Doing MORE for SophoMOREs

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National Small College Enrollment Conference
July 23, 2019
Why Sophomores?
Defining a Sophomore

Students who have progressed into their second year of college regardless of credits.
Areas of Impact

Social  Personal  Academic
The Sophomore Year: Social

- College as their home now
- Question friendships & experiences from their first year
- Trying to find their niche on campus – leadership positions, athletics, etc.
- Intimate relationships are a significant concern

Bellani, 2007; Margolis, 1976; Pattengale & Schreiner, 2000
The Sophomore Year: Personal

• Lose faith in the college experience
• Students are trying to make meaning of their life experiences and future.
• Still have strong connection to parents
• Concerned with making a difference & also making money in the future.
• Confusion/loss of personal identity

Bellani, 2007; Margolis, 1976; Pattengale & Schreiner, 2000
The Sophomore Year: Academic

- Perception, reality, and goals sometimes in conflict
- New pressures & demands - decisions
- Introspective about their studies without the tools and knowledge to make the most of the course work.
- Parents still highly involved in decisions
- Lack confidence in finding experiences that will help in defining career goals

Bellani, 2007; Margolis, 1976; Pattengale & Schreiner, 2000
Thrusting in College

- Thriving
- Diverse Citizenship
- Social Connectedness
- Engaged Learning
- Positive Perspective
- Academic Determination

**Institutional Integrity**

**FACULTY: Interaction, pedagogy, perspectives**

Schreiner, 2010 & 2018
Helping Sophomores to Thrive

- Campus Involvement
- Major Certainty
- Student-Faculty Interaction
- Spirituality
- Sense of Community
- Institutional Integrity

Schreiner, 2010 & 2018
“Sophomore Slump” has a negative connotation

BUT we should celebrate this confusion & look to capitalize on this period of transition, growth, and change!
Private, United Methodist
Owensboro, Kentucky
757 Full-time Students in Fall 2018
13:1 student-faculty ratio
69% students are KY residents
53% are residential students
~18% are persons of color
~40% are first-generation
~48% students are NCAA DII Athletes

Fall 2018 Freshmen:
• Mean ACT: 23
• Mean SAT: 1090
• Mean HS GPA: 3.45
• 47% Pell eligible

Fall 2018 Freshmen retention rate: 69%
6 year graduation rate: 42%
Top 3 Majors: Business Administration, Health Sciences, Psychology
Why The Sophomore Experience at KWC?

James Graham Brown Foundation

Fall 2013: Sophomore to Junior retention was 46%

Awarded $450,000 over three years

Goal: 68% sophomore to junior retention by Fall 2017

Fall 2015: 81%
Fall 2016: 78%
Fall 2017: 77%
Fall 2018: 78%
Program Purpose

Academic Affairs and Student Life initiative to help second-year students be successful at KWC. Goal is to increase retention of second-year students by providing students with opportunities to connect to the college, their peers, and faculty while helping them to be better prepared and confident in their future.
January 2014 – notified that KWC awarded the $450,000 grant. Money deposited.

May 2014 – Director of Sophomore Experience hired

May/June 2014 – Lots of frantic research and program development, survey sent to rising sophomores

Mid June 2014 – postcards sent to rising sophomores inviting them to Sophomore Summit

Early July 2014 – letters sent to parents and families of rising sophomores explaining the program and encouraging them to encourage their students’ participation

Late July 2014 – Director and student worker harassed non registered students via phone calls, text messages, and twitter to register

August 20, 2014 – Director meets with Faculty to explain sophomore experience, needs, etc.

August 23, 2014 – Sophomore Experience begins with Sophomore Summit
Survey Results

- 100% wanted to identify potential work or internship experiences related to their major.
- 76.19% wanted to learn how to balance their time and demands.
- 62% were not satisfied with the opportunities they had their first year to connect with a KWC alum in their field.
- 43% wanted more experiences directly related to their intended career field.
- 48.28% planned to earn a Master’s degree after KWC.
- 24.14% planned to earn a terminal degree after KWC.
• Learn MORE
• Lead MORE
• Be MORE
• SophoMORE
Learn More

- Study Abroad Panel
- Resume Workshop
- Interview Skills Workshop
- Graduate School Information Panel
- What Not to Wear Fashion Show
- Graduate, Career, and Internship Fair
- Alumni Career Panels
Lead More

- Sophomores Serve
- Sophomore Nights at Athletics
- Featured Faculty Fridays
- Mystery Bus Tours
- Lead More Retreat
Be More

- Time Management
- Stress Management
- Financial Responsibility
- Physical Fitness
- Nutrition
Winter Service Trip
Sophomore Summit

- During same weekend as new student orientation
- Meeting with parents and families
- Holiday World amusement park
- House of Shine workshop on purpose
- Workshops from Alumni Affairs, Study Abroad, Career Development
- Sophomore Convocation & Pinning Ceremony
Sophomore Passport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Student ID:</th>
<th>Email:</th>
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Wesley N. Panther Cell:

Make sure to have your passport stamped at every SYE event you attend. Your completed passport must be turned in to be eligible for a "Find Yourself" Grant.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sophomore Summit (1)</th>
<th>&quot;Lead More&quot; Retreat (1)</th>
<th>Career Luncheons (2)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>&quot;What Not to Wear&quot; Fashion Show (1)</td>
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<td>Mystery Bus Tour (1)</td>
<td>Featured Faculty Friday (1)</td>
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<td>&quot;Be More&quot; Workshops (2)</td>
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<td>Sophomores Serve (2)</td>
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<td>Sophomore Nights at Athletic Events (2)</td>
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• 87% planned to complete degree at KWC
• 94% planned to keep their current major
• 93% felt confident in career goals
• 91% had made close friends at KWC
• 86% felt proud to be a KWC student
• 87% felt confident that KWC was their right choice for a college
What we’ve learned

• Without $450K, results are still possible.
  • Now incorporate events already planned.

• Need more faculty and coaches bought in

• More assessment!

• Still trying to engage more students of color & male student-athletes

• Students want:
  • To attend less athletic events
  • A community for sophomore commuters
  • Study groups and study sessions
  • More stress relief events
  • More variety in times events are offered
THE MURKY MIDDLE

Profiling campus segments based on early academic performance to determine which students succeed, which fail, and where schools should focus their efforts

Most student success initiatives target freshman students, but 52% of attrition occurs after the first year. Of these late stage departures, over half are within the "Murky Middle."

Where are you focusing your student success efforts?

Murky Middle 33%

Graduates, 13% (Depart)

Large numbers of students finish their first year with a GPA between 2.0 and 3.0. Even though they aren't on probation, nearly two-thirds of these students won't graduate. Yes, these students are traditionally overlooked at most schools—in part because it is difficult to distinguish those who ultimately graduate from those who eventually depart.

The fate of the murky middle student is just that—murky. This population demands attention, but with limited resources it isn't possible to target the entire group.

Emerging research from the Student Success Collaborative suggests that rigorous analysis of academic data can separate the hidden population of struggling students from the likely graduates, enabling targeted intervention efforts and ultimately improved outcomes.

Students by First-Year GPA

Students

First-Year GPA 2.0

First-Year GPA 3.0

Graduates (Within 6 Years)

Departures (2nd–6th Year)

Departures (1st Year)

Murky Middle 33%

GPA: 2.0 to 3.0

Students (approx. 740,000 students)

20% Graduates, 13% Depart

Donate

Students

2% Phoenixes

Despite facing early challenges, these students are able to course correct and ultimately graduate. Unfortunately, fewer than one in ten students who finish their first year with a 2.0 GPA will eventually right the ship, despite considerable investments from their institutions.

11% Failed to Launch

These students fail to hit the ground running and struggle in the initial phases of college. More than three-fifths of the students who finish their first year with a GPA below 2.0 don't make it back as sophomores despite repeated investments and efforts on their behalf. Schools may want to consider reallocating energy toward a group of students more likely to complete, like the Phoenixes.

5% The Ones That Got Away

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the vast majority of these students are transferring to and graduating from other institutions after the first year. Most institutions would love to retain these high-performing students and don't want to see them enroll with a competitor. Though many third-party service groups have tried to fix the problem, the question remains whether more concentrated support could help retain a portion of these strong students.

7% Unsolved Mysteries

Sometimes even the best students won't complete. It can be hard to isolate the causes of attrition for this group of delayed departures. Perhaps they decide to transfer, encounter personal hardships, or are unable to persist due to finances. Whatever the reason, it isn't showing up in their academics, leaving many institutions wondering how they can be reached and whether their group's attrition is ultimately outside of their control.

27% All-Stars

Three-fifths of students who make it to their second year with an above a 3.0 GPA go on to graduate. While academically we know these students aren't at risk, they tend to consume considerable subsidies resources through voluntary self-improvement efforts.

This has prompted a national dialogue about understanding student self-direction.

See more from the Murky Middle Project

eab.com/murkymiddle

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Institute on Sophomore Student Success by the National Resource Center for The First Year Experience and Students in Transition: In April in Columbia, SC

If you want to learn more:

Sophomore Experience Listserv
SOPH-LIST@LISTSERV.SC.EDU


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