

First-Year Council Minutes
Thursday, Feb. 11, 2021 from 10:00-11:00am via Zoom

Membership of First-Year Council for 2020-2021 *(listed alphabetically)*

Rotating Members

Dr. Minor Baker, COE (member through 2024)
Dr. Stephen Berkwitz, CHPA (member through 2024)
Ms. Alexis Butler, Student Representative, Hospitality Leadership major
Ms. Sierra Chitwood, Student Representative, SAHE masters program
Ms. Crystal Dicke, LIBR (member through 2022)
Dr. Toby Dogwiler, CNAS (member through 2024)
Mr. Scott Handley, Honors College (member through 2024)
Mr. Rob Moore, Student Affairs (member through 2024)
Dr. Linda Moser, COAL (member through 2022)
Ms. Sarah Murray, CHHS (member through 2022)
Ms. Carly Pierson, COB (member through 2022)
Dr. Christi Sudbrock, COA (member through 2022)

Ex-Officio Members

Dr. Kelly Wood, Associate Provost, Student Success (standing member)
Dr. Tracey Glaessgen, Associate Director, Center for Academic Success and Transition (standing member)

Council Charge: To advise the Executive Director and Associate Director, Center for Academic Success and Transition on initiatives involving the first-year experience (FYE) at Missouri State University. These initiatives include, but are not limited to: 1) developing overarching goals for the first-year seminar course, 2) ensuring the course is designed to increase academic skill building, public affairs awareness, and campus connections, 3) evaluating the effectiveness of the first-year seminar course and recommending changes based upon assessment data, and 4) serving as a liaison with other departments/colleges/student affairs as part of a larger effort to inform and address issues involving first-year students.

Agenda

- I. Convene meeting—
Members present: Steve Berkwitz, Minor Baker, Sierra Chitwood, Toby Dogwiler, Scott Handley, Rob Moore, Linda Moser, Sarah Murray, Carly Pierson, Christi Sudbrock, Kelly Wood, Tracey Glaessgen
- II. Updates/Discussion:
 - GEP 101 Updates
 - Recruitment--GEP 101 Instructors and Peer Leaders
Please reach out to colleagues who might be interested in teaching GEP 101 for fall. Deadline for first consideration is Wed. March 10. Please also encourage your students who have a desire to serve first-year students to apply to be a Peer Leader. Deadline for PL application and 2 reference forms is Wed. March 10 at 4:00pm.
 - Course evaluations/grade distribution/end-of-course instructor feedback
Fall 2019 to Fall 2020 course evaluations showed an improvement in student satisfaction with Fall 2020 course related to increased skill development, helpfulness with online course materials, better understanding of diverse perspectives, and usefulness and applicability of information for other classes.

The Fall 2019 to Fall 2020 grade distribution was very similar, even though the course transitioned from a 16 week seated to an 8 week blended approach. The end-of-semester instructor feedback was shared with First-Year Council members to provide some context to the need to review course requirements

- Fall 2021 first-block/blended modality
 - Modify course requirements
 - **4-year guide**--the assignment should be maintained but reimagined to better meet student needs in learning how to plan for their academic path from semester one through graduation.
 - **Public affairs conference reflection**—the assignment is a valuable addition to helping students meet the public affairs related course goal but, ideally, the conference would be offered during weeks 5 or 6 to avoid the end of block crunch. (Kelly mentioned that she has spoken to Dr. Franklin about this adjustment, and she was supportive of it.)
 - **Annotated Bibliography**--the assignment should be tweaked to better meet student needs and instructional delivery. GEP 101 does have the Gen Ed goal of Information Literacy, so we need to have an assignment that helps students meet that course goal. I'll follow up with Crystal to discuss further.
 - **Indirect or direct service project**—the assignment may need to be reconsidered as the possibility for 4 hours of service in 8 weeks may be problematic. The discussion also included possibility of reconsidering the indirect service project as the preferred approach. Instructor/student feedback has indicated that there is reason to reassess its required course component.
 - **Common reader**--the incorporation of a common reader text should be discontinued as the first-block/blended modality has replaced the full-semester seated approach. The elimination of the CR frees up class time to discuss current events, faculty expertise areas, college-related information, other areas of student development, etc. FYC has suggested to curate a collection of articles to share with instructors who may then opt to incorporate any/none of the articles into their course curriculum. Please send any suggested articles/media sites to me, and I'll compile.
 - **No other adjustments to required elements** were mentioned during today's meeting.
 - Center for Academic Success and Transition
 - Title III grant update
 - No time to discuss—will provide update at March meeting*

- Call for Graduate Teaching Assistant and Graduate Assistants (Academic Coaches) will open late February with March 24 deadline
- III. Other discussion items?
No additional topics were discussed.
- IV. Next meeting—*Thursday, March 25 at 10:00am via Zoom—topics to include textbook customization project overview, review instructor selection, and Title III grant update*