

# GUIDING YOUR SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS TO SUCCESS

FALL 2007

## CONTENTS

WHAT IS THE SOPHOMORE SLUMP?	1
IDEAS FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS	2
WHAT THE EXPERTS ARE SAYING	2
SOPHOMORE SLUMP QUIZ	2
SECOND YEAR AT A GLANCE	3
LCAC SUBCOMMITTEE ON SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS	3
LUNCH AND LEARN OCTOBER 23	3
RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES	4
TIME MANAGEMENT TOOL FOR SECOND YEAR STUDENTS	4

## WHAT IS THE “SOPHOMORE SLUMP”?

Sophomores, or more accurately second-year students, face numerous challenges. Some of these challenges have continued beyond their first year at Iowa State, while others arise as brand-new concerns. Nationwide, these common challenges are referred to as “the Sophomore Slump”.

Common challenges that second-year students struggle with during this “slump” include:

- Intensified curriculum
- Finding purpose in coursework
- Major or career selection
- Perception that institutional support has decreased
- Balancing peer relationships
- Acknowledging the financial costs of a college education
- Financial independence
- Thoughts of transferring elsewhere
- Negative behavior patterns from the past catch up to them

So, how can Iowa State help students overcome this slump?

As Academic Advisers we can:

Recognize that it exists and many of our students are going through it.

Encourage our students to do some self assessment, ask them to look at the reasons why they chose Iowa State as seniors in High School. Help them to find their professional passions.

Remind your student of what he or she has accomplished in their time at Iowa State. Ask them what they feel may be lacking from their Iowa State experience that is preventing them from feeling like this is the place for them?

Have your student ask themselves

- Who am I?
- Who do I want to be?
- Where do I need to go and what do I need to do get from A to B.

Developmentally, the second-year of college is one of the most difficult. The academics become more intense, the pressure to choose a major mounts, and personal relationships become more important now than they have



been in the past. As Academic Advisers, we can help them through this trying and difficult time by being aware of the fact that it exists and knowing what resources (see opportunities and resources page 4) are available to help them get through these tough times.

Other things to watch for are trouble with studies, particularly a lack of motivation. This can many times stem from the fact that your student has not yet found what he or she wants to do for a career or chosen a major. Consider advising them to see someone in your college’s career center and taking an interest inventory test to help them discover what they may be most interested in!

All in all, the most important thing that your second-year students need to know is that you are there to help them figure out what is best for them while letting them be independent and in control of their future.



## WHAT OTHER INSTITUTIONS ARE DOING FOR THEIR SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS: UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

The University of Denver's Second-Year Experience (SYE) program is designed with the idea of retention in mind with a multifaceted approach to keeping second-year students enrolled. The program kicks off the second year with a survival guide and kit with materials designed to get

students involved and engaged from the get-go. Once students have started their classes the SYE goes all out with a conference held specifically for second-year students with sessions that focus on study abroad, choosing a major, internships and other topics.

The SYE doesn't end at the beginning of the year though, with a lecture series that goes throughout the year and other special events such as a career decision course this program works to keep students fully engaged in their second year until they are not second years anymore!

## WHAT ARE THE EXPERTS SAYING: LITERATURE REVIEW

*Wandering and Wondering: Traversing the Uneven Terrain of the Second College Year* by Molly A. Schaller is an excellent starting point for any advisor who is new to understanding second-year college students. Schaller talks about "the academy's middle child" with an unassuming voice that explains how we can affect and support our second years by understanding how they experience college. The main point of the article is how students move through four stages in three aspects of their lives. The three aspects that Schaller talks about are: "how they viewed themselves, their

relationships, and their academic experiences and decisions." In each of these aspects students can move through four stages: random exploration, focused exploration, tentative choices and commitment.

Schaller discusses how students experience these stages with both progress and frustration and how second years use this critical year to grow into more adult roles and the impact turning twenty has on students who can no longer claim teen angst as an excuse for poor choices.

Implications for learning are discussed as well as what we as college administrators can expect from our second years and how we can assist their development through these rough transitional times. The article closes with a great line "the year to make it your own" which encourages students to take responsibility for all aspects of their lives. Read the article by clicking here: [Molly A. Schaller](http://www.psu.edu/dus/Schaller.pdf)  
<http://www.psu.edu/dus/Schaller.pdf>

## SOPHOMORE SLUMP QUIZ

This tool can help you to identify students who are hitting that sophomore slump. Ask your second-year student these questions, if they answer yes to three or more questions they may be feeling that sophomore slump.

Are you finding that your personal relationships are changing and becoming more difficult to maintain?

Do you find it hard to maintain your motivation and focus?

Do you feel like college is no longer exciting and fresh?

Are you feeling like there are not enough opportunities for you at Iowa State?

Do you find that your academic work is more rigorous than before and you are not sure if you can handle these higher standards?

Are you finding it hard to be actively engaged in your clubs and student organizations?

Do you find that your values and beliefs are being challenged and changing?



## SECOND YEAR AT A GLANCE

Below is a general guide to help advisors see the kinds of things their students are likely to be thinking about during the semester.

### AUGUST/SEPTEMBER:

Settling in! Your students are re-connecting with friends, attending programs such as Club Fest 2007, Career and Major Fairs. Advisors play a critical role in the success and retention of second-year students by encouraging them to take classes that are challenging and interesting as well as helping them to get involved at Iowa State!

### OCTOBER:

Students begin thinking about study abroad. Invite them to visit the study abroad office to explore their options. This is also the time of the year when students who are undeclared start thinking seriously about what they would like to major in. Advisors can

assist students by opening up all the opportunities that Iowa State has to offer! Some students begin exploring internship opportunities. Encourage your students to visit the career center before the semester ends to see what options are available.

### NOVEMBER:

Most second-year students who have received midterms will be concerned about their grades. Encourage them to visit the Academic Success Center to explore options that will help them to succeed in the classroom! For other second-year students, registering for spring semester classes will be a concern for them. How will these decisions affect your student's choice of major? Give your student some options and let them think it over the Thanksgiving break.

### DECEMBER:

This month is a great time look back to the past semester with your student and help them select their major if they haven't already done so. It is also a great time to re-evaluate strategies that have helped your student to succeed so far and make adjustments to increase their success and persistence at Iowa State. Please refer to the list of resources on the back of this newsletter to help your student make the most of their time at Iowa State!



## LEARNING COMMUNITY ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE ON SECOND-YEAR INITIATIVES

Often overlooked, the second-year student is now receiving national attention as new research shows that the "sophomore slump" is a real phenomenon that has some tangible solutions. The Learning Community Advisory Subcommittee on Second-year Initiatives is currently looking at ways we can support sophomores, especially in light of the strengths of our first-year programs. Students often report feeling "dropped". By providing academic advisers and learning community coordinators with information on the challenges students face during the sophomore year, we are hoping to help eliminate the slump and give second-year students the resources and encouragement they need in order to be successful. If you are interested in participating or just have questions for the committee, please contact us at

[SECONDYEAR@IASTATE.EDU](mailto:SECONDYEAR@IASTATE.EDU)

**JOIN LCAC**

**OCTOBER 23, 2007**

**11:30-1:00**

**2030 MORRILL HALL**

**FOR A LUNCH AND  
LEARN ON SECOND-  
YEAR LEARNING  
COMMUNITIES**

**REGISTER ON  
ACCESSPLUS  
TODAY!**

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS

Within this article is a great list of resources and opportunities that will assist you in helping to advise your second-year students. There are resources, leadership and involvement programs, events, courses, and programs designed to help you get your student more actively engaged in their academic and out-of-class experiences!

### RESOURCES

#### Academic Advisers

That's right! YOU are your student's greatest advocate and can play a major role in helping to shape your student's future!

#### University Programs

Use resources already in place. Take advantage of programs and services offered by:

- Early Intervention Program
- Program for Women in Science and Engineering
- Thielen Health Center
- LGBT Student Services
- Margaret Sloss Women's Center
- Study Abroad

- ROTC

#### Leadership Programs/Involvement

There are hundreds of paid and non-paid leadership positions on the ISU campus. Involved students report higher satisfaction with their college experience and struggle less with "the slump."

- Cyclone Aides
- Community Advisors
- STARS
- Student Organizations
- Peer Mentors

#### Events

Perhaps students are looking for a one-time boost, something to get them launched in the right direction. Here are some campus-wide programs for students to get involved in or encourage students to look for department- or major- specific opportunities:

- Multicultural Leadership Summit
- Iowa State Leadership Experience
- Global Citizenship Symposium

- New Greek Leadership Conference
- Residence Hall Leadership Organization
- ISU Conference on Race and Ethnicity
- Major, Volunteer and Career Fairs

#### Courses

Leadership ISU - This course is designed to help first and second-year students develop leadership skills. Most of these student sare interested in being future

### COMMITTEE ON SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS

#### Co-Chairs:

Lora Leigh Chrystal & Carmen Flagge

#### Members:

Kurt Earnest	Jennifer Leptien
Jill Kramer	Lynn Lundy Evans
Corey Rumann	Yanira Pacheco-Ortiz
Kevin Saunders	Bruce Allen
Denise Hix	Debra Sanborn
Kristen Wentworth	

SECONDYEAR@IASTATE.EDU

## TIME MANAGEMENT SKILL TO TEACH STUDENTS: USE PLANNERS

Many second year students will find that they were adequately supported during their first year of college and really did not have to manage their time. As second year students they will need to develop and utilize their time management skills. One of the best tools that students can use to manage their time is a day planner. The Academic Success Center provided all advising offices with planners at the beginning of August. These planners should be given out to students who are in your

estimation struggling with their time management skills. The planner has pages dedicated to study skills, time management, paper writing, and other academic topics that second-year students will find helpful. In addition to helpful tips it has already completed the step of putting University holidays and important academic dates on the corresponding pages, making it even more useful for students! If you find that you need more planners contact Jill Kramer at [jillck@iastate.edu](mailto:jillck@iastate.edu) to request more.

Supplies are limited!

