

**Plan 2008 Phase II Programs & Initiatives
Outcomes Reporting Form
January 2007**

Your Institution: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee	
Program/Initiative: First Year Transition Course: Freshman Seminar	Year Established: 1996
Target Audience (check all that apply): Administration: <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty: <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Staff: <input type="checkbox"/> Classified Staff: <input type="checkbox"/> Students: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Campus Community: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please specify:	
Race/Ethnic Groups Affected by this Program/Initiative (check all that apply): African American/Black: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> American Indian: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Latino/Hispanic: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Southeast Asian: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Asian: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> European American: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please specify: International and NA students	
Cost of Program/Initiative: \$350,000	Funding Sources: 101
Description: The Freshman Seminars offered by College of Letters & Science are innovative, special topic seminars limited to 20 students each. The emphasis in these classes is on student participation and discussion, and they are limited to first-year students. While elements of the "study skills" and "introduction to campus" courses are embedded in many of the seminars, the courses are seen primarily as introductions to particular disciplines. The courses have no pre-requisites and are known for their particularly engaging content. All faculty wishing to participate are required to attend a special faculty development workshop prior to teaching in the program.	
Point Person(s): Director Nigel Rothfels	Department/Unit(s): Edison Initiative, L&S
Departments/Units/Groups Involved: Faculty and career teaching academic staff in all L&S departments can propose courses for the program.	
Goals & Expected Outcomes: Goals of the Freshman Seminar are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of enrolled students • Increase the first-year retention rate of enrolled students • Increase the sixth-year graduation rate of enrolled students 	
Actual Measurable Outcomes for Plan 2008 Goals, Including Impact on Enrollment, Retention, and/or Graduation, and/or long term potential thereof: In fall 2005, a total of 984 new freshmen enrolled in Freshman and Honors Seminar courses. 81% of these students completed the spring 2006 semester, and 79% were enrolled in fall 2006. These completion and retention rates were higher than for students who did not take these Seminars, only 65% of whom completed spring 2006 and 66% of whom were enrolled in fall 2006. Of the 139 targeted new freshmen of color enrolled in Freshman and Honors Seminars, 64% satisfactorily completed the spring 2006 semester, and 69% were enrolled in fall 2006. Again, these completion and retention rates were substantially higher than for those students who did not take the Seminars, only 43% of whom completed spring 2006 and 52% of whom were enrolled in fall 2006. Although the data show increases in first-year retention rates and lower dismissal rates for all targeted students of color, the differences in retention and dismissal rates for those who enrolled in the courses and those who did not is particularly striking for African American and Southeast Asian students. Even with relatively small numbers of students and the fact that cause and effect cannot be determined from this analysis, the data continues to suggest that those students who participate in a seminar are more likely to be retained and less likely to be dismissed. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the 64 African American new freshmen who enrolled in a seminar, 69% were retained to the following fall semester, with a dismissal rate of 14% at the end of spring 2006; as compared to 49% retention and 28% dismissal rates of students who did not enroll in a seminar. • Of the 38 Southeast Asian new freshmen who enrolled in a seminar, 76% were retained to the 	

following fall semester, with a dismissal rate of 11%; as compared to 52% retention and 24% dismissal rates for students who did not enroll in a seminar.

Intersections Across Plan 2008 Goals:

Goal 1: recruitment and enrollment. New freshmen are encouraged to enroll in a Freshman Seminar at the summer orientation and registration sessions.

Goal 3: closing the achievement gap. Recent data supports earlier multivariate analysis which suggests that enrollment in a seminar improves student retention, including the retention of targeted students of color.

Goal 6: campus climate. The Freshman seminars are cohort-based classes taught by some of the best instructors on our campus. The instructors have gone through special faculty development to help them fashion courses ideally suited to incoming students. The courses help the incoming students make a connection to the university, its faculty, and other students.

Assessment Practices and Program Changes in Response to Challenges:

In the fall 2005, 31 Freshman Seminars were offered; in the fall 2006, there were 27 Seminars.

The challenges we face are primarily budgetary; the courses work, but they are expensive. We need to continue the faculty development aspects of the program, and we need more sophisticated assessment of how the courses are succeeding.

Based on the success of program, we expect to expand to over 50 sessions for the fall of 2007.

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