

**OFFICE OF THE PROVOST
AND VICE CHANCELLOR FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

**STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVE
FIRST YEAR ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE TASK FORCE**

FINAL REPORT

June 2021



OFFICE OF THE PROVOST
SSI: FIRST YEAR ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE TASK FORCE
FINAL REPORT

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Final Report

Student Success Initiative: First Year Academic Experience Task Force

I. COMMITTEE CHARGE

“One of the major concerns associated with the COVID-19 pandemic is the effect on student learning. . . This Task Force is asked to specifically consider academic preparation and recommend interventions we can undertake to help students ‘catch up’ and have a successful academic career at Illinois. In particular, the Task Force is asked to:

- Consider the range of preparation and types of academic concerns this cohort will present, particularly in first year, foundational courses.
- Propose interventions that we can undertake to help compensate for ‘lost learning’ due to the pandemic. These interventions might be through additional materials, short-courses, co-instruction or other ideas.
- Consider how we can address inequities in learning loss and ways that underrepresented groups can be aided through this effort.
- Collaborate closely with instructors assigned to teach these foundational courses. Their involvement and participation is key to successfully implementing these interventions.
- Consider the resources necessary to carry out the proposed interventions. For example, graduate degree completion has slowed due to the pandemic, can we take advantage of additional graduate personnel to carry out supplemental support?”

II. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Gretchen Adams, College of Applied Health Sciences, *chair*
Mardia Bishop, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Andy Borst, Office of Undergraduate Admissions
April Carter, College of Applied Health Sciences
Neal Davis, Grainger College of Engineering
Stephen R. Downie, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Susan Faivre, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Gioconda Guerra Perez, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Elise McCarren, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Kristi McDuffie, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Melissa Michael, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Alison Reddy, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Elaine Schulte, Grainger College of Engineering
Diana Steele, Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning
Alexis Thompson, Graduate College
Lisa Travis, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Kelly Ritter, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, *ex officio*

Laura Hendley, Provost's Office, *ex officio*
Kristi Kuntz, Provost's Office, *ex officio*

III. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The First Year Academic Experience Task Force formally met a total of seven times since receiving the charge on February 9, 2021. Early meetings focused on understanding the Fall 2021 admitted class, given the academic challenges due to the pandemic and the new test-optional application policy. *Key academic issues regarding the next incoming class are highlighted below:*

- Virtual learning difficulties and Zoom fatigue; if many of their classes are online in the fall, this may also result in students feeling disconnected from professors and less likely to ask questions, go to office hours, or seek assistance
- Some students might not feel confident in their ability to perform well because of learning loss due to virtual learning
- Course misplacement because there are no required standardized ACT/SAT test scores to help advisors make the best recommendations, plus incoming students who are already fatigued of virtual learning may not be able to demonstrate their actual knowledge and abilities when taking online placement exams
- Gaps in content knowledge, reading/writing comprehension, and problem solving abilities even with AP/IB credit (especially in calculus); speaking proficiency for international students
- Unclear impact of virtual/hybrid/socially-distanced learning now and in the fall
- Greater stratification in access to, and equity in, high school learning opportunities
- How to implement large scale “catch ups” to help students enter and remain on track for degree programs
- Addressing time management in the context of asynchronous courses and/or adjusting to potentially more rigid schedules compared to the last 12 months
- Trauma that students (and teachers) continue to experience because of the pandemic; impact of stress, anxiety, and depression, resulting from economic pressures, health issues, and isolation

To begin addressing these issues, each first-year academic area on the task force began exploring interventions right away, assessing potential resources needed, and developing implementation plans. These areas include The Mannie L. Jackson Illinois Academic Enrichment and Leadership Program (I-LEAP), Communication (CMN), Rhetoric and Composition (RHET), Integrative Biology (IB), Chemistry (CHEM), Mathematics (MATH), Psychology (PSYC), Physics (PHYS), Computer Science (CS), English as a Second Language (ESL), and the Illinois Scholars Program. We expect many (if not all) of our implementations to be accomplished by each area, with the hope that this eases the transition for all new students affected by the pandemic in first-year, foundational courses. This Task Force anticipates that some of these interventions will become permanent after this academic year if deemed successful for students, perhaps expanding to more students and/or courses on campus. Our recommended interventions are listed below in this report, grouped by stakeholder interest: ***course-specific recommendations***

(instructor recommendations), unit/college-level recommendations, and campus-level recommendations.

IV. TASK FORCE ACTIVITIES AND PROCESS

February 19, 2021: Andy Borst presented an “Early Look at Incoming Class Fall 2021,” including the new test-optional application policy and methods to assess college readiness. This presentation included 2021 enrollment projections, 2021 new freshmen admit data, the 2021 academic profile, and 2021 New Student Registration. The group also discussed ways to improve course placement before fall classes start and the New Student Registration experience (such as increased academic advising times, centralized key questions to ask all students, and expanding the window to change schedules before classes begin).

March 4, 2021: Diana Steele presented on “Placement and Proficiency (PNP) Testing for 2021-2022.” This presentation described how placement testing currently works, placement testing changes for Summer 2021, and proficiency credit changes for 2021-22. The remainder of the meeting was spent discussing the new policy change that incoming freshmen cannot make a New Student Registration appointment without completing the ALEKS assessment first. The task force discussed at length the need for more effective communication to accepted students regarding this policy change and the need for all appropriate placement tests to be completed before their summer registration appointment, as students already receive a lot of email and are overwhelmed by their current high school coursework. Additional communication methods are needed to reach students, especially those that are underrepresented and first generation.

With this new understanding of the admitted class and placement changes, our Task Force then focused on answering three key questions to identify key academic issues and begin brainstorming interventions. For the full set of answers, see the Appendices.

Question 1: What do you think are the academic issues regarding the next incoming class in light of the pandemic?

Question 2: Assuming you had enough resources, what are some steps your area can implement right away to address these academic issues (to be implemented during summer 2021, fall 2021, and/or spring 2022)?

Question 3: What resources do you think will be needed for your area?

March 25, 2021: Based on the answers shared to these three questions, each area shared at least one intervention that they could undertake this summer, fall and/or spring semester (and/or beyond) to help compensate for “lost learning” and other academic challenges due to the pandemic, with the goal of learning from each other. This intervention could be new or emphasizing/expanding upon something already done that might work for this new incoming class or just more students that are struggling. At this meeting, we also discussed the need for a funding template, Diana Steele shared placement updates, and Andy Borst provided freshmen acceptance updates.

April 8, 2021: Andy Borst provided an update on communication strategies to new students, encouraging placement test completion and New Student Registration appointments. He shared the complete communication plan including initial/reminder emails (with dates), updated resource webpage, text message reminders, New Student Registration survey, and webinars. As a group, we also brainstormed and discussed questions we could ask all new students to understand their academic concerns before the semester starts. This student feedback would inform instructors, academic support services and academic advisors of new student concerns instead of just assuming that we know and are aware of their worries and expectations. We also explored connecting with Student Affairs (Beth Hoag, Interim Director Assessment and Planning) and coordinating with the Office of Admissions to implement the survey questions.

April 21, 2021: Andy Borst provided an update on acceptance numbers, including the uncertainty surrounding international student attendance in the fall. Gretchen Adams finalized the survey implementation for new students. The Office of Admissions will ask new students the following three questions on the New Student Registration Survey:

- 1) *When I think about the upcoming fall semester at Illinois, in one word I feel...*
- 2) *For the upcoming fall semester, I am most concerned about...*
- 3) *For the upcoming fall semester, I am most excited about...*

These same three questions were included on a survey to current Illinois students. New students will be incentivized to take the survey through Admissions, hopefully increasing the response rate. Beth Hoag and Gretchen Adams will then code the student answers throughout the summer based on an already developed rubric. Beth Hoag will complete the analysis and provide the results to this task force by the start of August. The results, along with recommendations on what instructors and academic units can do with this information, will be provided before the fall semester starts.

May 6, 2021: Gretchen Adams shared her experience from attending the ATI Academic Equity Community of Practice Webinar. The focus of the webinar was on how institutions are preparing to welcome entering and returning cohorts of students back to campus this fall. The webinar discussed efforts institutions can take to create equitable academic and social environments that support students' educational success and mental wellness in the coming academic year. One of the most compelling discussions from the webinar included the perspectives of two high school teachers working with high school seniors. They shared the tremendous sense of loss the seniors felt with all-remote learning and no in-person extracurricular activities that seniors often partake in. One teacher shared how attendance significantly dropped at her charter school with no structure in place, including those that indicated they wanted to learn in-person a few times a week. Additionally, Gretchen Adams shared that she attended the SSI Gateway Grades Team Meeting. She described the charge for that task force and how our work might overlap with their research, including what might be incorporated long term beyond summer/fall in relation to improved grade performance and retention. The meeting concluded with updates on funding request processes (Kristi Kuntz),

admission acceptances (Andy Borst), ALEKS completion (Alison Reddy), and a process for completing the final intervention plan template for each area.

May 20, 2021: In our final meeting, Kristi Kuntz shared the funding request process from the Provost's Office, emphasizing that the funding is earmarked for summer/fall interventions only. Funding beyond the fall semester will be considered separately, likely by colleges and units. Andy Borst provided an Admissions update, specifically that New Student Registration appointments are lagging, which followed the continued "delayed" pattern by new students in each step of the application process this past year. Campus is working with international students, as their ability to come to campus will vary by country. He urged patience as we wait to see how students enroll in New Student Registration and engage with campus. Finally, the task force discussed a process for completing the final report.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force recommends several interventions and strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on student learning for new students, specifically related to first year, foundational courses. Many of these interventions already exist in some areas of campus and can be adapted or expanded for greater student support in other courses and units providing student support services. Some interventions require additional funding and some do not. Certain recommendations are already underway for Fall 2021, such as implementing revised course placement methods, improving communications, surveying new students about their concerns, starting a peer mentoring program earlier, and expanding a summer bridge experience. Detailed interventions are outlined by each area in Appendix 4. ***We encourage stakeholders to connect with colleagues associated with these interventions to share best practices.*** Our recommendations are as follows (not listed in order of priority but by stakeholder interest):

Course-specific Recommendations (Recommendations for Instructors)

- Reduce class sizes to allow for more individualized attention and teaching, as learning loss will be unique to each student.
- Adapt curriculum to focus on potential areas that students might not be prepared for this year.
- Change or expand the format of lecture and/or discussion sections to be more interactive, skill-based, and involve active engagement with the instructor, fellow students, and highly trained teaching assistants.
- Hire and train teaching assistants earlier and more comprehensively, including if teaching assistants only taught online this past year.
- Reduce high-stakes exams and replace them with more frequent, lower-stakes assessments.
- Proactively reach out to students who fall behind in their work.
- Formalize study partners or stable study groups.
- Address perception of not needing help.
- Offer "second-chance" assessments after deeper preparation.

- Hold group conferences or individual conferences with students to address academic challenges.
- Create tutorials or workshops on course content and/or preparing for major assignments/exams.

Unit/college-level Recommendations

- Develop (or revise) and execute a placement/assessment test or questionnaire to enroll students in the correct course and/or provide early identification of students that need an alternative learning environment or assistance to be successful in a course.
- Implement a peer-mentoring program, ideally starting this summer instead of the fall semester (which is when they usually start). Obtain feedback from current students on what students need, especially from a mentor.
- Hire more undergraduate assistants/tutors for learning centers/help hours to provide content help and community building for students.
- Provide summer content “catch-ups” or programming on transitioning to college (also providing an early start on community building).
- Coordinate a peer coaching program involving more intensive support for students who are failing to keep up with work. Support would take the form of reminders, review sessions, study skills assistance and referrals to resources as needed.
- Organize an intensive basic and foundational skills clinic for any student in an introductory course in need of such development. Instructors may refer and students may self-refer to the clinic.

Campus-level Recommendations

- To encourage higher course placement test completion rates before New Student Registration appointment with academic advisor, improve communication with students including automated reminder emails, updated webpages, text messaging, webinars, and answering phone calls/emails in a timely manner.
- Implement incentivized survey questions to all new students after New Student Registration to monitor student academic concerns. Results will be analyzed and shared with instructors, colleges, and units on campus prior to fall semester.
- Provide centralized funding to support COVID-related academic interventions in the short-term (summer/fall semester).

VI. CONCLUSION

There are many concerns associated with the COVID-19 pandemic for our new and current students. This Task Force was asked to specifically consider academic preparation for new students in first year, foundational courses and recommend interventions we can undertake to help students “catch up” and have a successful academic career at Illinois. After carefully

considering some potential academic issues, interventions were developed by area. Some interventions are already underway, such as updated and new course placements, improved communications, survey data gathering, peer mentoring, and a summer bridge experience. The majority of interventions will begin in the fall semester. It is our hope that stakeholders will connect with colleagues associated with these interventions to share best practices and that all University faculty and staff can help ease the transition for all students affected by the pandemic and improve academic success beyond next year.

VII. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Task Force Answers to Question 1 (by Area)

Name	Area (e.g., CMN, MATH, I-LEAP, ADMISSIONS)	Q1. What do you think are the academic issues regarding the next incoming class in light of the pandemic?
Elise McCarren	Chemistry	<p>Chem 101 Level Students - Mathematical reasoning skills which are generally weaker than expected, difficulties navigating course format, general problems with organization and beginning college</p> <p>Chem 102 Level Students - May see a portion of students misplaced into 102 instead of 101 due to the lack of an ACT/SAT Math score, same difficulties navigating college courses in general</p> <p>Chem 202 Level Students - Students who may have taken AP chemistry but have weak backgrounds, gaps in content knowledge, or who are missing the mathematical skills to succeed in the course, misplacing of students to missing ACT/SAT Math</p>
April Carter	I-LEAP	<p>Zoom fatigue/virtual learning fatigue- Many students do not learn well virtually. Students who already do not learn well virtually may also be experiencing virtual learning fatigue which will further impact their ability to perform academically if many of their classes are online in the fall. This may also result in students feeling disconnected from professors and less likely to ask questions, go to office hours, or seek assistance. Some students might not feel confident in their ability to perform well because of learning loss due to virtual learning.</p> <p>Students might not feel confident in their ability to perform well Students may not be aware of resources available to assist them in being successful at Illinois.</p> <p>Students may struggle with being placed in the correct level of courses (CHEM, RHET, etc) because there are no standardized test scores to help advisors make the best recommendations.</p>
Neal Davis	Computer Science	<p>CS is largely a college-level field, but relies on solid mathematical foundations, in particular Calculus I.</p> <p>Our two non-major classes, CS 101 and 105, will rely on Cal I or Business Calculus, so we are paying close attention to expected student performance and considering implementing some remedial or adjunct catch-up workshops targeted at what we need students to be able to carry out in terms of symbolic manipulation and numerical facility.</p>
Kristi McDuffie	Rhetoric Program (first-year writing program in the English Dept)	<p>Lack of information to make decisions (i.e. test scores); Unclear impacts over virtual/hybrid/socially distanced learning now and in the fall; Unclear what students want and need for fall instruction; Learning loss is a part of these things, but not the most tangible part of the problems we are trying to solve right now.</p>

Alison Reddy	Math	<p>Learning loss. Greater stratification in access to, and equity in, learning opportunities. Lack of clarity on how to measure the quantity and quality of learning opportunities during the past year. How to implement large scale catch ups to help students enter and remain on track for degree programs. Addressing time management in the context of asynchronous courses. Getting to a point where students, advisors, and faculty have a sense of what students missed during the pandemic and action items to get them what they academically need.</p>
Diana Steele	Placement and Proficiency Testing	<p>Students getting placed into inappropriate level because they didn't take their placement testing seriously, which might stem from "everything-is-online fatigue."</p> <p>Advisors and instructors putting too much faith in earned AP/IB credit when maybe student should take the UIUC class anyway. Would very much depend on student's academic goals (e.g., is that AP course credit just fulfilling a Gen Ed, or is it foundational to their major/college career?)</p> <p>Students feeling disconnected from instructors, classmates, the University experience, and so first-year learning in core courses may suffer.</p>
Elaine Schulte	Physics	<p>Mathematics proficiency and analysis skills.</p> <p>Appropriate Calculus placement given anticipated math learning loss/long stretches of remote learning.</p> <p>General problem-solving and analysis--difficult to help students learn through virtual/remote self-study.</p> <p>Appropriate placement in physics.</p> <p>Adjusting to potentially more rigid schedules compared to the last 12 months.</p> <p>Self-organization skills and working with unstructured time.</p>
Stephen Downie	Integrative Biology (IB 150)	<p>Over the past several years, level of preparedness of students has steadily declined, and will only worsen through learning loss. We are not sure that content remediation is really the issue. Academic issues of concern include weak reading comprehension, reasoning skills, and applied problem-solving skills. There are plenty of non-academic issues too, already mentioned by others.</p>
Lisa Travis	Psychology 100	<p>Study skills, organizational skills, reading comprehension, writing and logical thinking.</p> <p>Challenges specific to the pandemic include more mental health and personal issues that interfere with students' ability to complete their work.</p> <p>Psychology is fortunate that we assume no specific background, so learning loss is less of an issue for us. Our hybrid format requires even more</p>

		independent learning from our students than usual, making the increase in independent study required at the college transition more dramatic and difficult.
Susan Faivre	ESL	<p>It is difficult to assess what the variety of instructional modes have been of in-person vs online learning in the students' home countries. It is also unknown how this may impact students' proficiency in English, specifically writing, since a number of incoming students wouldn't have much experience in English academic writing in a non-pandemic year. There has been some speculation on whether we'd see a trend of lower placements, but in the ESL program/EPT, we don't think we will see this trend materialize and expect marginally similar percentages of writing placements in each level as what we'd see in a "normal" year.</p> <p>On the technical-difficulty side of online testing, the issues most people have are with the security measures and logging in. Once they are in, the writing task poses little conceptual difficulty beyond that of the paper EPT. Post-placement this fall could compare scores from pre-pandemic paper tests to online tests (i.e. online self-selectors), and mid-pandemic online tests (i.e. forced online test-takers) to see if placement has shifted, though I'm not sure this is the right empirical question to begin with.</p> <p>Speaking proficiency is another matter. ESL instructors (and students themselves in their IEFs and conferences) have already raised concerns about returning students' oral proficiency, particularly those in second semester and beyond. Students who normally would have had at least 6 months of social and in-class interaction in English to help them progress in oral skills have largely been isolated and, in many cases, not even in the US. With diminished opportunities to interact in English, we are not seeing the usual progress in English proficiency among returning students.</p> <p>More concerning than learning loss is the trauma that students' (and teachers) continue to experience because of the pandemic. I believe the impact of stress, anxiety, and depression, resulting from economic pressures, health issues, and isolation that many international students face in their home countries will be challenging to address. This impacts both incoming and returning students at both the graduate and undergraduate level.</p> <p>Rising Sinophobia and anti-Asian sentiment. Since the majority of our students are from China, I do think division and political tensions are having a broad impact on their experiences with discrimination.</p>

Appendix 2: Task Force Answers to Question 2 (by Area) – Brainstorming Ideas

Name	Area (e.g., CMN, MATH, I-LEAP, ADMISSIONS)	Q2. Assuming you had enough resources, what are some steps your area can implement right away to address these academic issues (to be implemented during summer 2021, fall 2021, and/or spring 2022)?
Elise McCarren	Chemistry	<p>Offer smaller course sections, and maximize in-person course offerings in the lab/discussion portions of the courses</p> <p>Provide additional opportunities for student-student interactions in a formal or informal academic setting as it relates to our courses</p>
April Carter	I-LEAP	<p>Offer a variety of interactive academic success workshops such as study skills, time management, notetaking, online learning, etc. throughout summer to prepare students for college. The session would be held online.</p> <p>Hire and train students to serve as tutors.</p> <p>Success workshops in the spring 2022 term based on trends observed in the fall semester</p> <p>Success workshops in fall 2021 after midterm grades are reported for courses with a high number of concerning midterm grades</p> <p>Match students with peer mentor during early summer 2021.</p> <p>Connect students with students (mentors, study groups, career groups) with the goal of them meeting in-person when possible.</p> <p>Create short videos for students to watch for staff introductions or to address certain topics.</p>
Neal Davis	Computer Science	<p>Prepare a concept inventory and "placement" exam (not really, just a beginning-of-term assessment) to identify students who need assistance early.</p>
Kristi McDuffie	Rhetoric Program (first-year writing program in the English Dept)	<p>If we had unlimited resources, we would offer tutorials for Rhet 105 classes (like we do for Rhet 101-102 classes). It would be more student-friendly to offer more flexibility within our curriculum since it is such a big jump from Rhet 101-102 to Rhet 105. We will pursue this tutorial option as soon as we can, but it is difficult to pursue that while also making placement updates, while also working on hiring approvals, while also working on fall instruction plans, and so forth.</p>
Alison Reddy	Math	<p>Peer mentors. Expanded Merit program. Smaller recitations. Addition of undergraduate assistants to recitations to assist with the facilitation of small group learning and just in time learning. Expanded corequisite course offerings.</p>
Diana Steele	Placement and Proficiency Testing	<p>Provide clear explanations on website and in test instructions (e.g., why placement testing matters, why it might be better to take Calc II instead of taking the AP credit)</p> <p>Provide a caring, human touch (e.g., spend as much time on the phone as the student needs until their questions are answered)</p> <p>Respond to email inquiries same-day or within 12 hours with personalized</p>

		answers so students get quick feedback and specific "action steps" for their issue
Elaine Schulte	Physics	<p>Be prepared to adjust the PHYS offerings in the timetable to accommodate observations of student placement need.</p> <p>Outreach to faculty about potential learning and placement related issues our incoming students could be facing.</p> <p>Training on campus-level resources to faculty & TAs.</p> <p>Possibly develop skill-specific workshops and/or participate in College/Campus skill-level workshops for students.</p>
Stephen Downie	Integrative Biology (IB 150)	Our AAP scholars take one additional hour of active learning instruction with a highly trained TA. This hour focuses exclusively on skill development. It would be ideal to offer such a section for incoming students with similarly low levels of preparedness as AAP students. Implementation of a placement test predictive of passing the course, which should not be a core knowledge-based test, but also include problem solving, reasoning, etc. A fully developed, validated placement test is already available but has yet to be implemented.
Lisa Travis	Psychology 100	We currently offer an AAP section (regular section with smaller size and an extra hour of instruction) and a Merit section (a supplementary section for 1 hour a week extra instruction). We want to continue with these. As a dream ask, I would like funds to support a grad TA to be in charge of a peer tutoring program. The grad TA could be charged with identifying students who are failing to keep up with work, establishing and maintaining communication with them, connecting them with a peer tutor, training and supervising the tutors. We could also offer that tutoring to all students, benefitting both at risk students and those who simply want a better grade.
Susan Faivre	ESL	<p>-Smaller class sizes so that teachers can provide more individual attention including feedback, interaction, and duration and frequency of individual conferences and peer meetings (10 students?)</p> <p>-weekly tutorial or workshop session led by ESL instructors in addition to regular class time</p>
Melissa Michael	MCB	<p>MCB 150 lecture is no longer a traditional lecture. The course is an interactive, skill- and content based course designed to make actively-engaged, informed citizens as well as future scientists and practitioners.</p> <p>MCB 150 has engaging discussion sections designed according to Merit principles and philosophies.</p> <p>Brad Mehrtens, MCB 150 instructor, offers office hours that are responsive to questions submitted and characterized by the instructor.</p> <p>MCB 150 offers TA Help Sessions whereby students can get additional support and input regarding MCB 150 content and its application.</p> <p>MCB 150 has Merit sections available to students that are targeted by the Merit program, including high performing, traditionally underrepresented, first generation or from low sending Illinois counties.</p>

		<p>Melissa Reedy, the MCB 150 coordinator, leads a BIOPass program that is an additional support in both content and navigation for at-risk students.</p> <p>Brad Mehrtens, instructor, and Melissa Reedy, coordinator, provide information, assistance and guidance on navigating the university system, classes and expectations in and beyond MCB 150 in order to aid them in being successful students both on campus and in the major if they are.</p> <p>Alejandra Stenger offers an LAS Success workshop to inform students about how to succeed in both MCB 150 and the MCB curriculum.</p>
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Appendix 3: Task Force Answers to Question 3 (by Area) – Brainstorming Ideas

Name	Area (e.g., CMN, MATH, I-LEAP, ADMISSIONS)	Q3. What resources do you think will be needed for your area?
Elise McCarren	Chemistry	<p>We have determined that coordination between chemistry department facilities and campus facilities should enable us to run approximately 60% of our large lecture general chemistry course discussion sections in person and 40% of these sections online. This will result in an increase in the number of sections offered overall due to low in-person section capacity. As a result, we estimate that this will require an additional 20 undergraduate course assistants during the Fall 2020 semester, with pay of approximately \$2700/course assistant/semester.</p> <p>We would also like to offer more opportunities for our students to meet and study with one another to build community within our courses. This may look like additional time for review sessions and office hours and/or extending the open hours of the Chemistry Learning Center. This may require additional room availability or funds for student worker staffing in these areas.</p>
April Carter	I-LEAP	<p>Undergrads, graduate students or professional staff to serve as academic coaches/mentors. It would be helpful to provide students with an academic coach/mentor that they could meet with regularly regarding their transition to Illinois and academic progress. The academic coach/mentor would provide support as well as direct students to campus resources as needed.</p> <p>A campus-wide, centralized website where students can find tutors for various subjects.</p> <p>Merit sections for classes that students are likely to struggle in.</p> <p>Tutoring for classes students are likely to struggle in.</p> <p>Physical space for groups of students to study/receive tutoring in person (health policies permitting)</p> <p>Monitors for displaying faculty and staff introductions, academic resources, upcoming events, etc.</p>
Neal Davis	Computer Science	<p>Coordinating faculty efforts and TA time and attention is liable to be our main resource bottleneck at this point.</p> <p>We are also pursuing flipped-classroom style activities to better support student learning coming into these courses.</p>
Kristi McDuffie	Rhetoric Program (first-year writing program in the English Dept)	<p>We need to hire specialized faculty to offer enough Rhetoric courses for the fall. Because it is too early to determine exactly how many classes we will have as of yet unstaffed, and I'm sure because of other reasons, a search has not yet been approved (by LAS or the Provost or both). But it would be a serious issue for student support and retention were we not able to offer all of the Rhetoric classes that students need.</p>

Diana Steele	Placement and Proficiency Testing	<p>Short-term: dedicated clerical support would be nice, even if part-time ("dedicated" because it takes a while to learn the ins and outs of PNP)</p> <p>Long-term: dedicated data analyst to study this incoming group's academic performance in their first-year courses in relation to their performance on their placement exams and their high school preparation. This would help determine what adjustments need to be made for the 2022-2023 incoming students who also have experienced significant at-home learning changes.</p>
Elaine Schulte	Physics	<p>Right now we're making decisions (to the best of our ability) about the timetable. The best possible understanding of room occupancy and room usage would be extremely beneficial.</p> <p>We will also find beneficial the best-possible estimates of student enrollments/placement information so we can make adjustments to introductory offerings, if needed. Otherwise we're allocating resources blind, and that is very concerning.</p>
Stephen Downie	Integrative Biology (IB 150)	<p>Active-learning classroom space is limited, particularly under social distancing parameters. Campus could use more of these classrooms. Undergraduate course assistants can help serve as tutors, to lessen the burden on the TAs and Instructor. Additional sections are required, but space limitations preclude this from happening. Moreover, we do not have enough TAs to accommodate these additional sections. Funds for development to introduce a 100-level biology class that can be offered to our most underprepared students - a course that is entirely lab based and will emphasize group work and projects that traditionally give students difficulty and support project-based learning, problem solving and related skills. A shorter course, similar in design, could be offered initially.</p>
Lisa Travis	Psychology 100	<p>Not essential, but helpful</p> <p>Funds for a grad TA to run a peer tutoring program</p> <p>A bigger room to accommodate active learning. One of rooms (serving about half our sections) is too small for active learning.</p>
Susan Faivre	ESL	<p>With more questions than answers about what fall will look like and what enrollments will be, it is difficult to plan for addressing these challenges. Right now, we're preparing for (at minimum) an enrollment number similar to that of FA 2019. However, with a reduced pool of available TAs, the loss of a full-time lecturer during the pandemic, and the potential for expanded offerings and/or reduced class sizes, staffing is sure to be our biggest challenge. I'm concerned that we aren't going to have enough teachers, and we won't be able to offer tutorials or additional support and face time with instructors if we can't even cover sections.</p> <p>If we can't staff demand for sections, students may have to wait until spring (or later) to begin their ESL coursework, which will only exacerbate the current proficiency and practice concerns. We need to do a search, but without any solid information on enrollments or delivery modes, it is difficult to make this request.</p> <p>On the technical side, we used Proctorio for both EPT and some in-class testing. The EPT is currently testing the Safe Exam Browser (SEB) Moodle add on to replace Proctorio (as soon as it works). SEB is great for security during the test, but not as great at the more invasive benefits of Proctorio, i.e. ID checks. The EPT has talked with the Computer-based Testing Facility, and they coached them on Zoom proctoring, but it's not currently workable for a 60-</p>

		person test. They believe they can do two 30-minute test windows per testing day to do Zoom ID checks, instructions and proctoring, but they would have to hire and train UG assistants to help with this.
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Appendix 4: Task Force Final Intervention Implementation Plans (by Area)

Area	Task Force Committee Member Name(s)	Task Force Committee Member Email(s)	Intervention(s)	Name(s) of Instructors/Key Coordinators Involved in Intervention	Email(s) of Instructors/Key Coordinators Involved in Intervention
CAMPUS	Andy Borst, Alison Reddy	ajb168@illinois.edu, ared@illinois.edu	To assist with earlier math placement and course enrollment needs, ALEKS assessment must be completed by new freshmen prior to scheduling a New Student Registration appointment.	Andy Borst, Alison Reddy	ajb168@illinois.edu, ared@illinois.edu
CAMPUS	Andy Borst	ajb168@illinois.edu	To encourage higher course placement test completion rates before New Student Registration appointment with academic advisor, improve communication with students including automated reminder emails, updated webpage, text messaging, webinars, and answering phone calls/emails in a timely manner.	Sarah Loeffler, Diana Steele	sloeff@illinois.edu, dmsteele@illinois.edu
CAMPUS	Andy Borst, Gretchen Adams	ajb168@illinois.edu, gadams4@illinois.edu	Implement incentivized survey questions to all new students after New Student Registration. Results will be analyzed and shared with instructors, colleges, units on campus prior to fall semester. Guidelines will be provided on what to do with the results to help new students transition to our academic environment. Three questions asked are: 1) When I think about the upcoming fall semester at Illinois, in one word I feel... 2) For the upcoming fall semester, I am most concerned about... 3) For the upcoming fall semester, I am most	Beth Hoag, Gretchen Adams, Jim Ecker	bhoag2@illinois.edu, gadams4@illinois.edu, jecker@illinois.edu

			excited about... (these three questions are also being asked of current students at Illinois)		
AHS I-LEAP	April Carter	acart22@illinois.edu	I-LEAP's peer mentoring program will start earlier. Timeline is moved up. Training will take place sooner including getting feedback on what students need and how to be a good mentor. New students will get matched in the summer. Peer mentors will meet with students in the summer instead of waiting for fall semester to start.	April Carter	acart22@illinois.edu
CMN 101	Mardia Bishop	mjbishop@illinois.edu	Reduce class size from 24 to 20 to allow for more individual attention, which will require hiring more graduate teaching assistants. Adapt the curriculum to allow more public speaking and interpersonal communication in the classroom. Adapt curriculum to focus on potential areas that students might not be prepared for this year, such as argumentation structures and critical listening.	Mardia Bishop, BJ Gailey	mjbishop@illinois.edu; gailey1@illinois.edu
IB 150	Stephen R Downie	sdownie@illinois.edu	Implement an optional, recently validated IMR-Biology Placement Test. This test outperforms math ACT in predicting course grades in freshman biology. For those students identified as being at risk of failing, IB will enroll these students into new sections of the course (IB150 Lecture CL2 and Discussion CD1). These merit-style sections are interactive, skill-based, and involve active-	Ben Clegg, Instructor; Lily Arias, Merit Director; Stephen R. Downie, SIB Associate Director of Academic Affairs	bclegg@illinois.edu, larias@illinois.edu, sdownie@illinois.edu

			engagement with the instructor, fellow students, and highly trained teaching assistants.		
RHET	Kristi McDuffie	kmcduff@illinois.edu	This year we updated Comp I placement due to SAT/ACT test-optional policy change and state legislation about developmental courses. We created a Rhet Placement Questionnaire as part of the updates, and this questionnaire facilitates a more holistic and student-friendly approach to placement. The Rhet Director held advisor information sessions and attended departmental advisor training sessions. Our largest need is funding and approval to hire additional full-time Lecturers in order to meet student need for RHET classes this fall.	Kristi McDuffie	kmcduff@illinois.edu
CHEM (Gen Chem courses)	Elise McCarren	emccarr2@illinois.edu	60% of normal discussion sections will be in person for Chemistry 101, 102, 104, and 232. All labs will be in person. Class sizes will only be 16 students in person (whereas online sections will have to stay at 30-35 students). Will hire and train undergraduate assistants/TAs earlier and more comprehensively. Will hire more undergraduate assistants which means there will be more help in the Chemistry Learning Center for tutoring and community building. The Chemistry Learning Center will open and be fully available to students in	Elise McCarren, Tina Huang, Sarah Sheeley	emccarr2@illinois.edu, thhuang@illinois.edu, sheeley@illinois.edu

			week 1 of the semester instead of in week 3.		
MATH	Alison Reddy	ared@illinois.edu	<p>Potential for increased enrollments in 100-level math courses. Reduce 100-level enrollment caps to allow for in-person teaching. Hire additional instructors and TAs to teach additional courses and provide more student supports. Expand support help hours and modalities. Implement large-scale summer math catch-ups to all students who scores below 85 on ALEKS PPL. Hire a summer coordinator and CAs to deploy and provide support during summer catch-ups. Reimagine assessment at the student, course, and departmental level. Ongoing evaluation of assessment, and pedagogy and didactics of curricular modalities for evidence of efficacy and best practices. Design and implement courses and modalities to meet students' needs as they transition to higher education during this unprecedented time.</p>	Alison Reddy	ared@illinois.edu
PSYC 100	Lisa Travis	lltravis@illinois.edu	<p>We will use a hybrid model, allowing us to reduce our in-person sections from 48 to 24 (though they will meet only once per week). We are eliminating high-stakes exams and replacing them with more frequent, lower-stakes assessments. We will continue with the more lenient policies re: late and missed work that we began implementing in</p>	Lisa Travis	lltravis@illinois.edu

			<p>F20. We will attempt more proactive outreach to students who fall behind in their work. If funding is available, we will hire a grad TA to help coordinate a peer coaching program involving more intensive support for students who are failing to keep up with work. Support would take the form of reminders, review sessions, study skills assistance and referrals to resources as needed.</p>		
PHYSICS	Elaine Schulte	eschulte@illinois.edu	<p>The Department of Physics is offering all courses in-person, with allowances made for students unable to return to campus to take our classes by remote-teaching. This will provide a hybrid-learning experience for some students. Most of our introductory level courses (PHYS 101/102, PHYS 211/212) have smaller per-section enrollment than is typical for these courses (certain introductory laboratories excepted).</p> <p>Subject to available resources the Undergraduate Studies Office for the Department of Physics is planning to organize an intensive basic and foundational skills clinic for any student in an introductory course in need of such tutoring. Instructors may refer and students may self-refer to the clinic. The clinic will be offered at intervals, and</p>	Elaine Schulte	eschulte@illiois.edu

			staffed by experienced undergraduate students from the Department. The clinic will be supervised by E. Schulte who will train and evaluate the performance of the clinic staff.		
CS	Neal Davis	davis68@illinois.edu	CS 124 - remedial workshops or side courses for majors. Thinking about how to assist students with organization and time management. CS 101/105 (service courses) - formalize study partners or stable study groups; address perception of not needing help; second-chance assessments after deeper preparation.	Neal Davis, Craig Zilles	davis68@illinois.edu, zilles@illinois.edu
ESL	Susan Faivre	sfavre@illinois.edu	-More sections in both modes of instruction (online and in-person) at lower capacities for more individualized instruction, added individual conferences with instructor. -Major-assignment specific tutorial sessions open to all students in a given level (there are 4 major assignments per level per term, and these make up the bulk of students' grades. These would come in the form of seminars followed by small group discussion. Students would then have work time before their next individual writing conference with the instructor. -For oral courses: increase frequency and length of synchronous sessions in small group break outs (e.g., add group conferences/small group sessions and increase the	Susan Faivre	sfavre@illinois.edu

			<p>duration of individual conferences).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Offer additional training for instructors on how to effectively lead small group modes and tutorial-type sessions in both modes of instruction. -Development of both seminar and small group discussion sessions for major assignment tutorials, development of training materials. 		
Illinois Scholars Program	Gio Guerra Perez	gguerra@illinois.edu	<p>Expanding Illinois Scholars Program this summer (two cohorts). ISP includes both a summer bridge experience – transitioning from high school to college – and inclusive excellence academic support throughout the ISP Scholar’s four years on campus. ISP offers two tracks tailored to meet students’ academic needs: ISP Engage, for students in Division of General Studies and College of LAS, and ISP Merit, for students in the Merit Program for Emerging Scholars. In each track, students connect with a cohort of 30 other new students and have access to academic advising, workshops, community-building activities and other enrichment opportunities that will help the students meet the rigorous challenges of university life. This program will also have early move in.</p>	<p>Math Lead Coordinator: Alison Reddy Writing Lead Coordinator: Carolyn Wisnieski Co-Curricula Lead Coordinator: Cecilia Vanghn- Guy</p>	<p>ared@illinois.edu cwisnie@illinois.edu cvauh4@illinois.edu</p>