



# Exploration as Praxis

Helping New College Students Turn Uncertainty into Opportunity

**#NASPAExplores**



#NASPA17    @NASPATWEETS



# About Us

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# Overview

- Learning Outcomes
- Key Terminology
- Literature Review
- Applying Theory to Practice
  - University of Delaware
  - Fort Hays State University
  - California State University, Fullerton
- Lessons Learned Along the Way/Closing



# Learning Outcomes

As a result of attending this educational session, participants will:

- Define transition in relation to new student orientation, transition & retention.
- Identify an institution's role in supporting new student personal & professional exploration through transition initiatives.
- Describe 2 new student transition initiatives focused on personal & professional exploration in practice at institutions across the nation.



# Key Terminology

- **Orientation:**
- **Transition:**
- **Retention:**

# Key Terminology

- **Orientation:** deliberate programmatic & service efforts designed to facilitate the transition of new students to the institution; prepare students for the institution's educational opportunities & student responsibilities; initiate the integration of new students into the intellectual, cultural & social climate of the institution; & support the parents, partners, guardians, & children of the new student.

**Source:** NODA Task Force to Explore the Definition of Orientation, Transition & Retention (2012)

# Key Terminology

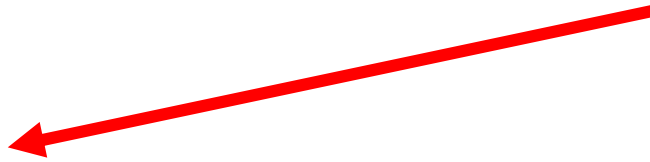
- **Retention**: student progression through higher education, focusing primarily on student persistence (i.e. term to term) through the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year at the same institution, with the goal being graduation from that institution and/or achievement of personal educational objectives. Retention is 1 outcome/measure/byproduct of successful student transition, which can be facilitated by effective orientation programs & other academic & social integration processes.

**Source**: NODA Task Force to Explore the Definition of Orientation, Transition & Retention (2012)

# Key Terminology

- Orientation:

- Transition:



- Retention:



# Key Terminology

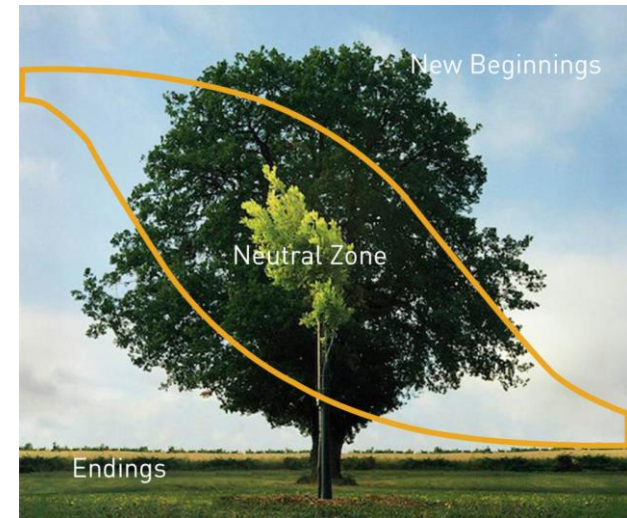
- **Transition**: the process students go through (typically lasting up to 1 year) when entering a particular institution of higher education and/or entering the same institution for a new purpose. This may include, but is not limited to, entering a college as a first-year student, transferring to a college from a different institution, and/or entering a college or university for a subsequent degree. Successful transition results in student integration into the institution & ultimately retention and/or achievement of personal educational objectives.

**Source**: NODA Task Force to Explore the Definition of Orientation, Transition & Retention (2012)

# Literature Review

Bridges, W. (1991). *Managing transitions: Making the most of change*. Addison-Wesley: Reading, MA.

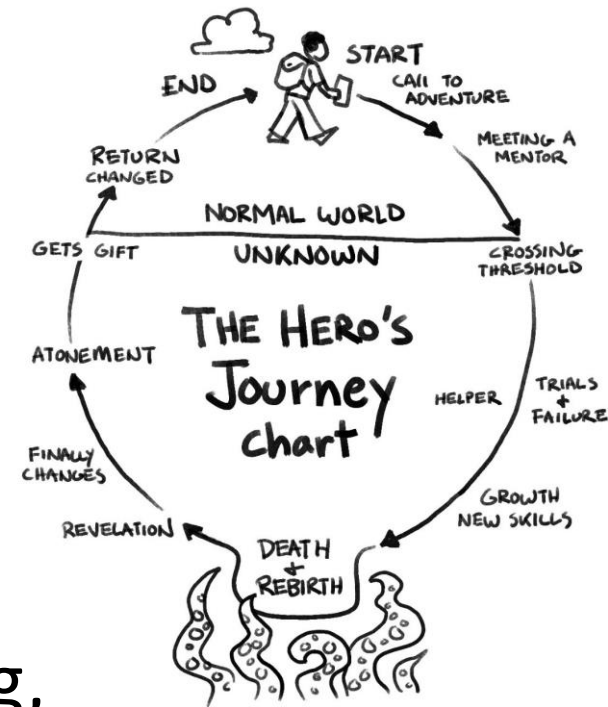
- Organizational transition theory
- Three phases
  - Ending, Losing, Letting Go
  - The Neutral Zone
  - New Beginnings
- The **Neutral Zone** is where our programs come into play



# Literature Review

Campbell, J. (1949). *The hero with a thousand faces*.  
Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Literary concept/narrative pattern often referred to as the Monomyth
- Three main phases:
  - The Departure
  - The Initiation
  - The Return
- Used in business and entrepreneurship, travel planning, leadership development





# Literature Review

- O'Banion, T. (1972). An academic advising model. *Junior College Journal*, 12(6). Retrieved from [http://www.uni.edu/advisorhandbook/sites/default/files/An\\_Academic\\_Advising\\_Model.pdf](http://www.uni.edu/advisorhandbook/sites/default/files/An_Academic_Advising_Model.pdf)
- Five dimensions in the process of academic advising
    - **Exploration of life goals**
    - **Exploration of vocational goals**
      - Program Choice
      - Course Choice
      - Scheduling Courses
  - The former dimensions place a focus on one main question: **How do I want to live my life?**



# Literature Review

Chambliss, D. F., & Takacs, C. G. (2014). *How college works*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA.

- First challenge is entering & academically/socially integrating
- Personal exploration & decision-making
- Academic & career exploration sets a tone for the student's experience
- “Satisficing” – not looking for perfect answers but those that are just okay in the moment



# Literature Review

Nash, R. J., & Murray, M. C. (2010). *Helping college students find purpose: The campus guide to meaning-making*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA.

- Intimidating to face the world on own
- Facilitating a conversation on students' hopes & dreams
- Tell stories
- Create purposeful silence
- Connect content & context

# Literature Review

Gordon, V. N. (1985). Students with uncertain academic goals. In L. Noel, R. Levits, D. Saluri & Associates. *Increasing student retention: Effective programs and practices for reducing the dropout rate*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA.

- Reasons for Indecision
  - Lack of information & developmental skills
  - Personal & social problems
- A Model for Retention
- Training Advisers for Undecided Students
- Freshman Orientation Courses

# Literature Review

Orndorff, R. M., & Herr, E. L. (1996). A comparative study of declared and undeclared college students on career uncertainty and involvement in career development activities. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 74(6), 632-639.

- Higher levels of career & major decidedness & lower levels of career uncertainty
- More career and major certainty of feelings
- Using greater depth of exploration
- Parents are most influential people affecting choice of major



# Applying Theory to Practice

## Delaware in D.C.

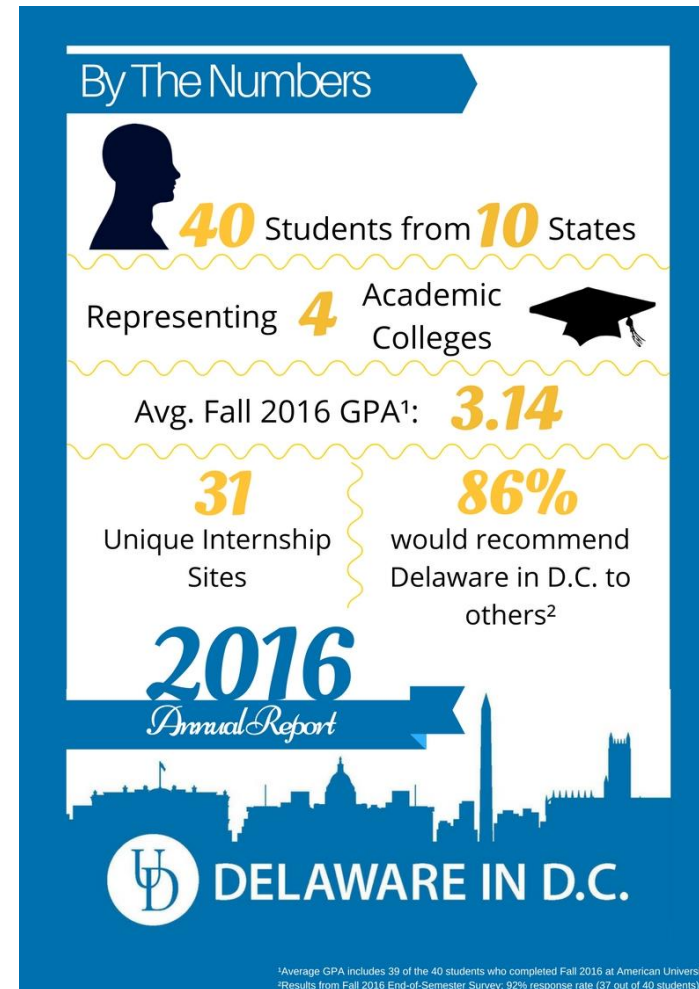
- Entering 3<sup>rd</sup> year
- Semester-long bridge program during Fall semester for Spring-admitted first-year students
- Collaboration with American University's School for Professional and Extended Studies (SPExS)



# Applying Theory to Practice

## Delaware in D.C.

- Program Highlights
  - Professional internship in DMV area
  - Combination of UD and AU-taught courses
  - Continued connection to UD's campus
- Opportunity areas
  - Stronger UD coursework
  - Alumni engagement
  - Student leadership component
  - Formulation of formal mission statement



# Applying Theory to Practice

## Summit & Summit by the Sea

- Began in 2011 – Entering 7<sup>th</sup> Year
- Four (4) trips for first-year students into the Appalachian Trail in August
  - Two days on campus: team bonding, rules of the trail
  - 4.5 days on the trail
- NEW! Summit by the Sea: One trip in July for transfer students
  - Base-camping on the beach at a state park in Southern Delaware





# Applying Theory to Practice

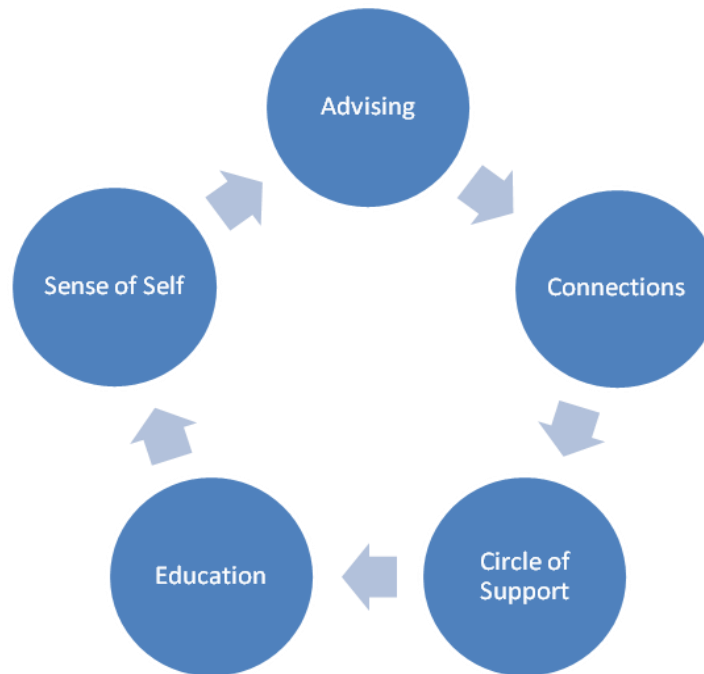
## Summit & Summit by the Sea

- NEW! Guiding Values
  - Through Discovery, Expanding Our Comfort Zones
  - Through Adversity, Cultivating Grit
  - On Our Campus, Embracing Diversity
  - To Our World, Recognizing Our Responsibility
- Aligned with division learning outcomes
- Next Steps
  - Re-alignment of existing learning outcomes rooted in CAS Standards for Orientation Programs
  - Influence on student leader training, program curriculum
  - Expansion of portfolio to include service-learning and cultural immersion experiences

# Applying Theory to Practice

## ACCESS to Success – Student Success Plan

- Created in 2013 in response to K.S.A. 76-717
- Key first-year student milestones





# Applying Theory to Practice

## ACCESS to Success – Student Success Plan



**TigerTracks**  
TigerEnroll

Welcome Jackie

Success Plan → ⚠️ Worksheet → ✅ Enrollment Holds → ⚠️ Pre-Enroll/Schedule Changes → ⚠️ Advisor Approval → ⚠️ Enrollment/Payment

College is a big deal. Four years of time; countless hours in class and studying; dollars spent on tuition, books, and housing. It is possible for all students to succeed at Fort Hays State University, particularly when you take advantage of the resources available to you. Get ahead by creating a plan to give yourself ACCESS to Success: Advising, Connections, Circle of Support, Education, and Sense of Self.

### ACCESS Success Plan

⚠️ Remember to click on the Save Changes button to retain updates to the ACCESS Success Plan.

Save Changes

#### Advising

Every FHSU student has been assigned an academic advisor (two if you are a double-major). An advisor is a faculty member or trained professional with whom you have the opportunity to meet and talk one-on-one about your academic program and your career/life goals - but you need to take the initiative. Your advisor will be assigned to you by September 1 (fall) or February 1 (spring). Learn your advisor's name and contact information. This can be found in TigerTracks (right hand corner at [www.fhsu.edu](http://www.fhsu.edu)), under Online Services. Your advisor(s) will inform you of his or her office hours for each semester.

#### My Advisor(s)

Your advisor will be assigned to you by September 1 (fall) or February 1 (spring). Learn your advisor's name and contact information. Your advisor(s) will inform you of his or her office hours for each semester.

Major	Advisor	Office Location	Phone	Email
Political Science	Mills, Shala	RH 356	(785) 628-4425	samills2@fhsu.edu

#### Meeting Schedule

	Fall 2013		Spring 2013	
Initial 3-Week Appointment ?	✅ 8/28/2013 4:00:00 PM	⚠️	✅	⚠️
Mid-term Meeting ?	✅ 10/14/2013 2:00:00 PM	⚠️	⚠️	⚠️
Pre-enrollment Discussion ?	⚠️	⚠️	⚠️	⚠️

#### Connections

#### Circle of Support

#### Education

#### Sense of Self

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# Applying Theory to Practice

## The Lighthouse Project First-Generation College Student Transition Program





# Applying Theory to Practice

## The Lighthouse Project First-Generation College Student Transition Program

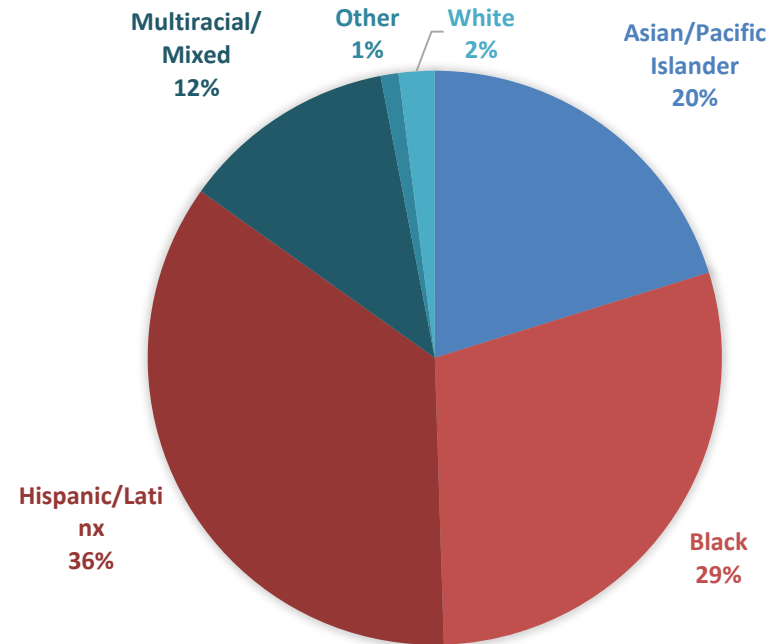
- Golden Beginnings Pre-Orientation Program: Project Lighthouse track
  - My Blueprint Poster Presentations
- Thematic section of UNIV 101 course
  - Common reading experience – *This I Believe*
  - Personal & professional exploration journaling
- The Lighthouse Project Fellows & Kansas Board of Regents Ad Astra Conference for First-Generation College Students



# Applying Theory to Practice

## Career Focused Orientation

- Cost to Participants
  - Free
- Demographics
- Coursework
  - Career & Major Exploration Sessions I & II
  - Communication Across Cultures
  - Leading Through Values



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
FULLERTON



# Applying Theory to Practice

**105**  
SURVEY  
PARTICIPANTS

## Career Focused Orientation

### THE OVERNIGHT ORIENTATION...

HELPED ME GAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE  
PROCESS TO CHOOSE A MAJOR OR CAREER

**89.5**  
PERCENT

WAS USEFUL FOR MY CAREER DEVELOPMENT

**80.95**  
PERCENT

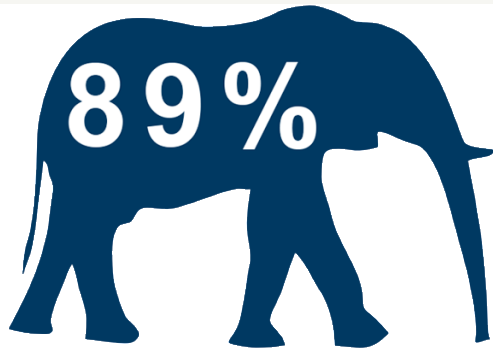
HELPED ME GAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF HOW  
MY INTERESTS RELATE TO MY MAJOR/CAREER CHOICE

**80**  
PERCENT

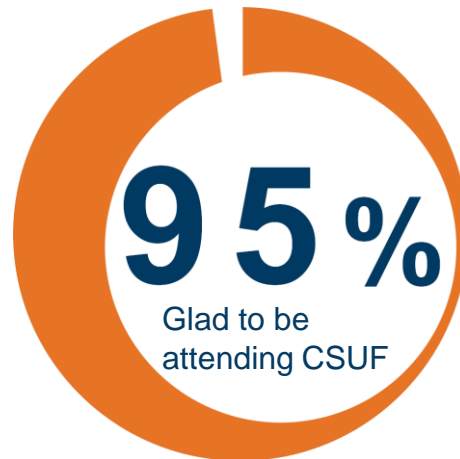


First Generation  
College  
Students

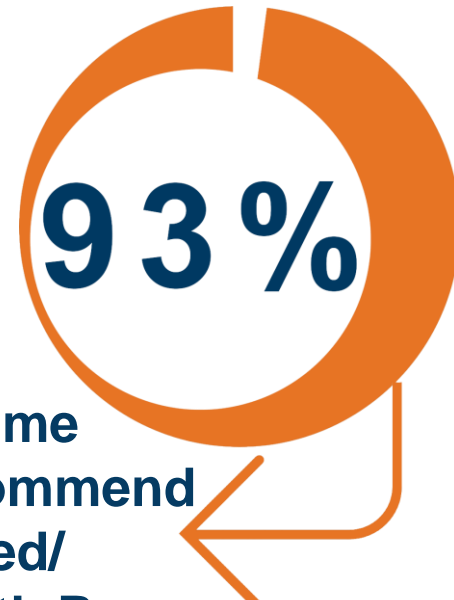
**50%**



**FELT LIKE A TITAN OR  
HAD TITAN PRIDE**



**Worth My Time  
Would Recommend  
Very Satisfied/  
Satisfied with Program**





# Applying Theory to Practice

## Career Focused Orientation

“I feel less nervous about just entering college.”

“...it has really helped me put my life and interests and values into perspective.”

“I was really surprised on how much Cal State Fullerton truly cared about the students...”

“The program allowed me to find my personal interests and make a decision on what career path to take.”

“It made me more comfortable to be in such a diverse environment.”

“I learned how welcoming everyone is and how dedicated the staff is on helping students reach their career goals and helping us understand ourselves before actually starting to look for the right career...”

“I now have a much better idea of what I want to do; I doubt my career choice a lot less.”

“The overnight program has helped me create new bonds and explore more jobs choices.”

“The workshops helped me get a better understanding of who I am and what my interests are. I had a major in mind and with these activities I confirmed that it is what I really want to do.”



# Lessons Learned

- Identify key milestones in a student's first year at your institution.
- Collaboration is key with campus partners.
- It's never too early to begin with the end in mind & start talking about next steps.
- Look at your own lifelong learning experiences.
- Share your personal stories about transition and exploration.



# **Exploration as Praxis**

## Helping New College Students Turn Uncertainty into Opportunity

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