

October 15, 2021

*Sent Via Email*

**Student Success Initiative – First-Year Experience Implementation Team**

Faculty/Staff

Mariana Ortega, La Casa Cultural Latina, co-chair  
Dan Turner, The Grainger College of Engineering, co-chair  
Jessica Arnold, Division of General Studies  
Marni Boppart, College of Applied Health Sciences  
Andy Borst, Office of Undergraduate Admissions  
Scarlette Briones, International Student and Scholar Services  
Mari Anne Brocker Curry, University Housing  
Amanda Carey, Disability Resources and Educational Services  
Shari Clapp, Division of Intercollegiate Athletics  
Demonic Cobb, Office of Minority Student Affairs and Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center  
Mary Edwards, College of Fine and Applied Arts  
Jon Elugbadebo, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Michelle Ellis, College of Education  
Grace Giorgio, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Brianna Gregg, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences  
Lisa Jackson, Student Success and Engagement  
Elise McCarren, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Corey Thoss, Gies College of Business  
Tony Torres, School of Information Sciences  
Zuri White, Parent & Family Programs, Student Affairs  
Jim Hintz, Student Success & Engagement & Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations, *ex-officio*

Students

Annie Althaus, undergraduate student in  
Oneida Byrd, undergraduate student in Elementary Education  
Jack Casey, undergraduate student in Special Education  
Ryann Chomiak, undergraduate student in Global Studies  
Jonathan Cu, undergraduate student in Urban Studies and Planning  
Danielle Schleyer, undergraduate student in Advertising

Dear Colleagues,

Launched in fall 2019, the campus' Student Success Initiative (SSI) has taken a comprehensive view in defining student success, establishing goals, and collecting feedback. To work toward the common goal of institution-level improvements in equity and inclusion, four teams were tasked to assess student responsibility, participation, and performance. Additionally, structural and systemic barriers that impede student progress were analyzed.

With collaboration from Academic and Student Affairs and relying heavily on the expertise of colleagues from across campus, the initial phase invited faculty, staff, and student voices to recognize and advance the good work already being done and identify opportunities to facilitate equitable and inclusive outcomes for our students. Although unforeseen, the COVID-19 pandemic provided additional insight, and the task force teams submitted final reports with recommendations that were thorough, aspirational, broad, and relevant.

The Student Success Initiative continues to a second phase with assembly of teams to implement some of the key recommendations from the task forces teams' final reports. We hope you will accept the invitation to serve on the First-Year Experience (FYE) Implementation Team. Mariana Ortega, Director of La Casa Cultural Latina and Dan Turner, Assistant Dean in the Grainger College of Engineering, have agreed to co-chair this group.

As charged to the First-Year Experience Taskforce, “focus on the elements of the first-year experience with the ideal that the first year should provide all students with a solid foundation to support continued success. This focus should be balanced by the needs of those students who are most likely to leave the university before graduating.” The team should use the *First-Year Experience Task Group Report* from September 2020 as a resource. Specifically, your team should focus on recommendations related to developing “a comprehensive orientation, transition, and first-year experience program for new students at Illinois” by using the following framework to recommend an implementation plan: 1) What do first-year students need to know or experience? 2) When do first-year students need to know it or experience it? and 3) Who is best to deliver this information or provide the experience? Keep in mind that this includes transfer students, but for purpose of this charge the focus is on undergraduate students. Student voice and input must be central throughout this endeavor.

This does not need to be a complete reimaging of the first-year experience. Leverage the existing strengths of various units who deliver the first-year experiences but be mindful of overlapping experiences that force students to choose based on their identities. Overlapping experiences have caused students to miss other experiences that could contribute to their success. In addition, identify data needed to assess the student experience for continual improvement that can be used for a data analytics approach for future decision making. Finally, develop an implementation plan timeline for your recommendations for changes to elements of the first-year experience. While many implementation items will be for future years given the nature of the work, we ask that you not exclude recommendations that can be implemented in the more immediate future, noting these accordingly in your timeline.

All work of the Student Success Initiative is guided by foundational core values to promote systemic change across the university. Please be sure to read carefully and frequently reference the core values statement, which is included as an enclosure with this charge letter, throughout your work. With students at the heart of every decision, these core values are embedded throughout our initiative to preclude racial equity gaps, inconsistencies, and miscommunication between institutional stakeholders. Common language fostering an inclusive, anti-racist environment and an unwavering commitment to student completion shall be derived from these core values.

Your team will have access to administrative support through Teresa Spence in the Office of the Provost. In addition, a Box folder pre-populated with several documents is available to serve as a resource.



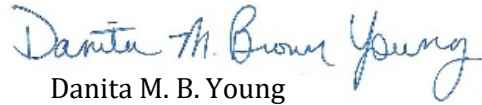
We are grateful for your willingness to serve, and we look forward to the team's recommendations. An update to the Council of Undergraduate Deans and Student Affairs Leadership Team will be due on December 15, 2021 with a full report following by March 4, 2022.

We appreciate the many demands on your time; if you are unable to accept this invitation, please let Teresa Spence ([tcspence@illinois.edu](mailto:tcspence@illinois.edu)) know by Friday, October 22, 2021.

Sincerely,



Andreas C. Cangellaris  
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost  
M.E. Van Valkenburg Professor of Electrical  
and Computer Engineering



Danita M. B. Young  
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Enclosure: Student Success Initiative Core Values