

The Freshman Year at Creighton:
Assessment and Recommendations

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In January, 2004, Creighton's first Director of Freshman Programs began a year-long review and assessment of Creighton's freshman year experience. This process included:

- *Interviews with over 50 faculty and administrators*
- *Interviews with student program leaders*
- *Freshmen focus groups*
- *Participation in all freshman advising, Preview, and Orientation activities*
- *Piloting a two-semester Freshman Seminar*
- *Review of Institutional Research data on freshman year*
- *Consultation with first year programs at other universities*
- *Review of current research on first year programs*
- *Discussions with four on-going different committees relating to freshman programming.*

As a result, this report details recommendations for the development of a holistic freshman program at Creighton University for the class incoming September 2006.

I. Introduction

Freshman year is a crucial year for students at any college. They are transitioning from home to independence, from high school memorization to college critical thinking, from adolescent dreams to adult career planning. According to research, “If students make it through the first year successfully, the chances that they will persist improve considerably.”¹ While much of the research focuses on ways to improve student retention, Creighton’s goals go beyond simply keeping students. At Creighton, freshman year holds additional challenges for students due to the rigor of our academic standards and the Jesuit mission to “educate the whole person of solidarity for the real world.”²

The groundwork for all of this personal development is laid throughout the freshman year. We must ensure student engagement so that first-year students³ will progress toward their ultimate goal of becoming Creighton graduates. This groundwork is not just the responsibility of Academic Affairs or Student Services, but of all department chairs, administrators, staff, faculty and upperclassmen who have the opportunity to shape the experience of first-year students.

II. Where Creighton Stands Now

Creighton offers a variety of courses, programs, and services specifically for freshmen.

- In 2004, the freshman class of 968 was Creighton’s second largest incoming class and the most selective. 750 of those are in the College of Arts and Sciences. 144 of them are in the College of Business, with the School of Nursing hosting 76 freshmen.
- 64% of students attended one of four summer Previews (up from three offered the previous year.)
- All freshmen are required to take a first semester college-based Freshman Seminar. The School of Nursing requires a second semester seminar as well. Freshman Seminar instructors serve as the students’ pre-major advisor.
- Freshmen are encouraged to participate in a 10-day Welcome Week orientation.⁴ Rates of participation vary by Welcome Week activity between 78 % and 26%.
- 88% of freshmen are housed on campus in one of four residence halls.
- 108 upperclass Student Group Leaders and 28 Resident Assistants offer freshmen an upperclassmen’s perspective on college life.
- 108 freshmen attended Campus Ministry’s 24-hour retreat which is designed specifically for freshmen by upperclassmen.
- Intramural sports are the most popular freshman extracurricular.

¹ Levitz and Noel, 1989, p5.

² Kolvenbach, 2000

³ “Freshman” and “first-year student” are used interchangeably throughout the report.

⁴ According to the Bulletin, participation is “required” but there are no consequences for non-participation.

Each of these programs and others contribute greatly to the Freshman Year Experience at Creighton. While each is evaluated and improved on an individual basis, currently there is no overall picture for what needs to be accomplished during the freshman year. “Success” is defined in terms of student participation, retention, and satisfaction.

According to 2004 Your First College Year survey (results from the freshman year class of 2003-2004), Creighton is doing very well on some indicators (see Appendix 1 for specific details.)

- Creighton freshmen report significantly more interaction with their academic advisors, other college staff, and close friends here at Creighton than freshmen at other institutions.
- Creighton freshmen report significantly more satisfaction with academic advising, tutoring, and counseling services than freshmen at other private universities.
- Creighton freshmen report feeling significantly more successful in understanding what professors expect, developing effective study skills, getting to know faculty, and developing close friendships with other students than other freshmen.
- Creighton freshmen are significantly more likely to report growth in analytical and problem-solving skills as well as critical thinking than other freshmen.

Some of these positive indicators can be attributed to Creighton being more likely to offer a required freshman seminar than other schools in our comparison group.

Consistently, the 2002-2003 National Study of Student Engagement found Creighton freshman statistically, significantly higher than other schools in our comparison group on:

- Campus environment that emphasizes studying.
- Satisfaction with educational experience

The retention rate is an important factor in Creighton’s national ranking. Not only does it directly account for 5% of the annual ranking, but tends to get counted again when the 6-year graduation rate is considered for 20% of the ranking. In 2003-2004, Creighton’s freshman to sophomore year retention rate was 87%. By way of comparison, the next closest ranking institution to Creighton, Xavier University, had an 89% freshman to sophomore retention rate. According to a recent ACT study of retention the top three contributions to retention are:

- 1) the First-year Transition Programs
- 2) Academic Advising, and
- 3) Learning Support⁵

Recommendations for enhancing each of these areas are offered in this report.

The recommendations also seek to address other indicators that show areas where freshman programming should be enhanced. On the YFCY

⁵ Habley and Gore, 2005

- Statistically fewer Creighton freshmen indicate their courses inspired them to think in new ways than freshmen at other private universities.
- Creighton freshman are significantly less likely to discuss course work outside of class than freshmen at other private universities.
- Creighton freshmen report significantly less development in library/research skills and understanding national issues during their first year of college than freshmen at other universities.

On the NSSE

- Creighton consistently falls significantly below our predicted Active and Collaborative learning benchmark which rates how well students are “intensely involved in their education and asked to think about what they are learning in different settings” or collaborate with others in their educational process.

The two surveys somewhat conflict in the area of how well Creighton contributes to the development of personal values. The YFCY indicates that

- In comparison to freshmen at the other private universities, fewer Creighton freshmen rate
 - Helping to promote racial understanding
 - Participating in a community action program
 - Influencing social values, and
 - Helping others in difficulty
 as “essential/very important”.
- In comparison to freshmen at the other private universities, significantly fewer Creighton freshmen rate
 - Developing a meaningful philosophy of life and
 - Integrating spirituality into my life
 as “essential/very important”.

Yet the NSSE rated Creighton statistically significantly higher on

- Extent to which the Creighton experience has contributed to developing a personal code of values and ethics,
- The extent to which the Creighton experience has influenced you to contribute to the welfare of your community.

Given this data, one important area for improvement is in classroom engagement. Freshman Year courses and Freshman Seminar in particular offer opportunities for such active and collaborative learning and personal values development.

While these statistics offer a snapshot of student satisfaction and how Creighton compares to other schools, they don’t offer a clear picture of how well we are fulfilling our mission during the freshman year. To do this, clear outcomes must be developed to demonstrate what each student needs to learn during his or her freshman year.

III. Proposed Learning Outcomes of Freshman Year

Various committees and documents from the past five years cite the need for development of a Freshman Year Program at Creighton.

- In 2000, a committee of Arts and Sciences faculty met to explore ways to enhance the Freshman Seminar. This “Freshman Seminar Seminar” developed some recommendations for freshman year and piloted two seminar initiatives: a full-year, one-credit seminar, and the LINKs program to develop a living/learning community.⁶
- In 2002, Creighton’s Strategic Plan called for “Nurturing Academic Excellence (B1)” through the “Use of signature programs as points of national emphasis.” One tactic for reaching this objective is to “Develop Freshman year-long integrated programs.”
- In 2002, Dean Austin and Student Services convened a First-Year Programs committee with representation from across campus (18 members) to develop “a cohesive freshman program...forming not only foundation for student education but life skills as well.”⁷ The result of this committee was to develop a part-time position of Director of Freshman Programs to coordinate and assess all that is done for freshmen and to develop a holistic freshman program. The Director of Freshman Programs was hired in January, 2005.
- In September, 2005, the Director of Freshman Programs was charged with chairing the Freshman Seminar Advisory Committee⁸ to examine the adequacy of the Freshman Seminar as well as the Director’s proposed Learning Outcomes for the Freshman Year.

“The current view in higher education is that we should focus on student learning rather than teaching in order to improve students’ college experiences.”⁹ This learner-centered approach should be applied to program development as well as course development. The question we should ask first is not “What Freshman Programming should we offer?” but “What do we want our students to gain from Freshman Year?” By building a Freshman Year Program around learning outcomes, Creighton will position itself as one of the premiere freshmen experiences in the country. Few universities (including the top freshman program in the country at the University of South Carolina) offer such a comprehensive, learning-centered approach. Defining the Learning Outcomes for Freshman Year will assist all entities engaging freshmen to work towards consistent ends and identify where new programming and structural changes are needed. These learning outcomes are meant to complement, not replace, the learning outcomes and goals of other campus entities that interact with freshmen.

⁶ Neither of these initiatives was continued.

⁷ Minutes, January 2002 First Year Program Committee meeting.

⁸ See Appendix 1 for list of Freshman Seminar Advisory Committee members.





⁹ Huba and Freed, 2000. p. 3.

Working with the Office for Academic Excellence and Assessment and the Freshman Seminar Advisory Committee, learning outcomes for Freshman Year were developed to be

- Student centered;
- Consistent with the mission of the University;
- Consistent with the learning outcomes of each undergraduate school/college;
- Consistent with the outcomes of a Creighton graduate as defined by Fr. Schlegel in his 2004 convocation;
- Consistent with recommendations from earlier committees on the First Year¹⁰; and
- Reflective of research on First-Year Student Success¹¹

The learning outcomes reflect appropriate levels of student development during the freshman year and address all aspects of student development, from academic to intellectual, spiritual, character, health, and interpersonal development. By clarifying, assessing, and developing programming to help students achieve these learning outcomes, Creighton will ensure its students have a solid foundation to grow into the Creighton graduates we seek.

The proposed Learning Outcomes for Freshman Year are:

-  *Freshmen will demonstrate fundamental academic skills.*
-  *Freshmen will explore what it means to be an educated person according to Creighton University's Catholic and Jesuit Mission.*
-  *Freshmen will develop a sense of belonging and identity in the campus community.*
-  *Freshmen will explore how Ignatian values are reflected in themselves.*

The following tables illustrate how each learning outcome is reflective of the characteristics identified above.

¹⁰ See Appendix 2 for Recommendations from the First Year Initiatives Committee of May 2002.

¹¹ Upcraft, Barefoot, and Gardner, 2004.

Mission Statement	Outcomes of the Creighton Graduate ¹²	CAS Learning Outcomes	COBA Learning Outcomes	School of Nursing Objectives	Recommendations of First-Year Planning Committee	“First-Year Student Success” ¹³	<i>Proposed Learning Outcomes for Freshman Year</i>
Creighton exists for students and learning.	An ability to communicate—written, verbal and technical	Communicate clearly and effectively in written, spoken, mathematical and artistic languages;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate effectively, clearly, and persuasively through appropriate mediums 	<p>...Qualities considered highly desirable for nursing include...verbal and non-verbal communication skills. Communicate professionally and therapeutically using diverse modalities</p>	Equip Students with fundamental academic skills	Develop academic and intellectual competence	<i>Freshmen will demonstrate fundamental academic skills.</i>

¹² Schlegal, Rev. John, S.J., Convocation Speech February 2004

¹³ Upcraft, M. Barefoot, B., & Gardner, J. *Challenging and supporting the First Year Student: A Handbook for Improving the First Year of College*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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<p>As Catholic, Creighton is dedicated to the pursuit of truth in all its forms...</p> <p>As Jesuit, Creighton participates in the tradition of the Society of Jesus which provides an integrating vision of the world.</p>	<p>A disciplinary competence and/or professional proficiency aided by a liberal education and a global perspective.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate broad and diverse learning with at least one individually chosen academic discipline or professional field. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate a broad and diverse liberal arts education with their business education Apply knowledge skills and technologies essential for business as a whole and in their chosen concentration. 	<p>balance knowledge and skills gained in the humanities, basic sciences, and nursing... Synthesize knowledge from nursing and other disciplines in managing health care of diverse populations</p>		<p>Develop academic and intellectual competence</p>	<p><i>Freshmen will explore what it means to be an educated person according to Creighton University’s Catholic and Jesuit Mission.</i></p>
<p>Creighton exists for students and learning.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think critically about information, assumptions, and arguments found in multiple forms of academic and cultural discourse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think critically and creatively about information, assumptions, and argument in order to develop innovative solutions to business and societal problems. 	<p>Qualities considered highly desirable for nursing are critical thinking skills... Demonstrate critical thinking skills in reasoning, analysis, research or decision-making relevant to the discipline of nursing.</p>			

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,... the inalienable worth of each individual, and appreciation of ethnic and cultural diversity are core values of Creighton.				Demonstrate a belief in the dignity and worth of each person, a respect for life and an awareness of spiritual uniqueness	Fostering students’ awareness of community. Facilitating contact between students and adults.	Establish and maintain interpersonal relationships	<i>Freshmen will develop a sense of belonging and identity in the campus community.</i>
As comprehensive, Creighton’s education ... is directed to...the promotion of justice . Service to others...is a core value	Possess a disposition towards service and an engaged civic responsibility	Relate an active commitment to learning, truth, and justice to a life of service and to the development of global community	Appreciate the responsibility of business to be an agent of change in society for the common good.	Qualities considered highly desirable in nursing include ...sensitivity to the needs of others		Develop civic responsibility	
...the inalienable worth of each individual, and appreciation of ethnic and cultural diversity are core values.	[Possess] a disciplinary competence aided by a... global perspective.					Deal with Diversity	

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...the inalienable worth of each individual... (is a) core value of Creighton.	A disposition towards life long learning Ethically competent and values centered	Apply a reasoned approach to effective decision making according to sound and coherent ethical principles.	Apply sound and coherent ethical principles to decision making in their personal and professional lives	Qualities considered highly desirable in nursing include...integrity and a developed sense of values.	Fostering students' self-awareness	Explore identity development	<i>Freshmen will explore how Ignatian values are reflected in themselves.</i>
Members of the Creighton community are challenged to reflect on transcendent values, including their relationship with God...		Appreciate the Christian, Catholic, and Jesuit intellectual traditions in the context of historical, cultural and spiritual concerns.		Integrate professional, legal, and ethical standards into nursing practice		Consider the faith/spiritual dimensions of life	
Creighton's education ...is directed to the ... physical, and recreational aspects of students' lives.				Incorporate self-awareness and values consciousness into a process of personal and professional development.		Maintain personal health and wellness	
As comprehensive, Creighton's education embraces several colleges and professional schools	A disposition towards life-long learning			Nurses...manage care for individuals, families, and communities from diverse cultures.		Decide on a career and lifestyle	
...the appreciation of ethnic and cultural diversity (is) a core value of Creighton.	[Possess] a disciplinary competence aided by a... global perspective					Deal with Diversity	

These learning outcomes were reviewed and approved by the Freshman Seminar Advisory Committee. Two clear challenges remain before these learning outcomes can be implemented.

1. Defining the Objectives and Assessment methods for each Learning Outcome

Once these learning outcomes for freshman year are accepted, the objectives of each outcome must be clearly defined. Potential objectives for each learning outcome were compiled from surveys of Freshman Year Programs across the country and can be reviewed in Appendix 4. Objectives to be met by Freshman Seminar are discussed in the next section. The Director of Freshman Programs will work with other entities to define additional objectives and methods for students to reach the learning outcomes. Those entities include:

- Freshman Seminar
- Lead Academic Advisors
- Curriculum
 - ENG 150
 - THL 100
 - PHL 107
 - CHM 203/204, Other intro sciences
 - ENG 120/121
 - PSY 111
- Faculty teaching these and other freshman level courses
- Advisor
- Student Support Services
- Strategies for Academic Success (formerly Master Student classes)
- Academic Success Counselor
- Counseling Services
- Preview and Welcome Week
- RA/RD, Residence Life
- CCSJ
- Career Center/CAP Program
- Peer Education
- Multi-Cultural Affairs
- Campus Ministry
- Student Government
- Student Activities
- Freshman Leadership Program
- Honors Program
- COBA Leadership Program
- Cardoner
- Group leaders
- Health Sciences Advising
- Work study/student employment
- Athletics
- Fraternities and Sororities (2nd semester)
- Intramurals
- Judicial Affairs

Once objectives for all learning outcomes are determined, methods of assessing each objective must be clarified. The Director of Freshman Programs will work with the Office for Academic Excellence and Assessment and Freshman Seminar leaders to develop these measures. A comprehensive annual evaluation will determine where future program development or structural changes are needed.

2) Defining the Creighton graduate

The Strategic Plan calls for the University to “Identify core learning outcomes for all undergraduate students (B2).” During Freshman Year, students will take their first steps toward fulfilling those learning outcomes. Until the outcomes of a Creighton graduate are clearly defined, we can not be sure the Learning Outcomes of Freshman Year are leading to them. The Student Services Student Learning Committee has been charged with the task of defining year-by-year learning outcomes at least for Student Services. Academic Affairs will need to respond to or engage their proposal.

IV. Programming Recommendations to Achieve the Learning Outcomes of Freshman Year

A variety of courses and programs will contribute to students fulfilling the learning outcomes of freshman year. Some of these we already offer and do very well compared to other schools. Some of the current programming needs to be assessed more for impact than participation. Other programming that has been proven to be effective at other schools simply doesn't exist at Creighton. This section details several programming recommendations based on research, interviews, and committee discussion. The most significant recommendation comes from the Freshman Seminar Advisory Committee (FSAC) to develop the academic focus of Freshman Seminar. The Director of Freshman Programs also offers an secondary recommendation for changing the structure and content of seminar if the FSAC recommendations are not implemented. Finally, additional programming beyond Freshman Seminar is recommended by the Director of Freshman Programs to offer a holistic Freshman Year and achieve the proposed learning outcomes.

A. Freshman Seminar Recommendations

A.1. Background on Freshman Seminar in General

Freshman Seminar is the cornerstone of Creighton's first-year programming. It is the only vehicle that touches every freshman, commuter or resident, Nursing, A&S or COBA. It is also the basis for introducing transfer students into Creighton via FRS 130. The purpose of the Freshman Seminar is to help students transition into the Creighton

community and the world of higher education. Additionally, each college has an interest in allowing its students to begin to develop their own community within Creighton and get to know their faculty and their unique perspective on Creighton and higher education.

Research shows that a freshman seminar course is offered at many colleges across the country with a variety of structures and content, some of which is academic and some personal development. All seminars offer the key components of a small group and a leader knowledgeable in the resources and policies of the university and higher education. Successful seminars can have clear impacts including:

- Increased persistence to sophomore year
- Improved student connections with peers
- Increased use of campus services
- Increased student satisfaction with the institution
- Increased out-of-class faculty/student interaction
- Increased level of student participation in student activities
- Increased academic abilities
- Increased student satisfaction with faculty
- Improved grade point averages
- Increased persistence to graduation.¹⁴

A.2. Background on Creighton's Freshman Seminar

Currently, the freshman seminar at Creighton is one of the weaker links in freshman programming. Because of its one-credit, one-semester, pass-fail status, seminar requires little work or engagement on the part of the student or the instructor. It is generally perceived as an extended orientation with a laundry list of requirements rather than an academic course with clear learning objectives. There is also a perceived mismatch between faculty expertise and seminar topics, many of which are addressed by outside presenters as a result. Still, it remains the only vehicle that touches all freshmen and is vital to their transition to life in college.

Although well over 20 years old, Creighton's seminar continues to adapt to changing times. Historically, Creighton's Freshman Seminar was intended to be taught by a faculty member for good reason. "Student-faculty interaction has a stronger relationship to student satisfaction with the college experience than any other variable [and] any student characteristic or institutional characteristic. Students who interact frequently with faculty are more satisfied with all aspects of their institutional experience, including student friendships, variety of courses, intellectual environment, and even administration of the institution."¹⁵ This holds for retention as well as student satisfaction. Research

¹⁴ Tobolosky, 2004.

¹⁵ Astin, 1993.

shows that 90% of institutions in the latest survey of Freshman Year programs offer a seminar taught by at least some faculty.¹⁶

At Creighton, the greatest challenge of offering a faculty-led Freshman Seminar is in attracting the needed number of faculty. For most faculty at other institutions, teaching seminar is a part of their regular load for teaching.¹⁷ To include a Freshmen Seminar as part of a regular load at Creighton would require over 40 sections of other courses to be covered, often times by adjuncts that are less experienced than Creighton faculty in their field of expertise. At the same time, faculty in particular disciplines are not readily available in the local area. As a result, seminar is an overload for all Freshman Seminar Instructors.

Teaching a one-credit seminar alone would not be a problem for faculty even as an overload. However, it becomes a much greater burden when the Seminar instructor also acts as the Academic Advisor for the students in the seminar. Beyond preparing for meeting 20 students in class once a week, Freshman Seminar Instructors currently are asked to:

- Attend a 2-4 hour training
- Call all advisees over the summer for initial course selection (10 hours)
- Attend (if available) four preview sessions to meet each advisee one-on-one (8 hours)
- Attend various sessions during welcome week (3-5 hours)
- Attend a social activity with their seminar during first semester (2 hours)
- Meet one-on-one for at least 20 minutes two times each semester until a student declares a major (possibly for four semesters.) (up to 80 hours)

This results in an 100+ hour overload commitment for \$1500. The stipend does little to attract seasoned faculty or those in colleges where the pay scale is significantly higher. Most faculty don't lead seminar for the money, but for their personal concern for students or for the appreciation of their dean.

Thirty percent of Freshman Year Programs report combining the two positions, most frequently at highly selective institutions.¹⁸ This practice increases the comfort level of the adviser and student as they see each other more often than just for course selection advice. As reported earlier, Creighton freshmen report greater satisfaction and interaction with their advisors than freshmen at other schools. The advising aspect of freshman seminar has consistently been cited by more freshman as the "most helpful or extremely helpful" aspect of seminar. Completing a 4-year plan is also cited as one of the top activities of seminar.

Several other factors have contributed to fewer faculty being available to take on the role of Freshman Seminar Instructor and Advisor:

¹⁶ Toblosky, 2004, p.94.

¹⁷ Toblowisky, 2004, p.94.

¹⁸ Ibid. p 95

- Creighton currently boasts the second largest freshman class in its history resulting in the need for more seminar advisors. The class of 2006 is projected to have 1000 freshmen requiring 50-69 seminar advisors (depending on seminar size.)
- Over the past few years the emphasis on faculty scholarship has risen. Since teaching Seminar and advising are only considered as service (not teaching) in an annual review, some faculty are more selective about how they spend their time. Some faculty are clearly advised by their department chairs not to lead a seminar.
- Although seminar lasts only one semester, the advising expectations continue until students declare a major, often near the end of sophomore year. The time commitment for agreeing to lead a seminar then lasts for two years (and possibly longer for students who don't declare a major.) As a result, each college must recruit a new pool of seminar instructors every year or technically have some faculty advising 20 freshman, all undeclared sophomores from the previous year, and some major advisees at the same time. This is a challenge for schools with smaller faculty like COBA that have a small number of faculty to draw on as well as for Arts and Sciences to find so many new advisors each year.
- At the same time, higher education research has demonstrated a need for colleges to address more non-academic subjects (e.g. career planning, alcohol, dating in college, learning to navigate the requirements and resources of a university, etc.).¹⁹ Freshman Seminar, being the only vehicle that reaches all students, is the place many of these subjects are addressed. Some faculty members do not feel well prepared to lead a course outside their area of expertise.

Because fewer faculty are willing to serve as seminar instructors and academic advisors for freshmen, non-faculty members of the university community have taken on the role (again as an overload to their full-time jobs.) In Arts and Sciences, 14 out of 38 advisors were not faculty. In COBA, the challenge of finding faculty to take on the overload of a seminar led to using senior student leaders for the seminar with faculty members having varied levels of involvement. In the School of Nursing, one staff member serves as a freshman advisor.

Currently, the College of Arts and Sciences is holding a special committee to develop a policy on pre-major advising and faculty expectations. So while Freshman Seminar and advising are inseparable, the Freshman Seminar Advisory Committee focused more on the content and structure of seminar itself.

A.3. Recommendations of the Freshman Seminar Advisory Committee: A Faculty-Led Freshman Perspective

In developing the recommendations for Freshman Seminar, the Freshman Seminar Advisory Committee reviewed the goals and objectives of Creighton's strategic plan and solicited feedback from all faculty and current and former Freshman Seminar advisor's.²⁰

¹⁹ Berman, 2005.

²⁰ Advisors from 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 as well as all current faculty were asked:
"The committee would like to know:

In addition, the committee reviewed freshman seminars from other peer institutions, and reviewed previous Seminar proposals (including the JAY Path proposal from some members of the July 2002 committee.) The FSAC also discussed the various types of freshmen seminars and which would work best within Creighton's structure.

Representatives from the Freshman Seminar Advisory Committee shared insights with the Arts and Sciences Committee on Academic Advising and the Student Services' Student Learning committee. Ultimately, the committee discerned which objectives of the Freshman Year Learning Outcomes would best be met via Freshman Seminar. The Freshman Seminar Advisory Committee worked to develop a freshman seminar that

- Engages faculty strengths as academics;
- Limits and appropriately compensates their time commitment;
- and
- Provides support in areas outside a faculty member's expertise.

The result is a recommendation for a new course: The Freshman Perspective.

A.3.a. Content of Freshman Perspectives

The current Freshman Seminar content tends more towards having "experts" come in to lead sessions on various topics (from Jesuits to peer educators to Cardoner) or having students complete required outside activities without any reflection on those activities to the whole of their education. Thus Freshman Seminar has a reputation among both faculty and students as a requirement to get through rather than a course to be engaged. If faculty are to be engaged, the content of seminar should reflect the expertise of the faculty as academics. If students are to be engaged, some work must be required of them. Freshman Perspectives will change seminar from an extended-orientation type to an Academic with Common Content-type of seminar.

Freshman Perspectives will be largely centered on the second Learning Outcome of Freshman Year:

Freshmen will explore what it means to be an educated person according to Creighton University's Catholic and Jesuit Mission.

To help students fulfill that learning outcome, the objectives of Freshman Perspectives ensure that:

- Students will articulate the value of a liberal arts education as demonstrated in Creighton's core

1) The challenges the current seminar poses to faculty, department chairs, and, from your perspective, to students;

2) Areas that you feel work particularly well at this time;

3) Ideas you have for enhancing the seminar."

- Students will articulate the differences between a Jesuit perspective and a secular perspective of education
 - Students will articulate the role of spirituality in academics.
 - Students will demonstrate how to be responsible consumers of information (e.g. how to access data, how to critically evaluate a source, who's voice counts)
 - Students will articulate the principles of academic honesty
 - Students will identify instances of academic dishonesty
 - Students will demonstrate how to engage faculty
 - Students will identify differences in their college expectations compared to their high school expectations.
 - Students will develop a personal four-year plan for their academic coursework.
- (and third goal)
- Students will participate in a community of peers
 - Students will meet with the freshman seminar instructor via at least two one-on-one 20-30 minute meetings per semester.
 - Students will articulate the impact of alcohol on their academic experience.
 - Additional objectives to be facilitated by senior leaders will be developed annually by the Director of Freshman Programs in conjunction with Student Services based upon the latest research in higher education student needs and needs noted within Creighton University.

A.3.b. Methodology

The process utilized in freshman seminar is key to its success. Seminars that rely on the formal lecture or regular outside presenters miss the point of having a small class community. Ultimately, **the methods for fulfilling these objectives will be determined by faculty**. Faculty will be provided support for using active learning methods, taking advantage of the seminar size. Outside class preparation and follow-up expectations commensurate with 1 credit-hour of course work will be expected of students so they can engage in discussions and reflect on experiences. Instructors should be seen as sharing the exploration of each topic of being educated, rather than being the expert imparting wisdom. The “shared inquiry” idea will be encouraged. The Director of Freshman Programs will work with Lead Academic Advisors and the Office for Academic Excellence and Assessment to offer a variety of resources for faculty including reading suggestions, case studies, alumni panels, limited outside presenters, immersions, and other out-of-class activities.

A.3.c. *Structure of Freshman Perspectives*

- **Freshman Perspectives will be taught by a faculty member of the students' college**

While faculty come from all departments, they share a unique perspective on life in the Academy and the student role in it. Faculty will be asked to consider the uniqueness of this opportunity and the impact they may make on each advisee via an annual program on the Call of the Freshman Seminar Advisor offered by Cardoner.

To reflect the two-year time commitment involved, the FSAC recommends that faculty be compensation be increased to \$2000. The committee also recommends that Faculty receive an additional \$150 for the summer calling to their advisees and \$50 per Summer Preview advising session.

- **Freshman Perspectives will be limited to 15 students per faculty member**

Because of its unique size, the process of the course, that is, the close interaction and discussion between student and faculty and other students, makes Seminar so critical to freshman year. Currently, most freshman classes range from 25 to up to 350 students in some of the sciences. Decreasing the size of seminar to 15 students and a faculty member enables a sense of community. Faculty members can engage students personally rather than just lecture. Students learn by discussion, action, and reflection. This type of interaction is one of the hallmarks of Jesuit education.

A 15-student limit per seminar also lessens the amount of time faculty need to set aside for the two required one-on-one conversations per semester (from 20+ hours per semester to 15). With freshmen enrollment projected to be 1000 in 2006-07, this recommendation raises the number of faculty needed university-wide for the 2006 -2007 academic year from 54 to 70. Fifty advisors would be needed for Arts and Sciences (including Honors Seminars), 12 for COBA and 5 for Nursing. Two additional advisors are required for transfer students and one advisor is needed for a second semester class that includes transfers and incoming freshmen.

Some interest was expressed in offering sections that combined 10 advisees from Nursing with 10 advisees from Arts and Sciences into one seminar with two advisors. Faculty members wishing to team teach such a section would have fewer individual advisees. This recommendation would depend on Nursing finding more faculty to act as advisors.

- **Freshman Perspectives will be a required one-credit, one-semester course.**

Currently, half of the institutions surveyed across the country offer 1-credit seminars.²¹ The Freshman Seminar Advisory Committee has concluded that because of the number of CORE requirements currently required of students, and the fact that many of our freshman plan to fulfill preprofessional requirements in addition to their majors, only one

²¹ Tobolsky, p93.

more required credit hour is possible in a semester. A two or three-credit Freshman Seminar course in one semester would put many students at or over the 18 credit hour limit. It is better to limit the seminar to one semester because faculty are less likely to take on an additional course overload for two semesters. The School of Nursing (SON) has elected to implement a second semester course to continue the close relationship between the SON and the student advisees. However, the NUR 116 course would not have to be considered part of Freshman perspective courses.

- **Freshman Perspectives will be a graded course with a clear rubric of expectations by each instructor**

Currently, the freshman seminar is a Pass/Fail course with little outside class work required. This tends to contribute to an image that what happens in seminar is not truly valued and that attendance, rather than true engagement in discussions and activities, is the only expectation.

Over 75% of institutions offering a freshman seminar do so for a letter grade.²² Grading is a strong motivator for students in their freshman year. Grading also reflects a change in the objectives to a more academic content rather than an extended-orientation type of seminar. Grading also makes preparation for each class more likely.

Concerns were raised that grading the seminar may cause tension between the student and advisor. While other schools with graded seminars had not cited this as a problem, Creighton could emphasize various methods of assessment that focus on feedback and student learning rather than graded tests. Instructors will develop clear rubrics of expectations for their seminar to justify the grade earned by each student. Sample rubrics will be developed by the Office of Academic Excellence and Assessment.

- **Freshman Perspectives will be co-facilitated with a senior student chosen by the faculty member.**

According to several higher education researchers, fellow students are very influential on student outcomes in college.²³ Upperclassmen tend to set the bar to which freshmen look to rise. Recently, COBA began to utilize senior students as leaders in their weekly seminar meetings. One of the results was a higher sense of community among COBA freshman seminars (as reported on student course evaluations) than in either Arts and Sciences or Nursing seminars. Upperclassmen are able to give freshmen a student perspective on life at Creighton. To see an upperclassman in a role of leading an academic course and contributing to intellectual discussions with faculty will model for freshmen an appropriate relationship with faculty.

The FSAC recommends that a senior student, chosen by the faculty advisor, share the responsibilities of transitioning freshmen into the Academy. As with our current RA and Student Group Leader programs, a key component will be the training of the seminar

²² Ibid

²³ Astin, 1993. p87.

leaders. The Education Department, in conjunction with Student Services, will develop and offer a three-credit course on Educational Leadership, one credit of which will be fulfilled by the senior student facilitating the seminar with a faculty member²⁴. Seniors will be specifically trained on leading seminar objectives related to healthy student development and the fourth learning outcome. Seniors will also work closely with their faculty member to assist in facilitating all other objectives.

- **A sophomore/junior student will also be assigned to each seminar.**

Similar to the current Student Group Leaders, a sophomore or junior will provide a new student perspective on topics, lead the group through Welcome Week activities, and plan social opportunities outside of seminar. Two seminars may be combined for Welcome Week activities.

- **A Lead Academic Advisor will be assigned to support each advisor.**

To lessen the time commitment required and to ensure consistency of information and support for faculty advisors, a Lead Academic Advisor will be assigned to each seminar (each LAA may serve up to 6 seminars at once). He or she will be responsible for:

- summer registration calling, (at the discretion of the faculty)
- Summer Preview meetings and review of student on-line registration (at the discretion of the faculty)
- presentation and development of a four year plan (at the discretion of the faculty member)
- working with the Director of Freshman Programs to facilitate best practices for teaching various topics of seminar
- assisting advisors in dealing with challenging students and situations
- following up with students on academic probation
- acting as a resource person for advisors and students
- encouraging major area declaration by end of sophomore year

LAA's may come from a pool of current administrators familiar with course advising. Additional faculty or professionals may need to be hired in this capacity for an annual stipend of \$3,000.

- **Increase the prestige of Freshman Seminar Advisors.**

Currently, the need for faculty willing to take on the responsibility of a Freshman Seminar is so high that the de facto practice is to accept any faculty member who is willing even if they have received poor reviews as a teacher and/or advisor in the past. There needs to be more incentive to put our best faculty forward. Rather than being seen as “babysitting” freshmen, seminar needs to be where our top teachers engage our newest students to give them inspiration for their journey. Several methods to increase prestige were noted in research and campus interviews:

²⁴ Seniors for the Nursing Seminar may have to do their training prior to the fall semester.

- **Deans should send a personal invitation to those with top teaching evaluations to teach seminar rather than a general email request for anyone.**
- **The winner of the annual teaching award as voted by students should give an annual freshmen address during welcome week.**
- **Upper administrators teach a Freshman Seminar section. This helps them to be familiar with the student perspective and makes students take the course more seriously.**

A.3.d. Assessment

The Director of Freshman Programs will assess the student learning associated with the seminars relative to the stated learning objectives as part of the annual assessment of Learning Outcomes of Freshman Year. This assessment will inform what aspects need to be modified to enhance student learning in future years.

A.3.e. Funding

The Strategic Plan looks to ensure overall Financial Stability for Creighton by increasing student enrollment via increasing student retention. Specifically, the tactics include devoting additional resources to retention and advising programs (B1c2, E3b1 of the Strategic Plan). Freshman Seminar and Advising is clearly one of these.

Additional funding will be needed to increase the faculty stipend, increase the number and compensation of Lead Academic Advisors, offer the 3-credit course to senior student leaders, to train the sophomore/junior leaders, and to cover the increased number of seminars due to reducing the size of the seminar. A comparison of funding for current and proposed seminar programs is offered on the next page.

	2005 Freshman Seminar		Proposed Faculty-led Freshman Perspectives	
Adivsors	54 x \$1500 ²⁵	81000	70 x \$2000	140000
+ Soc. Sec 8%	81000 x .08	6480	140,000x .08	11200
Lead Academic Advisors ²⁶	4 x2500	10000 ²⁷	11.5 LAAs ²⁸ (7 new @ \$3000)	21000
Additional funding for faculty willing to do previews and summer calling			30 (estimated) x \$400 (estimated)	12000
Fun \$ per seminar	\$200 x54	10800	\$150 x 70	10500
Non-salary	Advertising, printing, speakers, food, media services	17200	Similar expenses + development of Senior leader course	24000
Total		\$125,480		218700

²⁵ For AY 2005-2006

²⁶ Lead Academic Advisors are only available in CAS now.

²⁷ This has come out of A&S budget in the past.

²⁸ Some of these will come from currently funded administrators so new funding will only be needed for 7.

A.4. A Secondary Option for Freshman Seminar: The Freshman Seminar on Living and Learning at Creighton

The Freshman Seminar Advisory Committee was unanimous in designing a freshman seminar that strengthened the academic nature of seminar and eased the advising burden on faculty. If these recommendations are not approved by the various colleges, the Director of Freshman Programs offers an alternative structure for enhancing Freshman Seminar and Freshman Year programming. This alternative was not discussed or endorsed by the Freshman Seminar Advisory Committee.

A.4.a. The Case for Professional Freshman Advisors leading seminar

There are many ways Creighton could develop its freshmen-faculty interaction. Choosing to have faculty lead freshman seminar and act as freshman advisors is a strategic decision in freshman programming. As a result of this decision, the FSAC has recommended a Freshman Seminar meant to attract and engage faculty, but not necessarily to address all the needs of freshmen. Developing a Freshman Year Program around 10-15 professional Freshman Advisors allows for additional objectives to be met with more efficiency and without significantly more funding.

- Creighton already has many non-faculty professionals acting as advisors to excellent reviews.
- Faculty know their discipline and their department, but they do not necessarily know the curriculum or particular nuances of different programs and pre-professional plans. Often the newest faculty with the least understanding of the curriculum volunteer to teach Seminar. As Creighton looks to develop more dual and multi-college degrees, this complexity will only grow.
- Building a freshman advisor relationship around faculty working on overtime makes it hard to give freshman the level of individual attention recommended. Currently, we require two one-on-one meetings each semester for freshman and sophomore year. Anecdotally, however, we know that often faculty are meeting with students only to give out PIN numbers for registration. Consequently, many opportunities are missed for directing students to resources or addressing concerns.
- Training 67 faculty on overtime leads to inconsistencies. Training is not required. Some faculty attend and some don't. As resources and programs change, it is hard to keep so many people "in the loop" to pass on information to advisees.
- The number of topics to be covered in freshman seminar could easily extend into a second credit hour, but because faculty are not likely to be willing to do an overload course for a full year and may not be comfortable leading discussion on many of the personal development topics, the seminar is limited to the disservice of students.
- Both higher education research and previous Creighton committees on the Freshman Year recommend a year-long program. The challenges faced by freshman during their second semester are different than those from first semester. To end the freshman seminar after only one semester leaves freshmen without one

- of their closest communities and without regular contact with one of their key resources at a challenging point in their first year.
- The admissions staff already takes on additional work because once students deposit there is no clear entity to hand off to. With the FSAC recommendation, students will be handed off to LAA's then to their faculty advisor working on overtime.
 - Professional advisors can be evaluated on the quality of their work with students, ensuring that Creighton offers the highest quality, best trained advisor possible.

A Seminar lead by professional advisors would be called The Freshman Seminar on Living and Learning at Creighton.

A.4.b. Objectives of Freshman Seminar on Living and Learning at Creighton

The theme of seminar will be to meet the second, third, and fourth goals of freshman year:

Exploring what it means to be an educated person, Developing a sense of identity and belonging and exploring how Ignatian values are reflected in themselves.

- *Articulate the value of a liberal arts education as demonstrated in Creighton's core;*
- *Articulate the differences between a Jesuit perspective and a secular perspective of education;*
- *Articulate the role of spirituality in academics;*
- *Participate in an intellectual community;*
- *Articulate the principles of academic honesty;*
- *Identify instances of academic dishonesty;*
- *Exhibit academic honesty;*
- *Demonstrate how to engage faculty;*
- *Demonstrate how to be responsible consumers of information (how to access data, how to critically evaluate a source, who's voices counts, etc.);*
- *Identify differences in college expectations from their high school experiences;*
- *Develop a four-year plan for their academic coursework;*
- *Recognize personal strengths and weaknesses;*
- *Begin career planning;*
- *Demonstrate lifeskills such as money management, interpersonal skills, diversity awareness, time management;*
- *Articulate healthy attitudes toward personal development;*
- *Participate in a community of peers;*
- *Participate in a relationship with the Freshmen Seminar Instructor via at least two one-on-one 20-30 minute meetings each semester;*
- *Share the challenges of transition and adjustment to college; and*
- *Utilize various campus resources.*

Again, specific topics to be addressed will be developed in conjunction with Student Services and faculty. Faculty will also be asked to contribute to best means for meeting each objective via the Freshman Year Advisory Committee.

A.4.c. The Structure of The Freshman Seminar on Living and Learning at Creighton (FSLLC)

- **1000 freshman students could be served by 10-15 professional freshman advisors**

Two full-time 10-month advisors are already funded in the CAP program. By restructuring the roles of other administrators who are currently responsible for dealing with freshmen and knowledgeable of freshman concerns, including Resident Directors, a total of six new full-time freshman advisors would need to be hired. Graduate Students in the Master of College Counseling and Student Development may also be utilized. Each full-time advisor would be responsible for 100 students, teaching five freshman seminar classes (each part time advisor for 40, teaching two freshman seminars.) Seminars would remain one advisor to 20 students. The Freshman Advisors would be perfectly situated in the new Academic Resource Center.

- **The Freshman Seminar on Living and Learning at Creighton will be limited to 20 students.**

This is the size of current seminars and seems to work well for connecting Welcome Week programming to seminar.

- **The Freshman Seminar on Living and Learning at Creighton will be a two semester, two-credit (One per semester) required course**

Staying for two semesters with one seminar enhances the sense of community and continuity of freshman year. Objectives can be met on an appropriate developmental time table rather than in one semester. Generally, freshman are not prepared until second semester to address the bigger picture questions of higher education, where first semester is better geared to learning resources and means of survival. A full-year seminar syllabus designed by Prof. Barb Harris reflecting student development is offered in Appendix 5. A condensed one-semester version can be offered for transfer students.

- **The Freshman Seminar on Living and Learning at Creighton will be a graded course with a clear rubric of expectations by each instructor**

Again, grading motivates students to engage material, but the emphasis will be placed on feedback and meeting the expectations of the course developed in a clear rubric. Grading is more likely to be consistent with 15 instructors rather than 67.

- **Two upperclass Student Group Leaders would be assigned to each seminar**

Student Group Leaders would continue to be a valuable tool for peer education in the seminar. Professional advisors are likely to have more time to work with their student group leaders than current faculty do.

- **Professional Advisors will be responsible for all summer registration calling and Preview meetings with their advisees.**

Because supporting freshmen is their only job, professional freshman advisors can actually give students more attention than faculty and administrators working on overtime. They can be responsible for the freshman immediately upon deposit. They can be present for all summer advising. They will continue to be available for advisees throughout their sophomore year. They can also lead additional freshman programming including connections with faculty courses.

A.4.d. Assessment and Evaluation

Again, working with the Office for Excellence in Teaching and Assessment, the Director of Freshman Programs will develop and utilize a variety of direct and indirect measures of how well each objective was met by students. Evaluation of individual advisors will also be similar to all other professional evaluations at Creighton, ensuring excellence in advising.

A.4.e. Funding

Additional funding will be needed for at least six new professional advisors full time. Salary for this position is estimated around \$30,000. No funding would be needed for Lead Academic Advisors, Summer Calling or Preview. These advisors would be further utilized by leading other proposed Freshman Year programming as well. The chart on the next page details the various expenditures comparing the current and proposed Seminar/Advising programs.

	2005 Freshman Seminar		Proposed Faculty-led Freshman Perspectives		Proposed Professional Advisor Freshman Seminar on Living and Learning	
Adivsors	54 x \$1500 ²⁹	81000	70 x \$2000	140000	6 ³⁰ x 30,000	180000
+ Soc. Sec 8%	81000 x .08	6480	140,000x .08	11200	.33benefitsx180000	59400
Lead Academic Advisors ³¹	4 x2500	10000 ³²	11.5 LAAs ³³ (7 new @ \$3000)	21000		
Additional funding for faculty willing to do previews and summer calling			30 (estimated) x \$400 (estimated)	12000		
Fun \$	\$200 x54	10800	\$150 x 70	10500	\$200 x 54	10800
Non-salary	Advertising, printing, speakers, food, media services	17200	Similar expenses + development of Senior leader course	24000	Similar expenses to the current seminar (no senior leaders course.)	20000
Total		\$125,480		218700		270200

²⁹ For AY 2005-2006

³⁰ Does not include two current 10-month funded CAP Program positions or funding for current administrators taking on advisor role part time.

³¹ Lead Academic Advisors are only available in CAS now.

³² This has come out of A&S budget in the past.

³³ Some of these will come from currently funded administrators so new funding will only be needed for 7.

A.5. Summary of Freshman Seminar Recommendations

Two proposals for revising Creighton's Freshman Seminar are offered for consideration, one faculty-lead and one lead by professional advisors. Either will be the foundation of Creighton's Freshman Experience. However, Freshman Seminar alone can not fulfill all the objectives to achieve the learning outcomes of freshman year. Additional new and enhanced programming is needed to offer a holistic experience.

B. Recommendations for Additional Freshman Year Programming

B.1. Recommendations for Academic Affairs

- **Creighton should offer its faculty more structures and resources that help them to engage freshmen.**

Faculty are the cornerstone to students reaching the goals of Freshman Year and beyond. Not all students will live in residence or participate in extra-curricular activities or the spiritual dimension of the university. All students will, however, be impacted by the faculty, for better or for worse. Vincent Tinto (2002) notes, "Students who learn, are students who stay. Institutions that are successful in building settings that educate their students, all students, not just some, are institutions that are successful in retaining their students." The Director of Freshman Programs should work in conjunction with the Office of Excellence in Teaching to develop workshops and guides to assist teachers in engaging freshmen in their courses. The goal would be to help faculty know better what to expect of their students, how and where to refer them to resources beyond the classroom, and ways to engage students in the classroom.

- **Offer new One Credit Seminars on faculty chosen topics**

Creighton's core is very tight. Given over 1/3 of our students enter with an expectation of fulfilling professional school requirements in addition to the major and core requirements, few credit hours are left for exploring unrequired topics. At the same time, faculty are often teaching to classes of 35+ where they lack the opportunity for discussion and getting to know students personally. Finally, many freshmen who need to drop a 4 – credit science or math course are left with the concern of being one-credit less than a full time student (losing housing, insurance, scholarships, etc.)

One method to allow more faculty to engage freshmen on cutting edge topics is to offer one-credit seminars on faculty-chosen topics specifically for freshmen. Meeting one hour a week for a whole semester or two hours for part of a semester and reading a limited number of texts (possibly novels or non-fiction sources rather than text books) allows the freshmen to get to know a faculty member personally and gain a brief introduction to a unique concept. In this format of faculty-led seminar, Creighton will continue to meet the Strategic Plan objective of "modeling teacher-scholars who engage in innovative,

integrated, and values-centered learning...” These seminars may work well as a second semester type of freshmen seminar or as the basis of a living/learning community. The objectives of these seminars could help meet any of the learning outcomes of freshman year. Faculty would be paid \$1000 stipend for the overload course.

- **Teach library research skills in the context of a freshman introductory course**

Demonstrating library research skills will contribute to freshmen fulfilling the first learning outcome of developing fundamental skills. According to the 2004 YFCY, significantly fewer Creighton freshmen reported growth in their library/research skills during their freshman year than freshmen at other universities. Currently, Freshmen are introduced to the resources of the library through a required library visit of freshman seminar that is often based on a library scavenger hunt. Research indicates that “to be effective, the library unit must teach the research skills academic classes require (not just the location of resources in a building.) This indicates the need for a research-based, not scavenger-hunt model. Students also need to research a real-life topic or issue in order to see value in the activity. A course-related approach is more likely to satisfy these requirements.”³⁴ Departments offering freshmen-level courses should work with the library resource staff to determine how a research project could best be incorporated into the course syllabus. While not all sections need to do research papers, each freshman should take at least one course that does require a library research paper.

- **Develop learning communities that help students see connections across courses and outside of class.**

In AY 2003 and 2004, Creighton offered freshmen the LINKs program in which students in one Freshman Seminar would also share two other classes and live in the Gallagher residence hall. While feedback on the program was generally positive from both students and professors, the program was ended due to lack of clear objectives and the amount of work required to coordinate registration of so many students. Since that time, Creighton has gone to online registration for freshmen which would eliminate many of the challenges of organizing the program. Additionally, new research demonstrates significant impact on learning outcomes from linking freshman seminar to other courses including:

- Improved study skills;
- Improved Academic/Cognitive skills;
- Improved Critical thinking skills;
- Stronger connections with faculty and peers; and
- Higher out of class engagement.³⁵
- Enhanced retention to sophomore year.³⁶

³⁴ Baker, 2005. p.26.

³⁵ Swing, 2004 p.11-13.

³⁶ Keup, 2005.

Reinstating a LINKS-type program will be a good first step towards the Strategic Plan call for “Creating a residential living-learning environment...for enhanced social experience (D1a).” This will contribute to freshman meeting the first three learning outcomes.

- **Develop an Omaha Immersion Program for freshmen**

Although Creighton’s Jesuit community intentionally sought out an urban area where academics could engage the community, many freshmen rarely have the opportunity to venture off campus, particularly to the north and south Omaha areas. When confronted with the realities of the larger community, students can begin to see the importance of their education to addressing injustices, thus becoming an educated person in the Jesuit tradition.

Brief (4.5 hour) immersions offered as a means to fulfill the learning objectives of Freshman Seminar have been demonstrated to have positive impact on student views of their education.³⁷ These immersions would also enhance Creighton’s support of the urban community. To offer 50 immersions over the course of a semester or year, a part-time immersion coordinator position would need to be established. It may also be possible to utilize some students (e.g., CCSJ student coordinators, Diversity Scholars, members of Creighton University’s cultural student organizations, and members of the Cortina Community) of as guides for this programming.

- **Develop a summer reading program.**

The first few weeks of college are the most influential on many students for setting university expectations and offering new perspectives. Many universities are finding that a summer reading program helps students have a common point of discussion in initial classes and helps students tie together different classes to see a broader picture of education outside the classroom.

Generally, a summer reading program consists of a committee choosing a book to be sent to freshmen as their first text of college. The book can be a novel or work of non-fiction, but is generally geared to offer an inspirational or challenging perspective. The reading is then the focus of seminar discussion, initial English writing assignments (to set a common baseline of writing skill), and a theme for additional campus activities including speaker presentations during the year.

The Cardoner program offered to fund a summer reading for this year, this did not create a common experience because only a few seminars used it and the book was not utilized in other courses. Some students loved it, others didn’t, and some felt left out. To have the intended impact the summer reading must be carefully chosen and fully implemented.

If offered as a component of freshmen programs, the book could be a starting point for meeting the fourth learning outcome of reflecting on personal development and

³⁷Evaluations of Freshman Seminar Immersion offered by the Director of Freshman Programs, March 2005

Seminar's goal of helping students to know what it means to be an educated person. The book could also be utilized in other courses and extra-curricular activities. The book could also be a way for alums to connect with freshmen.

Funding for this program includes the cost of the text, mailing, and speaker or extra-curricular activities associated with the book if desired.

B.2. Recommendations for Student Services

- **Weekly Student Development Workshops**

Currently, a strong safety net is in place for our most at-risk students in the form of Student Support Services advisors, athletic advisors, and the Strategies for Academic Success course (formerly Master Student). At the other end of the scale we have a strong Honors Program and the Freshman Leadership Program for selected freshman. Little extra support is given to the student in between to help them get more out of their college experience and develop personally. With Freshman Seminar taking a more academic focus, the Director of Freshman Programs should work in conjunction with the Academic Success Counselor to coordinate weekly workshops that offer additional opportunities for student development. Topics could range from learning styles to money management, speed reading to study abroad and many more (a year's worth!). Attendance at workshops could be part of a living/learning community or additional consideration in RA or Student Group Leader selection. Timing of sessions would need to be careful not to conflict with popular courses. These workshops would contribute to the first and fourth learning outcomes.

- **Continue the Calling All Jays program**

Student contact with faculty, especially outside of class, is an independent predictor of learning gain or growth.³⁸ In the fall of 2003, Residence Life initiated a program entitled Calling All Jays which brought faculty and top administrators into the residence halls for one evening of knocking on doors to meet freshmen and get a sense of their concerns and experience at Creighton thus far. Not only did both students and faculty report very positive feedback from even their brief interaction, but this program won a national Residence Life award. The program is a great method of promoting faculty-student interaction, helping faculty to understand the student perspective, and developing a strong sense of community at Creighton (the third learning outcome of freshman year.) The Director of Freshman Programs should work to engage more faculty in this program.

- **Develop clear methods for engaging parents**

Parents are a valuable tool to reiterate the messages we are sending freshmen. Some freshmen have noted they talk to their parents several times a day via cell phone or email.

³⁸ Tinto, 1993.p.73.

Parents also use web sites to look up information on professors, courses, and stay in contact with advisors. As a result, all entities supporting students need to be giving parents clear and consistent messages about their role and what to expect of Creighton and their son or daughter. The Director of Freshman Programs needs to work with the parent council and other entities on campus to develop ways to better engage and support parents of freshmen.

- **Develop more ways to get freshmen involved in activities**

Students provide a wealth of information on their admissions form including activities that interest them and background information. Currently that information is not utilized in any significant way beyond the admit decision and course placement. In the interest of helping freshmen feel a sense of belonging, Freshman Programs should utilize that data to help freshmen connect their stated interests with opportunities available on campus.

Other students suggested holding a second semester involvement fair as well since class and work schedules change and students may have been hesitant to get involved first semester. Activity registration could also be done in the dining halls in the evening, possibly with three different fairs, one for service/spiritual activities, one for physical activities like IM and one for social/academic activities.

- **Develop more specifically freshmen social activities**

Freshman noted that although Creighton promotes itself as a city campus, there is little opportunity to get off campus without a car. To continue building a sense of identity and community and to offer more non-alcohol related activities, Freshman Programs should work with Student Activities to offer regular on and off-campus social programming designed and promoted specifically for freshmen. Simple changes in the Blue Jay shuttle route and transportation to weekend activities will go a long way to helping freshmen overcome homesickness and build friendships.

B.3 Recommendations for University Ministry

- **Expand the number of Freshman 24 hours retreats offered**

The 24 hours retreat offers freshmen a day away from Creighton at the university retreat center to hear advice from upperclassmen on making the most of your time at Creighton and to build community. Having Freshman Seminars attend together enhances the sense of community in the Seminar. 24 Hours is one of the truly unique programs Creighton offers to contribute to personal reflection and better understand Ignatian values (the fourth learning outcome). Currently only 180 students of 963 are able to go on 24 hours. Opening the retreat to more students and entire seminars enables students to understand the value of other campus ministry opportunities.

C. Initial Budget for Proposed Freshman Programs

To develop a holistic Freshman Year Experience at Creighton, new programming must be funded. Because Freshman Seminar is the main vehicle of the Freshman Year Experience it is currently the top funding priority. Priority for other programming recommendations will vary by the level of interest of other offices involved and the advice of the Freshman Year Advisory Committee. Proposed funding is generally speculative based upon costs for programming currently and as offered at other schools.

Proposed Freshman Seminar revision	\$218,700 -\$270,200
Faculty one-credit seminars (varied topics)	\$25,000
Development of a Living/Learning Community	\$5,000
Freshman Immersion Program	\$20,000
Summer Reading Program ³⁹	\$20,000-\$30,000
Weekly Student Development Workshops	\$15,000
Freshman Social Programming	\$10,000
Connections of Freshmen Parents	\$5,000
Total Proposed Freshman Programming Budget⁴⁰	\$318,700-\$380,200

D. The Role of the Director of Freshman Programs

The first year of this position raised some clear responsibilities to be delegated to the Director of Freshman Programs. The position description should include:

- Acting as an ombudsman between freshman and the university (representing freshmen concerns to relevant programming/policy entities and promoting university policies/programs to freshmen.)
- Coordinating offices responsible for the transition of freshman into the University community to ensure consistency and coherence
- Act as a bridge between Student Services and Academic Affairs to ensure that both entities are aware of programs/policies on behalf of freshman.
- Integrate knowledge of national trends and research on Freshman Year Experience with assessment of current freshman programming.
- Establish the Freshman Year Advisory Committee to assist with developing new methods of helping freshmen fulfill the learning outcomes of freshman year.
- Establishing a Freshman Year Student Advisory Committee to ensure a student perspective on all programming.
- Oversee the budget and implementation of new freshman programming.
- Assess the impact of Freshman Seminar and other freshman programming in light of the learning outcomes of freshman year.
- Offer recommendations for new and enhanced programming.

³⁹ Offset possible through coordination with Cardoner at Creighton, Alumni Association, and Student Fees.

⁴⁰ Does not include current funding for part-time Director of Freshman Programs.

IV. Report Summary

Creighton University is poised to move from offering various programs for freshmen to offering a holistic freshman experience based on distinct learning outcomes. The Freshman Seminar Advisory Committee recommends the development of a more academic-focused seminar lead by faculty. The Director of Freshman Programs also offers a secondary option for Freshman Seminar as well as other programming needs and recommendations for other departments. While this move to a learner-centered Freshman Year will entail a change in some structures and additional funding, it will alleviate current gaps in programming and ensure our students begin their journey to be a Creighton graduate on solid ground.

Appendix 1
2004 YFCY Data from the Office of Institutional Research
Dr. Stephanie Wernig

The information is organized as follows.

- YFCY 2004 Results: Means Profile compares the mean scores of each group on the questions where a mean score is the best way to understand any differences among the groups. I have indicated the scoring key for each question and a designation [asterisk(s)] if the Creighton score is statistically significantly different from the “private university” and/or “all schools” groupings.
- YFCY 2004 Results: Percentage Responses compares percentage responses and a designation [asterisk(s)] if the Creighton score is statistically significantly different from the “private university” and/or “all schools” groupings.
- At the end of each questions, I have added a brief interpretation of the data in italics.

There are eleven other institutions in the “private university” grouping: Baylor, Boston College, Catholic University, Emory, Fordham, Lincoln University, Loyola Marymount, Notre Dame, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Southern Methodist, and Talladega College.

YFCY 2004 Results: Means Profile

If the difference between the means is significant at the 95% confidence level, the designation is one asterisk (*).

If the difference between the means is significant at the 99% confidence level, the designation is two asterisks (**).

4. Since entering college, how often have you interacted with:

(1 = Never, 2 = 1 or 2 times per term, 3 = 1 or 2 times per month, 4 = once a week, 5 = 2 or 3 times per week, 6 = Daily)

	<u>CU</u>	<u>Private Univ.</u>	<u>ALL Schools</u>
Faculty <u>during</u> office hours	2.89	2.81	2.87
Faculty <u>outside</u> of class or office hours	2.45	2.36	2.44
Academic advisors/counselors	2.44	2.30**	2.32**
Other college personnel	2.76	2.58**	2.63*
Close friends at this institution	5.73	5.73	5.61**
Close friends not at this institution	4.51	4.55	4.56
Your family	4.53	4.61	4.68**

Creighton freshmen report significantly more interaction with their academic advisors, other college staff and close friends at the same institution than other freshmen.

5. “Satisfied/Very Satisfied” with

(1 = Very dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Satisfied, 5 = Very satisfied)

	<u>CU</u>	<u>Private Univ.</u>	<u>ALL Schools</u>
Academic advising	4.65	4.46**	4.60
Tutoring or other academic assistance	4.66	4.54**	4.66

Orientation for new students	4.72	4.69	4.71
Psychological counseling services	4.60	4.37**	4.47*

Creighton freshmen report significantly more satisfaction with academic advising, tutoring, and counseling services than other freshmen.

8. Since entering college, how successful have you felt:

(1 = Unsuccessful, 2 = Somewhat successful, 3 = Completely successful)

	<u>CU</u>	<u>Private Univ.</u>	<u>ALL Schools</u>
Understanding what your professors expect of you academically	2.48	2.43*	2.44*
Developing effective study skills	2.27	2.21*	2.19**
Adjusting to the academic demands of college	2.42	2.39	2.38
Managing your time effectively	2.15	2.13	2.13
Getting to know faculty	2.11	1.98**	2.05**
Developing close friendships with other students	2.64	2.64	2.59*
Utilizing campus services available to students	2.30	2.30	2.29

Creighton freshmen report feeling significantly more successful in understanding what professors expect, developing effective study skills, getting to know faculty, and developing close friendships with others students than other freshmen.

13. Since entering college, how often have you felt

(1 = Not at all, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Frequently)

	<u>CU</u>	<u>Private Univ.</u>	<u>ALL Schools</u>
Intimidated by your professors	2.11	2.13	2.01**
Your college courses inspired you to think in new ways	2.89	2.96*	2.93

I do not understand why both Creighton freshmen and those at the other private universities report being significantly more intimidated by faculty unless it is a "quality" measure. However, it is concerning that statistically fewer Creighton freshmen indicate their courses inspired them to think in new ways.

19. Since entering college, how often have you:

(1 = Not at all, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Frequently)

	<u>CU</u>	<u>Private Univ.</u>	<u>ALL Schools</u>
Spoke up in class	3.08	3.04	3.04
Turned in assignments late	1.60	1.65	1.75**

19. Since entering college, how often have you (CONT.):

(1 = Not at all, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Frequently)

	<u>CU</u>	<u>Private Univ.</u>	<u>ALL Schools</u>
Discussed course content outside of class	3.23	3.29*	3.25
Received tutoring	1.70	1.75	1.74
Skipped class	2.25	2.29	2.25

Received advice and guidance from professor	2.14	2.10	2.17
Received emotional support from professor	1.96	1.89	1.96

Other than being significantly less likely to turn in assignments late and discuss course work outside class, Creighton freshmen are not different than the freshmen at other institutions on these measures.

20. Compared to when you entered college, how would you describe your growth in:
(1 = Much weaker, 2 = Weaker, 3 = No change, 4 = Stronger, 5 = Much stronger)

	<u>CU</u>	<u>Private Univ.</u>	<u>ALL Schools</u>
General knowledge	4.08	4.06	4.04
Analytical & problem-solving skills	3.88	3.80**	3.77**
Knowledge of a particular field or discipline	4.00	4.09**	4.07**
Critical thinking skills	3.91	3.84**	3.82**
Knowledge of people from different races/cultures	3.67	3.71	3.70
Religious beliefs and convictions	3.50	3.53	3.41**
Ability to get along with others	3.77	3.76	3.72
Library/research skills	3.54	3.56	3.61*
Ability to work as part of a team	3.48	3.46	3.52
Understanding of problems facing your community	3.44	3.46	3.42
Understanding of national issues	3.39	3.41	3.46*
Understanding of global issues	3.39	3.40	3.45

Creighton freshmen are significantly more likely to report growth in analytical & problem-solving skills as well as critical thinking than other freshmen. I would surmise that the reason Creighton freshmen do not perceive growth in a particular field or discipline is because they are mainly taking courses in the core curriculum

YFCY 2004 Results: Percentage Responses

If the difference between the means is significant at the 95% confidence level, the designation is one asterick (*).

If the difference between the means is significant at the 99% confidence level, the designation is two asterisks (**).

17. Have you taken a course or seminar specifically designed to enhance academic skills and/or social development of 1st year students:

		<u>CU</u>	<u>Private Univ.</u>
<u>ALL Schools</u>			
Yes, required component of curriculum	84.0	39.9**	48.5**
Yes, optional	4.3	7.4	11.6
No	11.7	52.8**	39.9**

Creighton is much more likely to offer a “freshman seminar, etc.” program than other institutions.

18. Type of 1 st year course:	<u>CU</u>	<u>Private Univ.</u>	<u>ALL Schools</u>
Extended orientation seminar	58.1	13.6**	20.9**
Academic seminar	13.7	20.2**	18.7**
Pre-professional or discipline-linked seminar	6.9	4.6	4.9
Basic study skills seminar	7.8	9.1	12.7
Other	5.7	5.8	7.1
Did not take a 1 st year course	7.8	46.8**	35.7**

Creighton's "freshman seminar" is seen as an extension of orientation by the majority of freshmen.

12. Indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following:

	<u>August</u>	<u>April</u>
<u>Most change</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>
<u>+/-</u>		
Have administrative responsibility for the work of others	35.9	47.1
11.2		
Become accomplished in one of the performing arts	10.1	21.1
11.0		
Helping to promote racial understanding	29.5	39.9
10.4		
Influencing social values	43.0	53.4
10.4		
Becoming an authority in my field	60.5	70.9
10.4		
<u>Least change</u>		
Helping others who are in difficulty	77.9	81.0
3.1		
Becoming a community leader	42.8	45.1
2.3		
Making a theoretical contribution to science	16.9	18.0
1.1		
Influencing the political structure	18.0	19.1
1.1		
Keeping up to date with political affairs	36.0	35.4
- 0.6		
Being very well off financially	66.9	60.8
- 6.1		

In comparison to freshmen at the other private universities, fewer Creighton freshmen rate

- Helping to promote racial understanding*
 - Participating in a community action program*
 - Influencing social values, and*
 - Helping others in difficulty*
- as "essential/very important".*

In comparison to freshmen at the other private universities, significantly fewer Creighton freshmen rate

- Developing a meaningful philosophy of life and*
 - Integrating spirituality into my life*
- as “essential/very important”.*

Appendix 2
 Members of the Freshman Seminar Advisory Committee
 2005

Freshman Seminar Advisory Committee

Name	Title
Scott Chadwick	Asst. VP Academic Affairs/Academic Excellence and Assessment
Kristina DeNeve	Director Cardoner at Creighton
Dave Dobberpuhl	A&S Chemistry faculty
Mary Higgins	Director of Student Retention
Lisa Kelly	Director of Freshman Programs
Linda Lazure	Assoc. Dean of Student Affairs, School of Nursing
Rob Moorman	COBA- Marketing and Management
Deb Ponec	A&S Education, Chair
Annette Schmeling	Assoc. VP for Student Learning
Michele Starzyk	Asst. Dean of Students
Tanya Winegard	Asst. VP for Student Life

Representation from the student body was sought via student government, but no representative was named.

Appendix 3
Preliminary Recommendations of the First Year Initiatives Committee
May 2002

First Year Initiatives
Preliminary Recommendations

Background

Since January 2002, an ad-hoc committee has been meeting weekly to consider ways in which the University might enhance first-year programming for incoming freshmen in 2003 and beyond. Student services staff members joined student representatives and both faculty members and administrators from all three of the undergraduate colleges to complete this task. The committee heard presentations and received written materials from a dozen individuals or offices that currently serve freshmen; we learned about the work of the Freshman Seminar Seminar that met last year; and we visited the freshman residence halls and ate dinner with hall directors and RAs. The following preliminary recommendations result from our hard work.

Building on a Solid Foundation

Our committee is impressed by the many programs already available for first-year students. Programs such as the Freshman Leadership Program, LINKS, the Freshman Seminars, retreats sponsored by University Ministry, and service opportunities all play their part in developing our new students. Any new program **will** need to exploit what we have already learned to do well.

Assumptions and Aspirations

We believe that Creighton's freshman programs should lay the foundation for each student to succeed by helping her or him to balance academic, personal, social and spiritual development. To this end, we recommend adoption of the following principles:

- Freshman programming should be integrated. Each element—whether it is sponsored by student life, by an individual college, by student government, or by an academic support unit—should be designed to complement all other elements that relate to it in time, in theme, or in purpose.
- S Freshman programming should be intentional. While all students have important needs, the freshman year is critical to a young adult's future career at university and beyond. We should therefore approach planning all activities that affect freshmen creatively and intentionally.
- S Freshman programming should be developmental. Not all freshman students bring with them to campus the same level of intellectual, emotional, social or physical maturity. Once at Creighton, furthermore, students will develop new skills at differing speeds. Our programs must be designed to accommodate such variation and, where possible, even take advantage of it.
- / Freshman programming should be fun. Students should certainly find the activities and challenges placed before them fulfilling and rewarding, but they should also

genuinely enjoy them. The same should be true for the faculty, staff and administrators who design and implement the programs.

- S Freshman programming should be attractive. The realities of the higher education "marketplace" require that we pay some attention, at least, to how the programs we offer will appeal to important publics—most obviously to prospective students and their parents.

Critical Components

Lengthy discussion led our committee to agree that four complementary (and even, in some cases, overlapping) goals will be essential to a successful first-year program at Creighton:

1. Fostering students' awareness of self. Freshman students often understand little about their own strengths and weaknesses—in the area of their preferred learning style, for example, or as potential leaders. They need tools and skills that will enable them to assess their own abilities more accurately and then to put that information to good use.
2. Fostering students' awareness of community. First-year students find themselves in multiple communities, all of them to some degree unfamiliar: dorm room, residence hall, college classroom, city. They need to learn to recognize the expectations of each community, the roles that they and others play, and the opportunities that each presents.
3. Equipping students with fundamental academic skills. Creighton students have done well in high school and boast high test scores. But they still need to adjust to the university setting, to learn about the academic support services available to them, and to develop good work habits.
4. Facilitating contact between students and adults. Incoming students benefit from developing relationships with interested and supportive adults beyond those that result directly from their enrollment in courses. Advisors play critical roles in this respect, but so too may alumni and alumnae, community mentors, hall directors, and others.

Devilish Details

We have by no means reached agreement within the committee regarding the specifics of the program that we hope ultimately to develop for freshmen arriving at Creighton in August 2003. However, we list below some of the concepts that attracted favorable comments during our discussions, beginning with those that seem to us especially significant:

- > that all programming be planned for the full academic year, not for a single semester
- > that leadership for first-year programming be vested in a Freshman Advisory Council

- > that development of an ideal program be pursued incrementally, utilizing assessment of prior years' successes
- > that adequate funds be set aside for training those who are to implement program elements
- > that programming allow students to make choicer in certain important areas
- > that a balance be struck between providing a common experience for all freshmen and respecting differences both among students and between the needs of different colleges

Next Steps

This document contains only broad-stroke recommendations. We are presenting it for comment to senior administrators, and to staff, students, faculty and administrators across campus. Since recruiting materials for the freshman class of 2003 will go to press during the summer, we will be seeking administrative approval to include information with those mailings that will mirror the points outlined above. Additional work during the summer months will enable us to present more detailed proposals to all interested parties in August. At that point, specific recommendations will be discussed and (if appropriate) implemented following the usual review protocols in different areas of the student services and academic affairs divisions. Your comments will be warmly welcomed by Jim Moore (moorej@creighton.edu) or Tim Austin (traustin@creighton.edu).

Appendix 4
Potential Objectives to meet Freshman Year Learning Outcomes

Freshman Year Learning Outcomes	Objectives	Vehicle (s)
Freshmen will demonstrate fundamental academic skills.	Students will... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate ways to take notes • articulate ways to listen effectively in class • articulate ways to memorize material • articulate ways to increase concentration • think critically • problem solve • think creatively • communicate through oral, written, symbolic and electronic means. • Access appropriate quality information through a variety of resources for academic purposes • Articulate ways to manage time appropriately • Utilize good test preparation skills • Utilize good study skills • Articulate ways to manage stress 	-Master Student Classes -Academic Success Counseling -100 level courses -Writing Center -=Library

Potential Objectives to meet Freshman Year Learning Outcomes (continued)

Freshman Year Learning Outcomes	Objectives	Vehicle (s)
<p>Freshmen will explore what it means to be an educated person according to Creighton University's Catholic and Jesuit Mission.</p>	<p><i>Students will</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Articulate the value of a liberal arts education as demonstrated in Creighton's core;</i> • <i>Articulate the differences between a Jesuit perspective and a secular perspective of education;</i> • <i>Participate in an intellectual community.</i> • <i>Articulate the principles of academic honesty;</i> • <i>Identify instance of academic dishonesty;</i> • <i>Exhibit academic honesty</i> • <i>Demonstrate how to engage faculty;</i> • <i>Demonstrate how to be responsible consumers of information (how to access data, how to critically evaluate a source, who's voices counts, etc.)</i> • <i>Identify differences in college expectations from their high school experiences.</i> • <i>Develop a four-year plan for their academic coursework.</i> • <i>Articulate the culture of academia.</i> • <i>Experience new avenues of education beyond the classroom.</i> 	<p>-Freshman Seminar -courses -service learning -immersions and service trips</p>

Potential Objectives to meet Freshman Year Learning Outcomes (continued)

Freshman Year Learning Outcomes	Objectives	Vehicle (s)
<p>Freshmen will develop a sense of belonging and identity in the campus community.</p>	<p>Students will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Participate in a community of peers</i> • <i>Participate in a relationship with the Freshmen Seminar Instructor via at least two one-on-one 20-30 minute meetings each semester</i> • <i>Share the challenges of transition and adjustment to college.</i> • Be familiar with all campus technology systems including phone/voicemail, blue, Student Self Service, jaynet, blackboard. • Utilize campus academic resources and facilities including advising, tutoring, and library services; • Utilize extra curricular resources when desired including counseling and career services, CCSJ, etc. • Articulate important campus policies and where to get further information if needed; • Give of themselves, their time, and talents to others and the University; • Articulate Creighton's role in the local and global community (and their role as a result); • Develop support groups/create friendships • Participate in a common experience • Articulate the various types of diversity to be considered in a given situation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Freshman Seminar -Residence Life -Welcome Week -Extra curriculars -CAP center -CCSJ -Campus Ministry

Potential Objectives to meet Freshman Year Learning Outcomes (continued)

Freshman Year Learning Outcomes	Objectives	Vehicle (s)
Freshmen will explore how Ignatian values are reflected in themselves.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try new activities • Recognize personal strengths and weaknesses • Make well-informed choices about personal behavior • Begin career planning • Develop lifeskills (including interpersonal skills) • Know ways to experience and integrate the presence of God into daily life. • Know healthy attitudes toward personal development. • Explore new academic areas. • Be aware of the unique perspective each individual offers to the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Student Activities -Education 101 -Freshman Seminar -Residence Life -Campus Ministry

Appendix 5

Sample full year syllabus reflecting freshman student developmental needs
Developed by Prof. Barb Harris, 2002

Developing as an Individual)

In this first phase of student development freshmen are encouraged to examine the issues pertaining to acclimating to a new environment. Students will explore such questions as:

- ❑ *Who and where are the important adults at Creighton?*
- ❑ *What new and interesting choices am I faced with as I move away from home?*
- ❑ *How to have solid relationships with my academic advisor, roommates and friends*
- ❑ *Where is my self-confidence?*
- ❑ *What do I define as “fun” and where is the “fun” at Creighton?*

Developing as an Academic Student

As mid-terms approach, students become more aware of their academic strengths and weaknesses. Notably we will focus on differences between high school and college work, research, and relationships with faculty. Questions to be asked include:

- ❑ How well have I kept up with the workload and attendance in all classes? What has hindered me from doing so?
- ❑ What joys and surprises came with Mid-term grades and papers?
- ❑ What is plagiarism?
- ❑ How should I interact with the faculty?

Developing as a Member of the Creighton Community

Students become aware of their role as a member of the larger university community. They begin to Creighton as more than just a place to go to school. Students will explore such questions as:

- ❑ What is a Jesuit and what are the values of Jesuit education?
- ❑ In what ways can/do I follow the Ignatian traditions?
- ❑ What are my contributions to the Jesuit mission?
- ❑ How does the Jesuit educational philosophy affect me?

Developing as a Member of the Larger Community

Students begin to understand that we are members of both the Omaha Community and a Global Economy. Students will explore such questions as:

- ❑ How can my involvement in the Omaha community enhance my education?
- ❑ Do I want to study abroad?
- ❑ What summer opportunities do I have for enhancing my education?

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