

**OIR Assessment Tool
First-Year Experience Survey 2011**

Purpose of Survey: The purpose of the First-Year Experience (FYE) Survey is to gather information from students enrolled or participating in FYE courses and groups on extra-curricular activities, institutional integration, and engagement with learning practices. (The FYE pilot project began Fall semester 2011.)

1. The data collected addresses information relating to what university group or situation? (I.e., from whom is the university collecting this information? Whose perceptions are we reading?)

The data were collected from first-year students enrolled or participating in FYE courses or groups. According to the 2011-2012 FYE Pilot Project Annual Report, the survey was administered in Fall 2011 to 22 FYE course sections/groups (N=333 students):

- *Seven FYE pilot sections*
- *Seven sections of Honors 101/102/103*
- *Six sections of UNIV 101*
- *The Integrated Studies Program*
- *The School of Engineering and Mines living/learning community*

2. How often is this tool used and analyzed? What time of year?

The survey has been administered once, at the end of the Fall 2011 semester.

3. To whom does the assessment group believe that an analysis of this report would be beneficial? In other words, what individuals, departments, or programs need this information in order to have reliable information to ‘close the loop’ on their assessment process?

The FYE survey results are useful to faculty and administrators on the FYE steering committee, as well as faculty and staff who teach/coordinate the FYE course sections and groups. In addition, faculty, staff, and administrators who work with first-year students outside of the classroom, such as Residence Life, Student Involvement, and Student Success Center staff, might also benefit from seeing the results.

4. What UND student learning goals are assessed?

- a. Use Y, N, ? to indicate whether the instrument collects data relevant to each of the following Institutional and/or General Education goals:

__Y__ 1 Communication – written or oral (“able to write and speak in various settings with a sense of purpose/audience”)

__Y__ 2 Thinking and reasoning – critical thinking (or “be intellectually curious”; analyze, synthesize, evaluate)

__Y__ 3 Thinking and reasoning – creative thinking (or “be intellectually creative”; explore, discover, engage)

__N__ 4 Thinking and reasoning – quantitative reasoning (“apply empirical data...analyze graphical information”)

__?__ 5 Information literacy (“be able to access and evaluate...for effective, efficient, and ethical use”)

__Y__ 6 Diversity (“demonstrate understanding of diversity and use that understanding...”)

__N__ 7 Lifelong learning (“commit themselves to lifelong learning”)

__Y__ 8 Service/citizenship (“share responsibility both for their communities and for the world”)

b. Additional goals

No additional student learning goals are assessed.

5. What are the findings/results of this tool?

a. From Question 4a above: For the goals with a Y or ?, describe the relevant findings/results from this survey:

The FYE survey does not directly or indirectly assess student learning goals. The survey, which includes a sub-set of questions found in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), provides information regarding behaviors that support and enhance student learning in a postsecondary education setting. The survey also records the frequency of participating or engaging in activities that support the student learning goals mentioned above.

b. Other findings/results

The FYE survey includes a series of questions on level of integration with the institution. Responses to these questions reveal that:

- *Students in the Honors/ISP cohort are more “integrated” and “engaged” than their Fall 2011 FYE peers;*
- *Students in the FYE pilot cohort are more “integrated”/“engaged” than the students in UNIV 101;*
- *The FYE pilot students felt their experiences were at least, and in some cases more, challenging than either the ISP/Honors or the U-Life cohorts. (excerpted from the 2011-2012 FYE Pilot Program Annual Report)*

6. Is this tool a direct measure, an indirect measure, or a non-measure of student learning?

The FYE survey is a non-measure of student learning, as it focuses on gathering student perspectives about the way in which they learned, rather than focusing on what they learned.

7. Does this tool empower individuals or the university to better understand and assess student learning at the university? If so, how?

The FYE survey is a non-measure of student learning but it is highly useful in understanding differences in student experiences and perceptions of learning across FYE courses and groups, such as those academic FYEs that are program-based (Honors and Integrated Studies Programs); academic FYEs that involve a single course (FYE pilot courses); non-academic FYEs (UNIV 101); residence hall-based FYEs (Engineering Living/Learning Community). In this regard, the context in which student learning occurs may be considered and assessed.

8. Are there recommendations for changes (e.g., additional or better tools, different means of analysis, etc.) that might improve the university’s ability to use this information?

It would be useful to find out more about the initial perceptions of first-year students regarding how they expected to be academically engaged during their initial college experience. Since they did not feel that their expectations were fully met, it would be

important to determine what those expectations were in order to enhance their experience and create greater satisfaction.

In future years, it would be helpful to consider NSSE student data according to whether or not students participated in a first-year experience so as to determine if there are differences in level of engagement.

9. What value does the committee place on this tool for helping to achieve the university's assessment plan?

The FYE survey provides a reasonable measure of comparison of student self-reported levels of integration and engagement across first-year programs, both academic and non-academic. This information is useful in terms of promoting and supporting student learning in a variety of environments. Therefore, the survey is useful in helping to achieve the university's assessment plan and relevant goals.

10. Review Summary (one or two sentences).

Students who were enrolled in FYE courses/groups in Fall 2011 generally reported that the academic FYEs helped them to be more reflective about their learning, and they reported high levels of interaction with faculty members. Overall, students expected to be more academically engaged in the first year than they were, although there is some variation in level of engagement by type of FYE course/group.

11. What might faculty want to know about this survey? (Please provide one to two paragraphs describing some findings from this survey. These paragraphs will be forwarded to academic departments as a means of keeping them informed about the existence of information that might be useful to them.)

The First-Year Experience (FYE) Survey is designed to gather information from students enrolled or participating in academic and non-academic FYE courses and groups on extra-curricular activities, institutional integration, and engagement with learning practices. The FYE courses and groups include FYE pilot sections, Honors courses, University Life courses, the Integrated Studies Program, and the School of Engineering and Mines living/learning community.

Findings from the survey reveal that there are discernible differences by type of FYE course/group in students' levels of institutional integration (peer group interactions, interactions with faculty, level of faculty concern with student development and teaching, academic and intellectual development, institutional and goal commitments) and engagement (active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty members, level of academic challenge). For example, students in the Honors/ISP cohort are more "integrated" and "engaged" than their Fall 2011 FYE peers. Students in the FYE pilot cohort are more "integrated"/"engaged" than the students in UNIV 101. The FYE pilot students felt their experiences were at least, and in some cases more, challenging than either the IPS/Honors or the U-Life cohorts. Overall, students expected to be more academically engaged in the first year than they were, suggesting that there is an opportunity to engage students in intellectually stimulating activities as early as possible in their college careers.

12. What results about this study would students find interesting?

- *There are many different types of FYE courses and groups to explore: First-year seminars, Honors courses, University Life courses, the Integrated Studies Program, and the School of Engineering and Mines living/learning community (as examples).*
- *Students expected to be “more engaged in academically important activities” in the first year than they actually were.*
- *Students gave feedback that taking a first-year experience course helped them to be more reflective about their own learning.*
- *Approximately 75% of the students in the FYE pilot courses felt they engaged (“sometimes, often, or very often”) in activities that promoted “active and collaborative” learning.*

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