Operation Sophomore Experience:
Helping First-Year Students
Get to Their Second Year

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### UHM Drop-Out Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2011 Cohort</th>
<th>Percent Loss</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st} → 2\textsuperscript{nd} year</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2\textsuperscript{nd} → 3\textsuperscript{rd} year</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3\textsuperscript{rd} → 4\textsuperscript{th} year</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1\textsuperscript{st} → 2\textsuperscript{nd} Year</th>
<th>Percent Loss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Manoa Institutional Research Office, University of Hawai‘i System (2013).
Second efforts have difficulty meeting or surpassing standards of the first

Thrill of college subsides and reality sets in

Period of developmental confusion

Uncertainty in major, career, or personal identity

The “forgotten year” or “middle child syndrome”

May start as early as second semester of the first year

Three general areas that cause sophomores the most stress:

• Academics
• Personal
• Relationships
Manoa Sophomore Experience: History

• Formed in Spring 2010

• Initiated by the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education

• 5 members; all from academic affairs

• Two Sophomore Conferences (2011 & 2012)
• Targeted 2nd semester freshmen and sophomores but students of any class standing were welcome

• Prepared students for academic, career, and personal success

• Concurrent sessions
  - 16 workshops
  - Topics included study skills, major and career decisions, financial literacy, stress management, involvement opportunities, and more

• Resource Fair

• Majors Fair

• Attendees:
  2011 = 116 evaluations
  2012 = 42 evaluations
Challenges

• Poor student attendance at events

• Identifying the issues and needs of the target population

• Identifying programming that would be utilized

• Unclear mission and goals

• Poor committee member representation
New Strategies & Outcomes

• Designated new leadership
• Created timeline to provide guidance and organization
• Grew and diversified committee composition
• Increased campus resources
• Revised and customized committee goals
• Updated and organized website
• Assessed sophomore population and their needs
Assessment Methods

Online Survey

Focus Groups

Written Assignment
Online Survey

• Worked with assessment office to create questions and format
  o Interest and likelihood of attending activities
  o Level of campus resource use
  o What do you enjoy most about attending UHM?
• Survey Monkey
  o Unique link created for each student
• Emailed 2,400 students at random
• 601 respondents
• Open for 4 weeks
• $5 incentive to be used toward campus dining services
• Only 90 incentives picked up
Online Survey

Rate the importance of the following items to success in your second year at UHM.

- Peer mentoring/guidance
- Recognition of 1st year success
- Self-reflection on development
- Feels part of campus community
- Frequent interaction with instructors

How likely are you to participate in activities that assist with the following items?

- Diversity/cultural awareness or celebration
- Sense of belonging to the campus community
- Leadership opportunities
- Faculty mentoring
- Sense of belonging to the local community
Focus Groups

- 4 faculty
- 7 advisors
- 1 staff

Questions

What issues have you faced with your sophomores?
Do you notice any differences in sophomore compared to other students?
What issues have you faced with your sophomores?
What questions do sophomores ask when communicating with you?
What strategies have you found helpful when working with sophomores?
Does your department offer special programming for its sophomores?
What programming do you think the SEC could offer?
How can UHM to help sophomores be successful in their second year?

The main theme was that interaction between faculty and students need to be increased!
Written Assignment

204 responses
Mandatory advising fulfillment
Students reviewed PowerPoint about Sophomore Slump

Questions
What specific parts of SS are affecting you?
What are some ways you could avoid SS?
What advice would you give someone experiencing SS?
Explain how completing this assignment may affect your academic career.
What are two academic goals you have for the sophomore year?

83% of respondents said they are or were experiencing the Sophomore Slump!
Themes

Peer mentoring/guidance
Interaction with faculty
Major/career confusion
Lack of finances
Lack of connections
Recognition in 1st year
Future Programming

• Peer Mentor
  • Sophomore Slump mentorship
  • Referrals to academic, career development, financial, personal, and extracurricular resources
• Social media integration
• Advertising the MSE
• Point of contact for MSE

• Finals Week Mixer
  • Finals “survival kits”
  • Cooperation with Sinclair Library and “Cram Jam”

• Faculty-Student Coffee Hour
  • Assists students in establishing connections with faculty
Future Programming

• Alumni-Student Coffee Hour
  • Assists students in establishing connections with alumni and local professionals
• First-Year Recognition Event
  • Recognize students for completing their first year
  • Summer scholarships and events
• “Week of Welcome” Sophomore Events
  • Welcome second year students back to campus
  • Major/career exploration and social events
Recommendations

• Be aware of the sophomore slump
• Proactively engage in discussing sophomores' college experiences
• Address potential transfer issues early on
• Provide programming specifically targeted toward sophomores
• Host social events to help establish and deepen departmental connections
1. What challenges and successes do your sophomores experience?

2. Do you have any sophomore specific programming in your department?

3. What programming ideas do you have for your department?
   For SEC?
Contact Us!

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