Second Year Experience Working Group
Final Report
August 12, 2012

Working Group Members
Sheryl Bolstad, College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences
Mark Bultmann, Office of Undergraduate Education
Laura Coffin Koch, Office of Undergraduate Education (co-chair)
Kevin Dostal Dauer, Housing & Residential Life
Amy Gunter, College of Science and Engineering
Becky Hall, Central Career Services
Sara Ihrig, School of Nursing
Nikki Letawsky Shultz, College of Biological Sciences
LeeAnn Melin, Office of Undergraduate Education (co-chair)
Sara Newberg, Career & Intern Services
Jan O'Brien, Carlson School of Management
Jenny Porter, Orientation & First Year Programs
Lucy Reile, College of Design
Jerry Rinehart, Office for Student Affairs
Alyssa Ruesch, College of Liberal Arts, Former PEL Program Participant
Krista Soria, Office of Institutional Research
Robin Stubblefield, Office of Student Engagement
Susan Stubblefield, Housing & Residential Life
Ellen Sunshine, College of Education and Human Development
Meaghan Thul, College of Liberal Arts
Patrick Troup, Office of Equity & Diversity
Overview
This report serves as a summary of the Second Year Experience Working Group which met from December 2011 – May 2012. The Office of Undergraduate Education assembled this group to continue the dialogue started by the 2011 President’s Emerging Leaders Program (PEL) Group Project focusing on the second year experience at the U of M, Twin Cities. Given their research, findings, and recommendations, the SYE Working Group explored the interest, need, and feasibility of moving forward with a coordinated campus approach to the second year.

Committee Charge
The Second Year Experience (SYE) Working Group was convened to answer the following question:

*Should the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities Campus proceed with a more coordinated approach to the second year?*

The Working Group agreed that the answer to this question is yes. The recommendations proposed in this report outline specific actions the group believes will enhance the second year experience.

SYE Working Group Process
The intent of the SYE Working Group was to understand the current landscape of the second year experience in order to answer the initial charge. The group intentionally stayed clear of developing specific programmatic recommendations as the goal was to complete the initial charge within a limited time span.

Over the course of six meetings, the committee accomplished the following:
- Defined the Second Year Experience and timeframe
- Reviewed the President’s Emerging Leader Group Report on the Sophomore Year Experience
- Reviewed the current Second Year Experience literature including student development theory
- Created Second Year Outcomes based on literature themes
- Explored U of M data related to the second year
- Reviewed U of M current practices
- Discussed the role of parents in the Second Year with Marj Savage, Director of Parents Program
- Discussed financial issues related to the Second Year with Kris Wright, Director of Student Finance

Defining the Second Year Experience:
The SYE Working Group began by creating a common definition by which to examine the second year. The committee intentionally chose not to use the term “sophomore” given its association with credit completion rather than time on campus.

*The second year experience (SYE) includes members of a cohort of new high school admits (NHS) who have completed one year of higher education at the University and are in their second year of undergraduate study. Transfer students may be included in the SYE as appropriate.*
Second Year Timeline:
For purposes of analysis, the scope of the second year is defined as the experiences that happen during the second year of undergraduate study.

However, the committee does recognize that the transition to the second year begins during the spring semester of the first year. This is when students begin planning for the second year and make decisions that affect the experiences students have during their second year. For example, students make decisions on where to live in late January; application and selection for leadership positions, study abroad and the honors program occur in spring; and the registration process for fall semester occurs in mid-spring. FYE initiatives should include the thoughtful planning for the second year so that the experiences occurring during the second year contribute to student success.

Literature Review
The literature review outlined in the PEL Report (2011) identified the following challenges unique to the second year:

Academic Challenges:
- Academic Standing: Continuing to make satisfactory academic progress and an opportunity for some to regain their footing after the first year
- Major Decisions and Academic Self-Efficacy: Required to choose and commit to an academic program by the end of the second year
- Faculty Contact: Less opportunity to develop quality interactions with faculty since students are often not yet in their major courses

Developmental Challenges:
- Career Development: Developing the self-awareness and autonomy necessary to make a decision regarding major and possibly career plans
- Student Motivation: Lacking a specific direction or undefined goals can affect motivation and desire to persist
- Social Integration and Involvement: Fewer opportunities that promote involvement on campus compared to first year initiatives

Institutional Challenges:
- Financial Issues: Heightened financial concerns due to less scholarship opportunities for second year students and the reality of first year financial costs setting in
- Satisfaction: Less satisfaction with their college experience compared to the first year
National Trends

Students during their second year report feeling a lack of: satisfaction with faculty interactions; commitment to academic major; satisfaction with academic advising; leadership opportunities; and support from student affairs professionals (Finning-Kwoka, Clayton, & Newman, 2007). In a 2008 National Survey of Sophomore-Year Initiatives, 37% of the institutions surveyed reported having a sophomore year initiative with an additional 29% stating that they are considering or currently developing sophomore initiatives (Keup, Gahagan, and Goodwin, 2010). The most common initiatives include the following components:

- Career Planning
- Leadership Development
- Academic Advising
- Online Resources
- Peer Mentoring by Sophomores
- Residence Life
- Study Abroad
- Faculty/Staff Mentors

U of M Second Year Data Highlights

The following data represents a snapshot of the second year experience at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. See Appendix 1 for more details.

- The overall retention from second to third year for the 2009 freshmen cohort is 85% (Soria, 2012).
- Until recently, the U of M has lagged behind its peers in the retention of students from their second to third year (Casper, Khoury, Lashbaugh & Ruesch, 2011)

Data from the 2008 freshmen cohort (Office of Undergraduate Education, 2011) show that:

- Second to third year retention for students of color is at lower rates than for white students. For the 2008 freshmen cohort, the rates break down as follows:
  - 74% for African-American students
  - 75% of American Indian students
  - 83% of Asian Pacific students
  - 83% of Chicano-Latino students
  - 80% of other students of color
  - 88% white students
- Roughly 60% of students who earned a GPA below 2.5 during the first semester of the freshman year will not persist to the third year.
- 22.3% of students with an ACT at or below 21 do not persist to the third year. Likewise, 17.5% of students entering the University with a HSR in the lower 50% of their class do not persist.

Data from the 2010 Student Experience in the Research University (Soria, 2012) suggest that:

- First-year students spend more time than sophomores on attending classes and entertainment events. Additionally, first-year students spend more time socializing with friends and participating in physical exercise. Sophomores spend more time than first-year students on employment, performing community service, participating in student organizations, watching television, and commuting to school and to work.
• First-year students report a higher perception of campus climate compared to sophomores on all of the items.
• Sophomore students report higher frequency in going to class without completing assigned reading and going to class unprepared.
• Sophomore students are less satisfied with advising by peers or school/college staff, the availability of courses needed for general education requirements and graduation, with the availability of educational enrichment programs, with their grade point average, and with the value of their education for the price they are paying.

Current Campus Strategies

Many campus programs, services, and initiatives across campus are open for students to utilize during their second year including academic support, career development/services, learning abroad, campus involvement opportunities, and many more. There are fewer opportunities designed specifically for second year students. Below is a representative list of offerings for second year students by various colleges and units. The items in bold occur during the second year specifically for second year students. The remaining bulleted items are either offered during the first year to provide a strong foundation for the second year or are available during the second year but open to all students.

College Strategies

Carlson School of Management
• Second year students are in the Immersion Core Curriculum Cohort consisting of four 3-credit courses.
• Students are recommended to meet with their adviser during their second year.
• Transfer students are required to meet with an adviser.

College of Biological Sciences
• Students have required advising appointments during the fall and spring of their second year.
  o Reflection on first 2 years, planning for the next 2 years
• Optional career planning courses are available.
• Student Learning Outcomes assessments are conducted between students and advisers.

College of Design
• A first year cohort model contributes to a stronger sense of community during the second year.
• Portfolio review during the second year helps to locate students who might need to consider a different major.
• Students are recommended to meet with their adviser during their second year.
• Students are encouraged to participate in career and internship exploration during their second and third year.
**College of Education and Human Development**
- Students who are undeclared during their second year have a hold on their record and must meet with an academic adviser.
- During Spring 2012, students were surveyed for their input regarding sophomore programming.
- The college has partnered with Housing & Residence Life to offer a Second Year Experience Living Learning Community for Fall 2012.

**College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences**
- Second year students are required to meet with their faculty advisers. Meetings focus on internships, study abroad, and careers opportunities.
- Second year students are strongly encouraged to meet with a career counselor.
- The few second year undecided students in CFANS continue to meet with a professional adviser who specializes in undecided students.

**College of Liberal Arts**
- CLA offers a Stop the Sophomore Slump event which focuses on major resources, learning abroad, internships, and engagement.
- Students on the Assistant Deans Freshmen Advisory Board may be assigned a sophomore mentor.
- New course will be required of all first-year students beginning Fall, 2012. The second semester of the course focuses on planning for the second year.
- Major Declaration Sessions and advising community specific programming are open to all students.

**College of Science and Engineering**
- Students are admitted to a major program in January of their second year.
  - Departments host welcome event after students are admitted to the major during second year.
  - The early admission process identifies students who are not on track to their intended major.
- Students are required to meet with their adviser until they are admitted into a major.

**Campus-Wide Strategies**

**Housing & Residential Life**
- First-year students living on campus can reapply to live on campus for their second year.
- H&RL offer a Second Year Experience Living Learning Community.

**Campus-Wide Strengths Initiative**
- The initiative’s second-year focus is on integrating strengths into self-awareness, career development, and student engagement.

**Center for Academic Planning & Exploration**
- CAPE provides specific outreach to and services for undeclared sophomore students to find their best-fit major.
Recommendations:

One of the challenges in addressing the second year experience is that one size does not fit all. During the first year, students have common experiences (e.g. orientation, welcome week, residence hall living, required advising, etc.) while the second year is more dispersed and experiences are more disparate. This challenge frames our recommendations outlined below.

The committee believes that the second year experience at the University of Minnesota may be enhanced by the following recommendations.

1) **Create a more coordinated effort** across campus to provide programs, services, and communications targeted at second year students.
   - Create a brand for the second year to promote a more cohesive experience and leverage existing events or services with a second year focus.
   - Increase targeted communication to second year students including a welcome back email, monthly newsletters similar to the first year communication, parent outreach, etc.
   - Create a second year experience advisory committee to share best practices, identify university-wide concerns, and create targeted initiatives.

2) **Create an annual assessment plan** that includes second year metrics and survey results. This may include an annual dashboard of success indicators, retention goals, and data from existing surveys.
   - Develop and implement a communications plan to share this data across campus with faculty, staff and administrators.

3) **Increase awareness of the second year experience** and encourage programs, policies, and practices to enhance and address the needs of second year students.
   - Through the Associate Deans meetings convened by the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education, engage in conversations around the second year to foster greater awareness, garner support for strategic initiatives, and strategize collaborative efforts to address retention concerns.
   - Provide an on-campus conference about the second year to increase support and awareness.
   - Provide advising tips for faculty and staff that center on second year issues.

4) **Adopt the following outcomes** to guide an intentional institutional focus on the second year experience. By the end of the second year, students will have developed a stronger **sense of purpose, sense of community, and sense of self**. Based on the current literature (Hunter, Tobolowsky, Gardner, Evenbeck, Pattengale, Schaller, & Schreiner, 2010), the following three areas encompass the unique needs of the second year and lay a strong foundation for continued progression.
Sense of Purpose
Students with a sense of purpose possess a clear understanding of why they are at the University of Minnesota and what direction they are heading. They have experienced success in the classroom and engage in the academic life of the campus. They possess enthusiasm for their academic path and understand appropriate career options. They have set realistic and obtainable goals for themselves. They have hope and optimism for their remaining two years at the University.

Measures for Sense of Purpose:
● Be in good academic standing
● Have declared an academic major
● Identify possible career options
● Articulate and identify obtainable and actionable goals for third year and beyond
● Report positive survey responses for measures of satisfaction and academic engagement

Sense of Community
Students with a sense of community feel like they belong at the University of Minnesota. They have the support they need to be successful from peers, faculty and staff. They are engaged in campus life and feel a sense of ownership in creating their own University experience.

Measures for Sense of Community:
● Engage in opportunities outside of the classroom including at least one high impact experience
● Possess a sense of U of M pride
● Demonstrate knowledge and utilization of campus resources
● Have meaningful relationships/interaction with students, faculty, staff and surrounding community
● Report positive survey responses for measures of satisfaction, supportive campus climate, and sense of belonging indicators

Sense of Self
Students with a sense of self have increased their overall self-awareness. They experience a safe, supportive, and respectful environment in which to explore aspects of their own identity and the diversity of others. Students have improved their overall well-being relating to financial, physical, spiritual, career and academic aspects of their lives.

Measures for Sense of Self:
● Articulate personal strengths and apply strengths to their college experience
● Possess a greater understanding of identity including values, culture, interests, and skills
● Interact with others who come from different backgrounds and life experiences
● Possess greater confidence in ability to succeed and take on new challenges (self-efficacy)
● Demonstrate financial literacy and take appropriate actions to support fiscal responsibility
● Report positive survey responses for measures of increased self-awareness, appreciation and interaction with diversity

If adopted, these outcomes will need to be assessed through existing survey questions, institutional data points, and other assessment measures.
References

Casper, J., Khoury, A. Lashbaugh, K. and Ruesch, A. (2011). Sophomore year experience final report to Dr. Laura Coffin Koch, Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. President’s Emerging Leadership Program. University of Minnesota.


APPENDIX 1: Second Year Data

Second Year Report
Analysis by the Office of Institutional Research

Retention and Graduation
Over the last six years (AY 2004 to 2009), on average, 18% of students did not persist to their third year of study (Table 1). The number of students who are retained each subsequent year continues to grow; however, students' first and second years continue to have the higher percentage of student attrition comprising the majority of student attrition rates over a six-year window. While the first-year remains important in students' retention, students' second-year retention also matters—once students surpass their second year, they are more likely to persist until graduation.

Table 1
Retention and graduation rates by cohorts (NHS UMMTC students only).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 5556)</td>
<td>(n = 5274)</td>
<td>(n = 5419)</td>
<td>(n = 5256)</td>
<td>(n = 5089)</td>
<td>(n = 5381)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-to-Second Year Retention</td>
<td>4868</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>4550</td>
<td>86.3</td>
<td>4794</td>
<td>87.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second-to-Third Year Retention</td>
<td>4985</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>4123</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>4349</td>
<td>80.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third-to-Fourth Year Retention</td>
<td>4049</td>
<td>72.9</td>
<td>3813</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>4040</td>
<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth-to-Fifth Year Retention</td>
<td>1507</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>1378</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>1348</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth-to-Sixth Year Retention</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-Year Graduation</td>
<td>2550</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>2488</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>2751</td>
<td>50.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six-Year Graduation</td>
<td>3909</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>3704</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Preliminary figures retrieved December 10, 2011.

Engagement, Campus Climate, & Satisfaction: Using SERU Survey Data
The SERU was administered to 28,277 undergraduates as a census survey in spring 2010, with the majority of communication occurring via electronic mail. The response rate was 34% (n = 9,601). In order to draw comparisons, students' level (first-year or sophomore) was derived using admission year and term. This procedure allows reviewers to compare students based on the length of time they have been on campus (one or two years), rather than compare students based on credits earned. Only non-transfer students were included in this analysis.

The number of students who responded to each SERU survey question varies, as students were not required to respond to each question. Approximately 1,900 first-year and 1,600 sophomore students responded to the items used in this report. Slightly more females and White students responded to the survey than are represented in the population; additionally, respondents tended to have slightly higher grade point averages than non-respondents.

The analyses presented in this brief report demonstrate statistically significant differences between first-year and sophomore students in the areas of academic disengagement, satisfaction, and the time students spend on activities. The results can serve as potential talking points to understand some of the differences between these two levels of students. In most cases, categorical data (e.g., hours, satisfaction, frequency) were re-coded to be continuous; this was conducted so that reviewers could more easily explore significant findings through mean differences, although it is recommended that reviewers examine the results from categorical analyses as well to pinpoint specific areas of differences.

Below, we present findings related to differences between first-year and sophomore students with regards to the time they spend on activities, their perception of campus climate, their academic disengagement, and their satisfaction on a variety of items.

Analysis | Office of Institutional Research
Sophomore Year Experience

Time Spent on Activities

The data suggest that first-year students spend more time than sophomores on attending classes and entertainment events (Table 2). Additionally, first-year students spend more time socializing with friends and participating in physical exercise. Sophomores spend more time than first-year students on employment, performing community service, participating in student organizations, watching television, and commuting to school and to work.

Table 1

Differences in the amount of time spent pursuing different activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>First-Years</th>
<th>Sophomores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Attending classes, discussion sections or labs</td>
<td>4.79 1.05</td>
<td>4.68 1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Paid employment (include paid internships)</td>
<td>2.08 1.54</td>
<td>2.83 1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Of your total hours spent working for pay, about how many hours did you work on campus?</td>
<td>1.65 1.23</td>
<td>2.17 1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Of your total hours spent working for pay, about how many hours were related to your academic interests?</td>
<td>1.36 .98</td>
<td>1.71 1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Attending movies, concerts, sports, or other entertainment events</td>
<td>2.11 .72</td>
<td>2.00 .76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Performing community service or volunteer activities</td>
<td>1.58 .74</td>
<td>1.72 .83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Participating in physical exercise, recreational sports, or physically active hobbies</td>
<td>2.44 1.00</td>
<td>2.37 1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Participating in student clubs or organizations</td>
<td>1.79 .92</td>
<td>1.92 1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Socializing with friends</td>
<td>3.51 1.49</td>
<td>3.24 1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Watching TV</td>
<td>1.97 1.01</td>
<td>2.16 1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Commuting to school and to work</td>
<td>1.81 1.02</td>
<td>2.01 .89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The items began with, “How many hours do you spend in a typical week (7 days) on the following activities?” and were coded 1 = 0, 2 = 1-5, 3 = 6-10, 4 = 11-15, 5 = 16-20, 6 = 21-25, 7 = 26-30, 8 = more than 30.

Campus Climate

The data suggest that first-year students report a higher perception of campus climate compared to sophomores on all of the items in Table 3.

Table 3

Differences in the perception of campus climate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>First-Years</th>
<th>Sophomores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- I feel free to express my political beliefs on campus</td>
<td>4.69 1.05</td>
<td>4.59 1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I feel free to express my religious beliefs on campus</td>
<td>4.76 1.00</td>
<td>4.61 1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students are respected here regardless of their economic or social class</td>
<td>4.74 .97</td>
<td>4.64 .98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students are respected here regardless of their race/ethnicity</td>
<td>4.76 1.00</td>
<td>4.63 1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students are respected here regardless of their religious beliefs</td>
<td>4.74 1.00</td>
<td>4.62 .99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students are respected here regardless of their political beliefs</td>
<td>4.71 1.06</td>
<td>4.55 1.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The items began with, “Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements” and were coded 1 = strongly disagree to 8 = strongly agree.
Sophomore Year Experience

Academic Disengagement
The data suggest that sophomores report higher frequency in going to class without completing assigned reading and going to class unprepared (Table 4).

Table 4
Differences in academic disengagement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First-Years</th>
<th>Sophomores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gone to class without completing assigned reading</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gone to class unprepared</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The items began with, “How frequently during this academic year have you done each of the following?” and were coded 1 = never to 6 = very often.

Satisfaction
The data suggest that sophomores are less satisfied with advising by peers or school/college staff, the availability of courses needed for general education requirements and graduation, with the availability of educational enrichment programs, with their grade point average, and with the value of their education for the price they are paying (Table 5).

Table 5
Differences in the perception of campus climate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First-Years</th>
<th>Sophomores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising by student peer advisers on academic matters</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising by school or college staff on academic matters</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of courses for general education or breadth requirements</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of courses needed for graduation</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational enrichment programs (e.g., study abroad, internships)</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota grade point average</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of your education for the price you’re paying</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The items began with, “How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your educational experience in the major?” and were coded 1 = very dissatisfied to 6 = very satisfied.