

University Exploration

Annual Report

FISCAL YEAR 2014

Enrollment Services & Undergraduate Education

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Year in Review

University Exploration is Ohio State's advising unit for undecided undergraduate students housed in Undergraduate Education. University Exploration has been in existence since Ohio State dissolved its University College. Exploration was retained to meet the needs of undecided students and initially was part of advising services in the College of Arts and Sciences. In 2008, University Exploration moved to Undergraduate Education to reflect the unit's work with students to select majors across colleges and disciplines. We continue to expand services for students and try to maximize our impact on the academic experience.

Highlights from Fiscal Year 2014 (July 2013-June 2014)

- Piloted 'Support from the Start' in Exploration survey class, an **early intervention** and resource referral program for new freshmen.
- 712 out of 7,083 New Domestic Freshmen began in University Exploration. This constitutes **10% of the class**. Each of these students was assisted by an advisor during new student orientation and throughout the year through individual appointments and enrollment in the university survey course, EXP 1100.
- University Exploration's **retention and graduation rates** remain consistent and are near equal to university rates.
- L. Whitaker won the **ACADAOS 'Advisor of the Year'** award.
- In partnership with University Admissions, First Year Experience and Student Life, we participated in nearly **30 recruitment events** (on and off campus) and hosted **12 student programs**.
- The Outreach Committee updated NFYS **Orientation** for Summer 2014 to include 30 minute advising appointments for each student and an optional Day Two parent session.
- The Curricular Committee developed curriculum for EXP 1100 that addresses our **student learning outcomes**. This year's results will serve as our baseline.
- N. Vangas and M. Coates completed the **Course Design Institute** through UCAT to create a new course for re-deciding students.
- An updated version of Exploration **website** was released which includes better navigation and additional resources.
- Exploration expanded its partnership with the **Office for Military and Veterans Services** to offer on-site academic advising four days a week. We were also assigned a Student-Veteran Community Advocate for the 2015 fiscal year.
- The Ohio State version of a **'What Can I Do With This Major'** series was completed and made public on our website.

*University
Exploration
advisors continue
to see more
students in
individual
appointments
each year.*

*University
Exploration
Assistant Director
L. Whitaker won
an ACADAOS
'Advisor of the
Year' award.*

- **Surveyed** students on their experiences in Advising Appointments, and for those who have recently moved to a major, on their overall experiences in Exploration.
- Despite office closures, and a temporary decrease in staff members from 2013 to 2014, we **increased the number of appointments** conducted by 1%.
- The number of **transfer students** entering through EXP continues to increase. In Autumn 2013 we had 463 new transfer students which was a 7% increase compared to Autumn 2012.
- P. Spreitzer had poster presentation accepted for the Student Affairs Assessment & Research Conference in June 2014.
- Margo Coates and L. Whitaker had a **presentation** accepted for the 2014 NACADA National Conference. S. Elliott, A. Treboni and L. Whitaker presented on a similar topic at Ohio State's annual FYE Conference.
- Obtained funding for an **additional Academic Counselor line** for May 2014- November 2015. Converted office space and re-keyed office, in part to accommodate additional advising line.

Our office has been able to make great progress in assessment related initiatives. We continue to assess retention, graduation and persistence in major but are now also working on assessment related to our student learning outcomes and early intervention initiatives. Despite the loss of two experienced staff members halfway through the year, we were able to see an increased number of appointments, participate more significantly in recruitment and yield events, and provide resources for the campus community, such as the 'What Can I Do With This Major Series'.



Amy V. Treboni
Director

Staff & Students

Staff: 1 Director
 1.75 Support Staff
 2 Assistant Directors
 8 Academic Counselors

“You gave me many suggestions which I had no prior knowledge of.

I am emailing you today to thank you for your time and your help. I decided to apply to Public Health Sociology and was recently accepted in the major. I could not have done this without your help!”

“My advisor helped me find an undergraduate major that has helped open up the door for so many post-graduate programs and careers and has helped me connect to my interests.”

Students:

	Autumn 2012	Autumn 2013
NFYS	894	712 (-20%)
New Transfer	433	463 (+7%)
Campus Changers	361	225 (-37%)
Total 15 th Day Enrollment	2,710	2,608 (-3.8%)
Total Appointments for term	3,741	4,155 (+11%)

Our advising loads vary as students move in and out of the unit, but our desired average load is less than 300 students per advisor (or 150 for Assistant Directors). On average an advisor currently has closer to 350 students on their roster. We have obtained a temporary additional line to try and lower ratios but our expected 43% increase in NFYS alone for Autumn 14, which will increase our overall enrollment numbers. Undecided students often require more advising assistance as they traverse the process of selecting a major than a student who has declared an academic program might need. Smaller advising loads would meet their need for strong and consistent advising support. As the number of advisors increases, we are also finding that support staff members are stretched more thinly as well, and having two staff members at the desk at all times would be ideal as it would decrease wait times for students and provide better customer service to them in other ways as well.

Two staff members left EXP when they accepted promotional opportunities in other units at Ohio State. An additional staff member will be leaving in August to pursue a PhD program. New staff members have been hired to fill these vacancies and we have also hired for the 18 month term advising position. Our Academic Counselor & Staff Assistant positions were reclassified to Assistant Director roles which better fit the administrative duties of these individuals.

Staff members continue to be actively involved in professional development through campus, regional and national organizations including: University Staff Advisory Committee (USAC), ACADAOS, NACADA, and OCPA. Two staff members had a presentation selected for the NACADA national conference in 2014. Each staff member attended at least two professional development events over the course of the year and most staff members participated in additional development that furthered their work with special student populations and university partners. This year we joined the Association for Deans and Directors of University Colleges and Undergraduate Studies and attended their annual conference.

As mentioned previously, one staff member was nominated for, and won, an ACADAOS Advising Award. All staff members who were here in December 2013 completed a colleague review process where peer feedback was solicited and reviewed with each staff member.

Committee Work

All staff members work on individual projects and academic counselors lead or serve on one of two internal committees. Both committees collect data and perform assessment related to their tasks and projects. We are working to reconfigure the duties for each committee for next year.

Curricular Committee:

The Curricular Committee is responsible for updating the Exploration survey class and providing instructor and student materials to advisors (in Columbus and also available to regional campuses). In addition to survey class, the Curricular Committee completes academic reviews and organizes the program standing review process as well. Members of the committee assist with projects such as: campus change processing, generation of letter templates, Academic Success Planning Workshop, Senior Bank, etc.

This year the committee worked on pre-test and post-test assessments of student learning outcomes, revising the grades review process and to develop a new course for re-deciding students. The chair of the committee is Stephanie Elliott, Assistant Director--Curricular Coordinator.

Outreach Committee:

The Outreach Committee is responsible for providing programming for prospective, current, re-deciding and transfer students. We coordinate University Exploration's Student Ambassador program and facilitate recruitment and orientation for our unit. The committee's goal is to provide a consistent level of student outreach designed to help students continue to explore majors that is relevant to student needs and university processes that take place each term. The chair of the committee is Danielle Whitaker, Assistant Director--Outreach Coordinator.

Strategic Plan

Vision

University Exploration will be the premiere advising program for undecided students in the nation, focusing on students first and efforts to assess, enhance, and invigorate advising services for new generations of students.

Mission

University Exploration advances Ohio State's educational mission by providing holistic, intentional, personalized and collaborative advising to a diverse student population. We promote all majors, minors, and curricular options to help students connect their skills, interests and values to curricular and co-curricular opportunities and to transition to majors. The process of advising helps students maximize their opportunities, supports academic decision making, and leads to timely completion of the desired degree(s).

Values & Beliefs

We value:

- Individual students; their skills, interests and needs
- The decision students make to engage in intentional academic self-discovery
- Exposure to majors through a variety of means and experiences
- Relationships built between students and advisors that aid in academic planning
- Collaboration that helps students explore the multitude of available degree options and allows students to meet with representatives from every college/school
- Diversity in our community
- Active contribution to the university community and our ability to support students and other divisions across all Ohio State campuses
- Effective use of technology to enhance services and provide greater access to information and advising service

We believe:

- Students are entitled to work with advisors who are invested in understanding them as individuals and helping them explore and choose rewarding majors that fit their skills and interests
- Students deserve accurate, respectful and timely assistance available in a variety of formats
- Holistic advising enhances the university and reduces complications for students
- Academic advising is critical in assisting students in the establishment of their academic and career goals and in selecting appropriate courses for major and career exploration
- Academic advising challenges students to reach their academic potential

- Academic advising assists students in navigating the organizational complexities of university systems, maximizing university resources, and resolving problems they encounter
- Academic advising encourages degree completion and minimizes hurdles to timely degree progress
- Academic advisors serve as role models and mentors

Strategic Focus Areas

The work that we do focuses largely on **Student Outcomes** as they relate to university goals. We have created a list of Student Learning Outcomes and an assessment plan for each outcome as one method of monitoring our progress.

Teaching and Learning: Through mentoring and outreach, provide intrusive advising that contributes to student success.

Tactics	Progress
Collaborate with the Center for the Study of Student Life, OESAR, and Walter E Dennis Learning Center to help increase awareness and usage of university resources to enhance student success (Support from the Start program)	AU13: Ran Support from the Start pilot. Email is the preferred method of contact for students and we identified differences in usage of resourced for First Generation students and also based on gender. Secured authorization to do single sign-on through CARMEN using Qualtrics for pilot group. Working with CSSL to refine outreach efforts.

Research and Innovation: Develop baselines for student success metrics (such as retention, attainment of degree, movement into major, etc.) and seek to improve these markers through innovative programs and strategies, such as our early intervention project. Better articulate the benefits of starting college as an undecided student.

Tactics	Progress
Review and compare current retention rates from 1 st – 2 nd year for NFYS students.	SP14: Need more recent report on 2012-2013 cohorts. EXP rate of retention for AU11 for first year went up while university averages went down, but has not yet hit 92.8%.
Review and compare 4, 5 and 6 year graduation rates for NFYS students.	Baseline for mobility: less than 2% of students who start in EXP move back to EXP after declaring a major or pre-major. AU13: assess viability of this data project and if possible to set baseline. We determined that with current resources, this sub-project is not feasible at this time.
Collect and report data on student persistence in declared majors and assess if improvement is needed. In general, students should move into a	

major and graduate from that major.	
Develop and assess Student Learning Outcomes (SLO).	AU13: Student Learning Outcomes were assessed in a pre-/post-test format. Changes are being made for the AU14 versions of survey.

Outreach and Engagement: Participate in university recruitment, advising and initiatives. Explore opportunities to present at regional and national conferences and benchmark best practices. Collaborate with regional campuses, Preferred Pathways and new programs like STEP and O^NPace.

Tactics	Progress
Offer advising services and resources to students in the CSCC Preferred Pathways Program (P3).	This year we offered OSU major videos updated with new information and distributed to regional campus advisors and P3 coordinator. We also conducted on-site advising visits to CSCC at least twice per term. This program is changing directions and
Support regional campus offerings of EXP 1100.01 and 1100.02 by providing materials and assistance to regional campus advisors.	AU13: provided updated EXP 1100 materials and CARMEN access to all regional campuses: videos, workbooks, instructor guides, power points, etc.
Offer advising services through Veteran's Resource Center.	Continuous: 2 advisors each spent an average of 6 hours per week advising out of the Veterans Center, usage is such that we are moving forward with a proposal for a shared line: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 55% advising and transfer credit coordinator (out of EXP) and 45% benefits certifier. Advisors who worked in the Veteran Center for Autumn were sent to the NACADA National Conference.
Partner with Admissions to offer overviews and guidance to prospective transfer students.	AU13: Piloting new transfer presentations and updated materials.

Resource Stewardship: Increase collaborations to provide better transitions for students moving from University Exploration to a major while managing increased enrollment numbers. Maximize use of technology for better efficiency and to meet our population's needs (see next page).

Tactics	Progress
Conduct annual update meetings with each college/school.	SP14: Met with every college during the academic year. We also polled colleges about DARs went to several colleges

	(EHE, ENG, BUS) to present about EXP and talk about future collaborations.
Partner with each unit to provide lecture and materials for EXP 1100.01, 1100.01H and 1100.02.	SU14: Arranged for college representatives to present at each survey. Updated online video lectures and increased number of recitations associated with online lecture (about half of all seats).
Collaborate with each unit to offer at least one additional major exploration activity to students per year.	AU13: Future goal for SP14 and beyond.
Increase interactive content on Exploration site (and/or link to such content hosted by the university, for example OnPace).	Moved to new platform for website and made more materials accessible. Website includes PDFs, clickable images and videos.
Use iPads to increase advising efficiency and support student development and independence. We are using iPads to help a student schedule themselves, vs. having an advisor complete this process for them.	Continue to utilize for orientations, meetings, trainings, etc.
Provide on-line materials for students. This gives students anytime, convenient access to workshops, which are also offered in person.	We offer online versions of our lecture (videos on majors), online Academic Success Planning Workshop for students on Probation, online resources for Campus Change students and a new CARMEN shell for re-deciding students.

Assessment

Future Approaches to Assessment

We will continue to use historic measures, such as retention, graduation rates and persistence in major to assess our programs. We have built new layers to our assessment plan as well. This was the first year we had Student Learning Outcomes established:

1. will transition from undecided to a best fit major
2. set attainable goals and can identify steps to achieving goals
3. appropriately self-advocate
4. understand role of advisor
5. evaluate academic strengths, skills, values and interests and match to available majors
6. understand the different types of relationships majors can have with careers
7. value a liberal arts education and understand how it fits into their degree planning
8. select and schedule for appropriate coursework that meets requirements, fits interests, continues degree progress and keeps options open
9. follow policies and procedures
10. can identify connections they have with the university (curricular, co-curricular, peers, staff, resources)

In FY2014, the Curricular Committee for Exploration completed a pre-test/post-test assessment of our survey class to set a baseline for how well that class helps students meet our Student Learning Outcomes. Overall, we saw that survey class had a significant impact on students, particularly in moving them from very undecided to decided or less undecided (1), increasing their awareness of academic options and campus resources (5 & 6), and knowledge of coursework required for degree programs (8).

We have also offered students the opportunity to complete an advising appointment survey. The survey link is mailed to the student once a note for the appointment has been entered into AdvisingConnect. A relatively small number of students have chosen to complete these surveys, but the overall feedback has been positive. The surveys are anonymous in most cases (name optional) and the results are given to the advisor. As a result of the small response rate (52), this survey feedback is not being included in the FY14 annual review process.

Our early intervention program, 'Support from the Start', was initiated to positively impact areas we have historically assessed (retention, graduation, persistence, etc.) and also new areas from our Student Learning Outcomes (such as connections to institution and engagement with university community). This first pilot was successful and also given us ideas for future improvements. Overall, this year was most utilized by female students and we are working to identify ways to increase usage and gather additional data. We plan to work with the Institutional Review Board as the project and data become more complex.

Midway through Spring Semester we sent out an exit survey to students who had moved out of Exploration into a major or pre-major. Approximately 25/407 students completed this survey which was disappointing. We are hoping to gather information on how satisfied students are with the process of exploring and the support they receive from EXP staff to inform future goals and changes to our program. We hope to increase participation in the future by sending out the survey earlier in the term, and perhaps adding an incentive for participation.

This Year's Initiatives

For Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 we delivered on the following initiatives (also see strategic focus areas):

- Programming to the First Year Success Series (FYSS) and Second-Year Transformational Experience Program (STEP)
- Offered a 'Making the Most of Your Time in College' programming series
- Rolled out 'What Can I Do With This Major' series (on our website and in collaboration with O^NPace)
- Updated recruitment materials and developed print and web materials for prospective students, families and high school counselors
- Co-presented the prospective Transfer Student Overviews with University Admissions
- Implemented and assessed 'Support from the Start' early intervention/resource referral program
- Created online resources for re-deciding students (in 2nd or 3rd year at Ohio State), which are also appropriate for STEP participants
- Collaborated with Parent and Family Relations and First Year Experience to begin envisioning online resources for parents and families
- Introduced Diversity Services webpage and moved entire website to new platform
- Assessed Student Learning Outcomes (in survey class) to set baselines
- Developed and implemented exit survey for EXP students moving into a pre-major or major
- Evaluated new versions of NFYS, transfer and referral orientation programs and modified as needed for Summer 2014, primarily discontinuing with the scheduling computer lab for NFYS and offering a parent session
- Implemented advising appointment survey. Overall participation rate was low, try to increase rate to 10% of those surveyed
- Reviewed staffing and job classifications: reclassified S. Elliott and L. Whitaker and updated job descriptions for several staff members

Next Year's Initiatives

Our FY2015 goals are very much an extension of the accomplishments from this year, and include:

- Revise 'Support from the Start' using data collected from the pilot and work with the Office of Responsible Research Practices and IRB to gain approval for data collection and usage
- Provide 30 minute advising appointments during NFYS orientations and offer parent session
 - Assess if these changes increase satisfaction/evaluations of program
 - Possible future modifications based on continued review of feedback
- Train four new Academic Counselors to advise at orientation, in individual appointments and to teach survey class
- Continue to assess Student Learning Outcomes as a part of survey class, and also as an optional piece for the advising appointment survey
- Increase participation in advising appointment and exit surveys (desired goal is 7-10%). Current participation is at 5.6%.
- Work with colleges and schools to provide additional programs for undecided students during Spring Semester
- Collaborate with Undergraduate Admissions to set specific recruitment and enrollment goals for University Exploration
- Continue collaborations with Parent & Family Relations and First Year Experience to create online materials for parents and families
- Offer programs as part of the First Year Success Series and STEP programs
- Manage appointment availability and services with increased student population (NFYS predicted 43% higher than last year)
- Gain course approval for 2nd session course for re-deciding students
- Present at national and regional/local conferences