

University of Maine
Student Affairs

First and Second Year Programs

Annual Report

July 15th, 2010

Submitted to:

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Submitted by:

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Director



First and Second Year Programs

Executive Summary

The 2009-2010 year has been another solid year of consistent and purposeful accomplishments. Our philosophy was to put students first and provide them with the best service available. We continued to collaborate within Student Affairs and across campus and launched a number of new and creative initiatives while maintaining a network of support and connection to help students solve problems, open new doors to opportunity, and improve their overall UMaine experience.

The following list provides key accomplishments for this academic year. A complete list of programs, projects and initiatives are in the main body of this report.

Fall 2009 & Spring 2010:

- *Maine Hello 2009:* The planning, logistics, and execution of the Maine Hello was very successful. We have over 700 volunteers, great weather, and great response from parents and students. This event has certainly become an event that we look forward to each year and has been very successful.
- *Second Year Programs:* This fall semester allowed us to maintain the level of support we gave to our second year students. The addition of Veterans to our operation did not allow us to grow and expand our services. We provided outreach and support to our “at-risk” sophomores and prided more general programming with Sophomore Days and collaboration with Residence Life on “Speed-Date-a-Major”. In the spring semester we were able to teach our three-credit course on career decision making.
- *Student Outreach & Referral:* We continued to be the leader in taking initiative and reaching out to students as soon as they arrived on campus. Our kind, caring, and compassionate outreach to students is something we consider our core focus and continued to make connections with students in an effort to maximize their potential for success at the University of Maine.
- *Veteran Outreach and Support:* This was the first regular semester that we took control over the enrolment certification process from student records. This time intensive and detailed operation was made more challenging because of delays with the VA and our willingness to better serve the needs of the student. By placing the needs of the student first we often created more paperwork and processing with the VA and the bursars office.
- *Leadership Conference:* Our office partnered with CASE to deliver a very successful and well attended conference for UM Students.

Introduction/Forward by Director

First and Second Year Programs began the year on a positive note with a successful Maine Hello and finished the year by participating in summer orientation. This was the first year Veterans Education and Transition services were totally integrated into our operations. We continued to focus on the areas that we feel we can best support and challenge our students. The need to address the challenges students face as they make the transition from high school to college is still our main focus. Regardless of the quality of student we admit to the University of Maine there is, and will continue to be, a need to provide students with the skills and resources early in their college career to help them be successful students. There are areas we can improve upon and we have included these areas in this report. As an organization that wants to be a great organization, we cannot rest on our past successes and must continue to be innovative and creative in our planning and implementation of highly innovative programs and initiatives.

Strengths:

We continue to focus on how we can best serve our students. On a daily basis, as with past years, we try to navigate the campus through the eyes of a student and attempt to make their experience as positive and hassle-free as possible. If we can help students solve problems, gain access to resources, and feel more confident about themselves, then we have done our jobs. We try to lessen the impact that bureaucracy can have on our students and approach our role in a kind, caring, and compassionate manner.

Our role in serving our Veteran students and being an advocate has been a great asset for the University of Maine. We heard over and over from students and staff that they are happy the role of certifying benefits is no part of Student Affairs and maintains consistent and helpful support.

We approached many of our programs and initiatives with collaboration as a key philosophy. We are part of the Division of Student Affairs so we aim to meet the goals of the division as we strive to meet our own departmental goals and objectives. We all work for the same team and are more than happy to assist other departments with their programs and initiatives that meet the needs of students. We are less concerned with credit for our ideas and programs and are more concerned with student success.

First and Second Year Programs has brought positive attention to the University of Maine through its work on the Maine Hello, student advocacy, the MELMAC Grant, and support for our Veterans. In the midst of difficult budget time our office and service help attract and retain students here at the University of Maine.

Weaknesses:

I feel we have great ideas and great plans, but lack the support from others in the division or others across campus. We need to be more vigilant in pushing our ideas forward. A

perfect example of this was the report generated by Noel Levitz outlining a plan for UM to improve its retention rates. Most if not all of the suggestions were suggested by our office years ago and have been revisited each year. Perhaps we have been too cautious in pushing our ideas forward. To overcome this we need to present again our ideas and plans to the leadership on campus and be persistent in our efforts.

We are very good at quickly acting to address a need that is identified by others in the division. By addressing current and last-minute projects we run the risk of neglecting our core foundation and programs. This year we have been stretched thin in a number of different directions. On one or two projects we had to sacrifice quality to accomplish all of the other tasks we have been responsible for. We will need to address this concern in the future.

Opportunities:

Our services and support to our Veterans from has grown tremendously over the past year. We have created a solid and consistent process of certifying enrollment and assisting students in managing their VA Educational Benefits. I believe that UM has a great opportunity to create a campus-wide and comprehensive center for our Veterans. A space that allows for a number of offices and off-campus VA support to share space could provide a great service to our students who served or are currently serving their county.

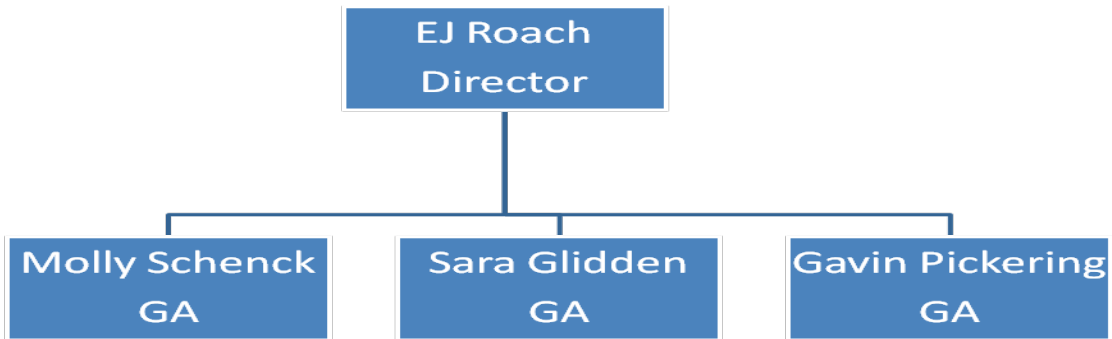
Parents are an asset that I feel we can work with to help our student be more successful. Parents have invested a significant amount of time and money into their student college experience. By developing and growing a parent network we can provide them on-going information that can help them encourage and support their students. I believe that they might have greater influence and access to their students and might have the time to be more persistent in their communication. I feel our parents should be embraced as a collaborative partner in our student success initiatives.

Threats:

With an increased level of responsibility and no increased staffing we have placed ourselves in a situation where we need to “stop doing” some things. We will make these decisions in a strategic and intentional way. Once again I request support in the area of staff so we can maximize the potential of our programs and take advantage of a growing Veteran population.

In the larger picture we are an office that operates with one professional staff member. We need to strengthen our foothold and make us a solid operation that cannot and should not be absorbed by another department, either in Student Affairs or into another department on campus. Our mission, vision, and focus need to remain in Student Affairs so in the upcoming year we need to keep this potential threat of being absorbed on or radar screen at all times.

Organizational chart including staff names; and listing of key student personnel.



Work Study Students:

First & Second Year Programs

Hannah Hudson
Katie Dumas
Andrew Doak
Jenna Dubois
Brandon Chandler

VA Work Study Students

Ryan Celli
Lon Souder
Kelly Souder
Joe McCarthy
Kurt Waldon
Daniel Day

First Quarter

July-August-September

Projects, Initiatives & Programs:

Student Outreach & Referrals:

- All first-year students living on campus were contacted by our office by e-mail explaining who we are and what we can do for them.
- Molly and Gavin reached out individually to their "high risk lists" and began meeting with student individually this week (They each have 200 at risk students they are focusing on).
- All students on the high risk list were scheduled a meeting to meet individually. Rather consistent with the face to face compared to years past. About 50% of them show up for the actually meeting

Parent Contacts

- We received a dozen or so e-mails from parents to our firstandsecond e-mail account with basic questions and we have followed up with them.
- Had one parent call who had not heard from their son in three days after repeated calls. We made contact with him and asked him to check in with his parents. We asked (Todd) to check in with him as well.

FYRE:

- Molly and Gavin spend 2.5 hours each week in the halls
- EJ is made a member of the FYRE advisory "Team" that meets monthly
- Molly, Gavin and EJ participate in the Room-2-Room event in the FYRE halls

Maine Hello:

- T-shirts and polo shirts were ordered for student and faculty volunteers through NH Printworks. (July)
- Maine Hello map and directions mailed to all first-year students. (August)
- Erin and Danielle maintained database of volunteers and worked with student leaders to recruit student volunteers. (July & August)
- EJ worked with Facilities Management for MH work orders. (August)
- Coke products delivered to campus and stored in U-haul rental truck.
- Golf carts (2) are used this year to ease movement of supplies and key staff around campus.
- Student volunteers for the Maine Hello were allowed to move into their residence halls from 7-9 pm (8/26).

- EJ and Tara provided training for staff and volunteers working in the welcome lots. Everyone “walks” the lots to visually see how traffic would be flowing, how to communicate via radio, etc (8/27).
- EJ provided training for faculty and staff team leaders and greeters. (8/27)
- EJ provided training for student PAWS and Greek Greeters. (8/28)
- 20 radios picked up from Whitten 2-Way radio. (8/28).

Second Year Programs:

- Following up with out "at-risk" from last year who were still enrolled.
- Gavin and EJ met with the RAs in Knox to develop some specific programming for sophomores since they have a couple wings of second years living in Knox
- Gavin works with Kim Trella on planning “speed-date-a-major”.

Veterans Education & Transition Services (VETS):

- Certified 212 students receiving VA Educational Benefits
- Worked with the director of the National Guard Health clinician for possible training around mental health issues.
- Hired 6 students working in the VA office. They are paid directly from the VA so no cost to us.
- I worked with the VA to increase our max number of VA work study students from 4 to 8. In terms of student wages this provides our office close to \$11,000 each semester.
- Participated in a webinar this on chapter 33 and the post 9/11 GI bill (9/23).
- Communicated with Frank Sores (VA contact for ME). He was asked to double check to see if UM was un-enrolling VETS who had not received payments yet from the VA. Sounds like some schools around the country might be doing that.
- Completed a file sweep at the end of "add-drop" period and made appropriate updates with the VA.
- Sara began setting up individual meetings with each veteran to "check" in and make sure they are maximizing their UM experience and helping them with any issues and referring appropriately.

Miscellaneous:

- 3,500 free notebooks from ABS arrived and were delivered to the residence halls (8/20).
- Collegiate Empowerment presented in the CCA to the first-year class. Their program was titled, “Get a Life Outside of the Classroom”. Estimated attendance was 1,500 first year students (8/29).
- Kenda asked that I work with Dick Young to help organize the volunteer sign up for the NIHI vaccination clinics. We are also helping them think through the logistics of moving 5,000 + students through the field house on those 2 days.

Programs & Committee Meetings Attended:

- Staff participates in open house (8/10)
- EJ attends STAR meetings (8/24, 8/31, 9/21, 9/28)
- EJ attends GLBTA Council meetings (9/16)
- Staff attends community meeting (9/18)

Presentations & Publications:

- EJ presents at “What’s on Wednesday” (9/2).
- EJ presents for Peter Reed’s NFA 117 class (9/9).
- Molly and Gavin present a time management workshop for a FYE class (9/4)

Staffing and Personnel:

- Erin and Danielle each work 20 hours per week over the summer.
- Molly Schenck and Gavin Pickering begin training in mid August.
- Sara Glidden hired in early September as our third GA.

Second Quarter

October-November-December

Projects, Initiatives, & Programs:

Student Outreach & Referrals:

- Contacted by e-mail all first year students again before October break. We requested that those students remaining on campus for break please let us know.

FYRE:

- EJ attended FYRE Team meeting (10/1, 11/5).

Second Year Programs:

- Began finalizing the career development course.
- Meet with 10-12 second year students through conduct referrals.

Veterans Education & Transition Services (VETS):

- Participated in a VET webinar (10/9).
- EJ and Sara attend Veteran outreach training workshop in Bangor (10/22 & 10/23).
- VETS office hosts open house in honor of Veterans Day (11/11).
- VETS office hosts a showing of “The Way We Get By” in the Bears Den.
- Staff participates in a VET webinar on recruiting Veterans to your campus (11/16).
- Jenny Willett from Togus is on campus to meet with her Vocational Rehabilitation Students (11/30 & 12/1).

Miscellaneous:

- Staff attends speed date a major (10/14).

Programs and Committee Meetings Attended:

- EJ attends STAR (10/5, 10/26, 11/2, 11/16, 11/23, 11/30, 12/7, 12/14, 12/21).
- EJ attends GLBTA Council meeting (10/14, 11/11, 12/9)
- Staff attends MASAP conference (10/16).
- Staff participates in UM open house (10/19).
- Staff participates in Student Affairs Fair (10/19).
- EJ judges Greek talent show (10/22)
- EJ attends recruitment team meeting (10/26, 11/30, 12/21)

- EJ and other directors present to the Board of Visitors (10/27).
- EJ attends GRRIT meeting (12/7).

Off-Campus & Community Outreach:

- EJ attends “College Day” at Central high school

Presentations & Publications:

- N/A

Staffing & Personnel:

- Staffing of both offices is up and running and daily and weekly task sheets are developed to keep students busy and productive.

Third Quarter

January-February-March

Projects, Initiatives & Programs:

Student Outreach & Referrals:

- Mostly referrals from OCSRR. We sent some e-mail reminders to "high-risk" students about class registration, followed by contact with those not registered.
- Reached out to all first-year students who started in the spring semester. (January)
- Followed up with all at-risk students. (January)
- Contacted all first-year students who got between a 1.5 and a 2.0 for the fall 2008 semester. These students were not part of the Academic Recovery Program. (January)

FYRE:

- EJ attends FYRE meeting (2/11)
- Staff participates in "sweets fest" (2/20).

Maine Hello:

- Began developing material to use to recruit student, faculty and staff volunteers. (March)
- Updated the map and mailing to parents and students. (March)

Second-Year Programs:

- Gavin and EJ facilitate ACE 198 for the spring semester.

Veterans Education & Transition Services (VETS):

Programs & Committee Meetings Attended:

- GLBT Allies Council meeting (1/20,2/27,3/17).
- Gavin participates in Florida State Webinar (idea for student coaching program develops)
- Ej attends touchstone advisory meeting (1/27).
- Staff attends community meeting (1/28).
- Staff attends and helps with leadership conference (2/6).
- Staff participated in Honors and Accepted Student Days (2/8)
- Office participates in the higher education interview day (2/25)

Off-Campus & Community Outreach:

- EJ attends NASPA Region 1 board meeting as the KC Rep for Veterans Affairs

Presentations & Publications:

- N/A

Staffing & Personnel:

- Work-study and non-work student position hours cut back by 2 hours each in anticipation of budget reductions.

Fourth Quarter

April-May-June

Projects & Initiatives:

Student Outreach & Referrals:

- Individually e-mailed 450 second years that were not registered for fall 2010.
- Individually e-mailed 600 + first-year students who were not registered for the fall 2010.

FYRE:

- FYRE Year-End BBQ: (5/1).
- FYRE Late Nite Breakfast.

Maine Hello:

- Started the recruitment phase of the Maine Hello. We contacted volunteers from last year to get them signed up and advertised through First Class. This will be an ongoing operation through most of the summer.
- Placed orders for the commemorative pin for faculty and staff greeters.
- Established expectations at summer Orientation for parents and students.

Second Year Programs:

- Gavin and I continued with the course and meet two times per week with the 15 student enrolled.

Veterans Education & Transition Services:

- Applied for Yellow Ribbon Status for 2010-2011 school year.
http://www.gibill.va.gov/School_Info/yellow_ribbon/index.htm
- EJ went to training for certifying officials at UMA on June 23, hosted by Frank Soares. He works for the VA out of Togus. o clear answers, but with more money being paid to the veteran the VA is going to pay closer attention.
- VETS BBQ on 5/7

Programs & Committee Meetings Attended:

- Open House: (4/19).
- Maine Day: (4/28).
- GLBT Allies Council (4/14,6/9,

- EJ Attends MELAC High school peer learning event at Wells Commons (5/17).
- EJ attends enrollment management seminar (5/25).
- Staff participates in summer orientation (6/18-6/21 & 6/25-6/28)

Off-Campus & Community Outreach:

- EJ attends NASPA knowledge community retreat (6/4)

Presentations & Publications:

- N/A

Staffing and Personnel:

- All three GAs returning or next year.
- Made some reductions in the number of student workers.

Goals 2010-2011

First & Second Year Programs

- Focus more on the model of operating by “quarters” to our overall philosophy. Our operation has clearly become a 12 month operation and by establishing operation, goals, and expectation, in smaller 90 day increments I feel we can be more organized, productive, and reduce some of the “burnout” that eventually happens each semester.
- Continue to offer and facilitate the career development course in the spring semester.
- Develop a plan to involve parents more in the outreach to our first-year students. By informing parents on a regular basis about general information, programs and resources they can assist us in reaching out to their own student.
- Increase contact and management of high risk first-year students through a case management approach and collaboration with Community Coordinators.
- Maximize the potential of our new graduate and undergraduate staff working in both offices.
- Develop and propose Spring Board pilot program to have first-year students take summer classes and get early starts.

Veterans Education & Transition Services

- Develop a peer mentor program for veterans to further support students and continue to educate and inform staff on issues that may arise which began with a conference call with Brad Watts, State Director of Student Veterans Affairs to look at getting a student group on our campus connected with their organization. www.studentveterans.org
- Launch a strategic and coordinated effort from various Student Affairs offices such as the Career Center, Counseling Center, First & Second Year Programs, Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Services, and the Deans’ Office to prepare to serve this population. This may involve the development of informational materials in print and on the web.
- Establish a lounge for veterans and families in the Memorial Room in the Memorial Union to both honor and provide space for veterans. The lounge would support and compliment the work done in the Veterans Center, Room 314 Memorial Union.
- Streamline operations to efficiently and accurately process enrollment certification for each eligible veteran.

Conclusion:

Over the past three years it has become unclear when one year ends and another one starts. The nature of our programs, outreach, and services requires us to be thinking many months ahead. We have seldom had any time to take a breath, evaluate our progress, make changes or develop long-term plans. We are the office that when given a task or given a suggestion, says yes. We put our plans into action quickly. First and Second Year Programs is not an operation that waits to be asked to participate from the sidelines. We see opportunities in front of us and get into the game.

We realize that without everyone else in the Division of Student Affairs and all of the other excellent resources at the University of Maine our efforts and successes would not be possible. We value the support that Student Affairs gives to us and therefore we truly live by the philosophy that we are all part of the same team. Our collaborative success is what makes the University of Maine a great place.

I see many opportunities to expand our efforts and create a more seamless and organized first-year experience, a well-rounded program for our second-year population and a comprehensive one-stop office for our Veteran students. This past year has been a big success with a large number of small and large accomplishments. Helping students succeed at the University of Maine is a core value we believe in and we will continue to fully embrace next year.

The year ahead of us will bring new challenges and new directions and we are excited to be a part of Student Affairs. We are well under way to developing programs and initiatives for the upcoming year and are excited for the arrival of the class of 2013 on Friday August 28, 2009. Our goal is to help students succeed as we are at our best when they are here on campus.