets should distinguish between one-time costs and ongoing/base-budget costs
 - 2) No funds will be provided for graduate assistant stipends and/or tuition waivers
 - 3) Requested travel costs should directly enhance program efforts and provide benefit to students

Evaluative Criteria to be Used in Rating Proposals

- Grounding of proposal in UT's FYE components:
 - Enhanced first-year classroom experience, especially involving innovative pedagogies to engage first-year students in learning
 - Learning communities and living-learning communities, involving the creation of linked first-year classes
 - Focused first-year advising (early intervention)
 - Supplemental instruction and tutoring
 - Peer mentoring
 - Orientation (FYI) classes, especially involving ongoing professional development for FYI instructors, advisors, and peers
 - Out-of-classroom engagement
- Projected impact on the success of first-year students
- Projected impact on retention
- Clarity and coherence of proposal
- Adequacy/reasonableness of budget
- Potential for sustainability

Theoretical and Empirical Rationale

Proposed activities to be included in the UT-FYE program should be consistent with the exemplary practices identified by the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition (<http://www.sc.edu/fye/>).

Appendix A
Membership of FYE Committee
2007-2008

Bopp, Bernard W., Chair

Barden, Tom

Bresnahan, Carol

Campbell, Jo

Duerring, Emily (student)

Gilbert, Charlene

Grant, Nina

Habrecht, Christine

Harmon, Martino

Hinko, Christine

Jorgensen, Andy

King-Blandford, Marcia

Kucera, Kevin

Patten Wallace, Kaye

Randolph, Brian

Schneider, Barbara

Serratos, Sabina

Waite, Zauyah

Appendix B

Components of the First-Year Experience (FYE) Program at the University of Toledo

- **Enhanced First-Year Classroom Experience**

The classroom experience of our first-year students should be of the highest quality. In courses with large enrollments of first-year students – especially large lecture sections – technology should be employed to enhance learning, and the efforts of instructors supported, recognized, and rewarded. A series of freshman seminar courses should be considered for development. These courses would be newly developed by faculty, with significant academic content and designed to introduce students to the culture of higher education. These graded and credit-bearing sections should have small enrollment (15-20 freshmen) and be taught by full-time faculty.

- **Learning Communities and Living-Learning Communities**

Students in a Living-Learning Community share a first-year experience in which their academic success is supported through residential experiences. Typically, Living-Learning Communities take academics into the residence halls through on-site classes, advising and referral services, tutors, and special opportunities to interact with faculty. A Living-Learning Community may also link courses that students take in their first year, and enroll a common cohort of students. The Learning Community concept may also be applied to groups of non-residential students via classes that are linked or clustered during the academic year, often around a particular interdisciplinary theme.

- **Focused First-Year Advising (Early Intervention)**

Advising, particularly that of first-year students, must be firmly *student-centered*. That is, advising can no longer be thought of as merely passing advice or information along to a student as to what courses to take, but must instead focus on overall student success. Advising efforts in the first year should be *proactive*, with particular attention paid to under-prepared students. First-year students should be required to meet with an advisor each semester. To alert us to academically at-risk freshmen, mid-semester grading and class attendance requirements for first-year students should be encouraged, and eventually made part of University policy.

- **Supplemental Instruction and Tutoring**

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is a student academic assistance program that increases academic performance and retention through its use of collaborative learning strategies. The SI program targets traditionally difficult academic courses, those that typically have 30 percent or higher rate of D or F final course grades and/or withdrawals, and provides regularly scheduled, out-of-class, peer-facilitated sessions that offer students an opportunity to discuss and process course information

(Martin, et al., 1977¹; Arendale 1994²). SI targets “high-risk” academic courses, and is available to all students enrolled in the course, starting the first week of the semester.

Tutorial services, centrally coordinated, should be available to all first-year students. These services should be highlighted to all incoming freshmen, and use of tutorial services strongly encouraged – or required – for students who are experiencing academic problems.

- **Peer Mentoring**

Programs involving student-to-student peer mentoring recognize that students are uniquely qualified to help other students succeed and that students learn best in an environment that is friendly and encouraging. Peer mentoring programs can exist in a number of forms, such as junior/senior-level student assistants in FYI courses, or Undergraduate Learning Assistants (ULA’s; Twigg 2003³) assigned to classes which they have successfully completed to help first-year students select and manage appropriate learning strategies for those classes.

- **Orientation Classes**

At the core of any FYE program is the orientation class – FYI – required for all first-year students. The FYI course provides basic information about the University and its support programs for students. It is oriented toward student success. There should be central coordination of FYI, including a “common core” of topics to be covered in all FYI sections. College-specific information and professional orientation may be part of expanded (2-3 credit hour) FYI offerings by individual colleges. Orientation also includes important student outreach programs such as Rocket Launch, Student Convocation, and First Week UT.

- **Out-of-Classroom Engagement**

Students at the University of Toledo experience an enriched academic, co-curricular, and social environment. This environment includes the *entire* University: learning, in many forms, takes place in numerous venues, spanning classroom and residence hall. The University is committed to supporting learning opportunities and activities in all these venues that lead to increased first year student success.

¹ Martin, D.C., and others. The Learning Center: A Comprehensive Model for College and Universities. Kansas City, MO: University of Missouri, 1977, ERIC ED 162 294.

² Arendale, D. (1994). Understanding the Supplemental Instruction model. In D. C. Martin, & D. Arendale (Eds.), Supplemental Instruction: Increasing achievement and retention (pp. 11022). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

³ Twigg, C. A. (2003). Improving Quality and Reducing Cost: Designs for Effective Learning. *Change*, Vol. 35, No. 4, p. 22.