Foundations of Excellence
First-Year Initiative

December 8th, 2015
Presentation to the Suffolk Community
FOE Implementation Team
Overview

• Opening remarks, Provost Kelly
• Foundations of Excellence (FoE) – Year I & II Process
• Proposal
• Next steps
• Remarks, John Gardner, Institute Advisor
• Q & A
Why are we here?

• Why the Foundations of Excellence?
  – What challenges do we face?
  – What opportunities exist?

• John Gardner, “If you want more of the same, keep doing what you are doing.”
Challenges: Institutional

• Retention and Transfers
  – Low retention rate
  – High transfer rate

• High Acceptance Rate (Admissions)

• Enrollment
  – Long term declining enrollment @ Suffolk and in Northeast
Challenges: What We Currently Have

• Current First-Year Experience
  – Variation across schools, across students, across courses
• Suffolk has a wide range of retention programs/initiatives
• No overarching plan
• No first-year philosophy
• Little coordination across units
• No comprehensive assessment of the first-year experience
• No comprehensive approach to accomplishing institutional diversity goals
Opportunities: What We Currently Have

• Excellent faculty
• Committed staff
• Energetic students
• Urban campus centrally located

– Overall commitment to institutional transformation
What We Need

- A comprehensive set of programs that make internal and external sense for our students, faculty, staff, and the wider community.
- Strengthen community across CAS and SBS and integrate students into this community.
- Opportunity to promote a singular undergraduate Suffolk University experience
  - Exciting
  - Innovative
  - Dynamic
  - Rigorous
Foundations of Excellence (FoE)- Overview

Year I
• Purpose
  • Develop an integrated First-Year Program
  • Increase persistence
  • Improve educational experience
  • Attract incoming students
• Self-study
• 9 Dimension Committees; 113 faculty, staff and students
• Recommendations; much consistency across Dimension Committees

Year II
• Six Learning Goals for First-Year Students
• Survey regarding Learning Goals
• Proposed FYE basic common components
  • Implementation plan
FoE Implementation Team

• Alina Choo, Assoc Director of Early Academic Success & Summer Programs
• Rachael Cobb, Government Department Chair
• David DeAngelis, Director of Student Leadership & Involvement
• Esi Elliot, Assistant Professor, Marketing
• Gary Fireman, Psychology Department Chair
• Greg Fried, Philosophy Department Chair
• Patrick Heaton, Director of Orientation, New Student & Family Programs
• George Moker, Director of Entrepreneurship Programs
• Jason Peterson, Associate Professor, Business Law and Ethics
• Sebastian Royo, Vice Provost for Student Success
• Nancy Stoll, Dean of Students
Foundations of Excellence – Recommendations from Year I self-study

- **Common learning goals for SBS and CAS**
  - Embed throughout first-year courses & co-curricular experiences
  - Provide consistent and reinforced learning experience

- **Facilitate first-year students’ transition to College**
  - Required first-semester SU 101 type course with a transition curriculum

- **Streamline entire first-year experience**
  - Provide continuous annual assessment and review

- **Create focused first-year seminar course for all undergraduates (CAS & SBS)**
  - Seamless first-year experience for all undergraduate students; Experiential / immersion experience
  - Required, unified first-year seminar course that addresses academic and transition to University issues

- **Faculty and Staff Professional Development**
  - Provide resources for professional development for instructors working with first-year students
  - Training for faculty and staff on key academic and student life issues.

- **Faculty Involvement in Student Orientation**
  - Increase and incentivize

- **Celebrate Excellence**
  - Develop a recognition system for exemplary use of pedagogies of engagement

- **Encourage engagement with critical dialog regarding diversity issues/ideas.**
  - Equip faculty with better tools, resources, training and overall education on working with diverse students.
First-Year Philosophy Statement – FoE Year I self-study

We meet our first-year students where they are and guide them on their journeys to where they need and want to be. We draw upon the diversity of our student body and the diversity of advantages provided by our urban location to create learning opportunities.

Supported by the strength of our community at Suffolk, first-year students will cultivate community and discover their motivations and potential opportunities by

- Establishing close mentoring relationships with faculty and staff that encourage curiosity, identify inspirations and talents, and lead to involvement with campus and local communities.
- Elevating and transforming their approaches to challenges and problem solving with new creative tools and critical strategies for approaching setbacks, risks, and ambiguities.
- Engaging with experiential learning that enables students to understand how learning inside and outside the classroom are productively connected.
- Connecting to the city of Boston and the prospects afforded by our downtown location and regional networks.
- Increasing global awareness through collaborative learning and exchange of ideas in our diverse learning environment.
- Joining a community that celebrates our academic achievements, civic contributions, and local heritage.

Enacting this philosophy for our new students requires coordinated reinforcement and constant reflection by faculty, staff, administrators, and students.
6 Learning Goals

- **Academic Success**
  - Students will understand the tools for academic success.

- **Personal Success**
  - Students will develop skills for personal success.

- **Career planning and the value of lifelong learning**
  - Students will have a better understanding of career planning and lifelong learning

- **Decision-Making**
  - Students will understand and utilize skills that support effective and responsible decision-making.

- **Relationships**
  - Students will understand the value of relationships within the Suffolk community.

- **Engage the world**
  - Students will learn to appreciate and engage in the wider world beyond Suffolk University.
Learning Goal #1

Students will understand the tools for academic success.

Upon the end of the first year, students will be able to:

• Advance their ability to think critically, write, speak publicly, pursue independent research, and work effectively in teams.
• Develop effective studying and learning strategies.
• Identify and engage academic resources on campus, including online tools.
• Use technology for innovation, analysis and communication.
Learning Goal #2

Students will develop skills for personal success.

*Upon the end of the first year, students will be able to:*

- Effectively **advocate** for themselves and others.
- Value and engage in **healthy life choices**.
- Build and display **self-confidence / self-efficacy**.
- Understand and demonstrate **financial literacy**.
Learning Goal #3

Students will have a better understanding of career planning and the value of lifelong learning.

Upon the end of the first year, students will be able to:

• Clarify interests and values and how they relate to major and career choices.
• Demonstrate an attitude of inquiry.
• Seize opportunities for experiential learning outside the classroom.
Learning Goal #4

Students will understand and utilize skills that support effective and responsible decision-making.

*Upon the end of the first year, students will be able to:*

- Understand the importance of academic and personal **integrity**.
- Identify problems and solutions and **understand accountability and decision ownership**.
Learning Goal #5

Students will understand the value of relationships within the Suffolk community.

Upon the end of the first year, students will be able to:

• Identify and establish relationships with mentors.
• Develop strong social connections and a Suffolk identity.
• Understand, respect and engage with diverse people and ideas.
• Participate in effective teamwork.
Learning Goal #6

Students will learn to appreciate and engage in the wider world beyond Suffolk University.

Upon the end of the first year, students will be able to:

• Participate actively in service learning and community involvement.
• Develop a global perspective.
• Demonstrate active citizenship.
Survey Participation

Approximately 140 respondents

Survey sent to:
- Instructors/faculty who teach 100-level courses
- FoE members who served on a Dimension Committee last year
- Student Success & Student Affairs staff who work with first-year students

Role with First-Year Students:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teach a 100-level course</td>
<td>73%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organize first-year programs/events</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advise first-year students</td>
<td>54%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other role</td>
<td>30%</td>
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Survey Results

• Impressive response rate

• Thoughtful responses

• Qualitative responses
  – Not easily summarized
  – Very helpful to committee
Survey Highlights/Themes

- Teamwork
- Financial literacy
- Guidelines for personal success goals in class syllabi
- Instilling self-confidence and self-advocacy in our students
- Experiential learning and post-reflection
- Understanding the “why” regarding principles & values
- Large percentage of international faculty and students
- Student involvement and measuring impact
- Active citizenship
Transforming the Suffolk First Year Experience: Proposal

• Principles
  – **Strengthen** what is already working well
  – **Unify** the CAS and SBS experience
  – Keep it **simple and flexible** to ensure access for all (all majors, all schools)
  – Provide **deep, impactful opportunities** for students, faculty, and staff for personal development and growth
## Proposed Components of a Shared First-Year Experience

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<th>Credits</th>
<th>FALL SEMESTER</th>
<th>SPRING SEMESTER</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Common to SBS and CAS (shaded courses are linked)</td>
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| **4**   | **Suffolk Seminar 1 + Lab** *(Writing to Engage)*  
*Lab includes Ram Academy over Labor Day weekend* | **4**  
**Suffolk Seminar 2 + Lab** *(Engaging the World)*  
*Administers Writing Proficiency Assessment* |
| **3**   | **Creativity & Innovation** | **3-4**  
**Diverse Perspectives, SGCP** *Any approved DP course at 100- or 200-level* |

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<th>CAS</th>
<th>SBS</th>
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|   | 8 credits | ENT 101 (3 credits)  
SBS 100 (1 credit)  
+ class (math?) |

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CAS</th>
<th>SBS</th>
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</table>
|   | 8 credits | STATS 240 (4 credits)  
SIB 101 (3 credits) |
Proposed Components of a Shared First Year Experience

Suffolk Seminar: ANCHOR COURSE for the 1st Year Experience:

- Suffolk Seminar would span the full first year, dovetailing with other elements of the First-Year Experience at Suffolk (CI, Perspectives, Advising, etc.).
- Both Suffolk Seminar-1 and Suffolk Seminar-2 would include a Lab with TA to teach key academic and life skills and to foster learning communities, as well as to coordinate with other elements of the First-Year Experience. TAs would provide invaluable peer mentorship.
Proposed Components of a Shared First-Year Experience

Suffolk Seminar, “Engaging the World”

– “Engaging the World” Theme
  • reviewed yearly through dialogue with the University community; theme may be repeated

– Themes reflect contemporary challenges, from the local to the global
  • Examples: Climate Change; Immigrants and Refugees; Police, Race, & Community

– Themes mobilize across the University, curricularly and co-curricularly
Proposed Components of a Shared First-Year Experience

Fall Suffolk Seminar: Writing to Engage

- Writing-intensive
- 50% shared texts and assignments, based on summer reading, Ram Academy
- Shared monthly plenary lectures
- Faculty otherwise free to design, develop, and create own syllabi, readings, etc. consistent with overall Suffolk Seminar theme for that year
  - Benefits
    - Faculty freedom to promote individually themed sections, similar to existing Seminar for Freshmen, while incorporating overarching theme
    - Examples: Police, Race, and Community theme
      - Possible variations
        - Policing in Film and Literature; Science and Race — Fact and Fiction; The Sociology of Prison Reform.
  
- Paired with Lab and TA, for life and academic skills, and learning communities
Proposed Components of a Shared First-Year Experience

Spring Suffolk Seminar: Engaging the World

• Writing-intensive
• Common learning goals and coordinated structure
• Learning goals linked to end-of-semester spring Writing Proficiency Assessment
• Shared syllabus among all sections, covering aspects of the year’s themes touching on expertise of all Suffolk’s schools
• Shared plenary lectures, monthly
• Paired with Lab and TA, for academic and life skills, and enduring learning communities
• Concludes with a First-Year Suffolk Capstone experience
Next Steps

- Engage the community
- Approval
- Further development of FYE components
- Implementation Plan and Timeline

- Goal: Implement in Fall 2016
Remarks from our Gardner Institute Advisor

President, gardner@jngi.org
Discussion and Q &A

Questions?

www.suffolk.edu/sufoundations

sufoundations@suffolk.edu