

Accountability and Learning: Integrating NSSE and Outcomes Assessment to Inform Student Affairs Practice

ACPA Convention 2013 – Las Vegas



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Miki Cammarata, and Chris Romano, Ramapo College of
New Jersey**

www.nsse.iub.edu

INSPIRING COMMUNITIES
OF WELLBEING



FS Coalition Sessions

Presidential initiative of
Dr. Keith Humphrey to sponsor
programs that **highlight how faculty
scholarship is being translated into
practice**

Scholarship: *Student Engagement, Educational Effectiveness, Assessment Practice*

Practice: *Ramapo College of NJ, 4 Year Model of Engagement*

Current Accountability and Assessment Agenda



- **Heightened demands for accountability**
- **Evidence of student learning**
- **All campus educators accountable “for identifying and achieving essential student learning outcomes and for making transformative education possible and accessible for all students.” (Learning Reconsidered, 2004)**

Assessment is...

The systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development (Palomba & Banta, 1999)

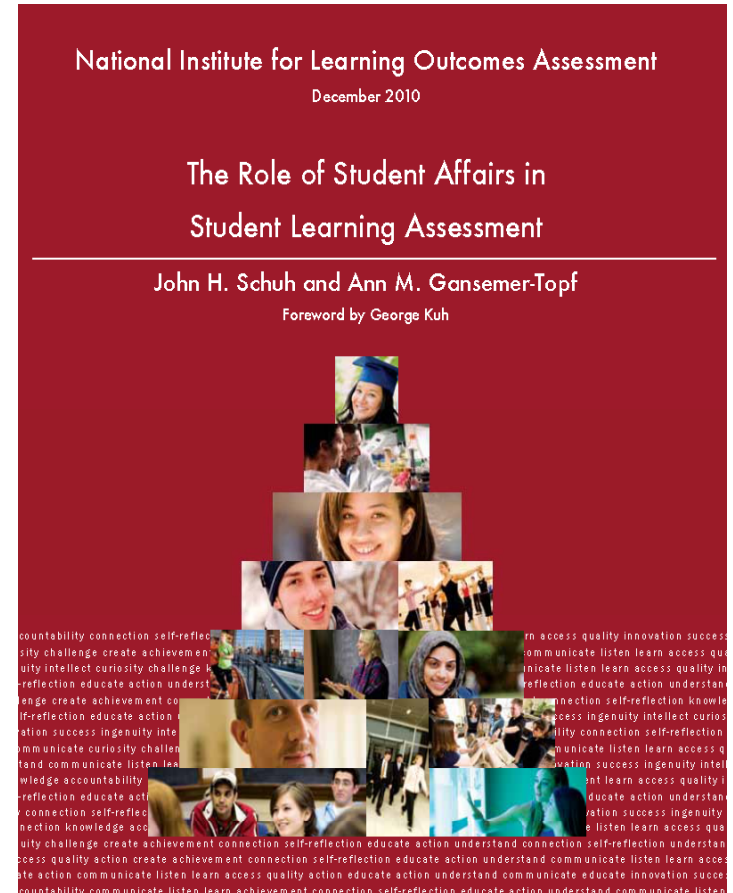


Student Affairs Practice and Assessment

- SA well-positioned to assess student learning
- Greater interest in how programs & experiences contribute to student learning
- Importance of collaborating on campus assessment activities

DOWNLOAD www.learningoutcomesassessment.org

Schuh, J. H., & Gansemer-Topf, A. M. (2010, December). *The role of student affairs in student learning assessment* (Occasional Paper #7). Champaign, IL: National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.



“Positive Restlessness”

Q. What distinguishes institutions that engage students at high levels, have higher than predicted retention & graduation rates?

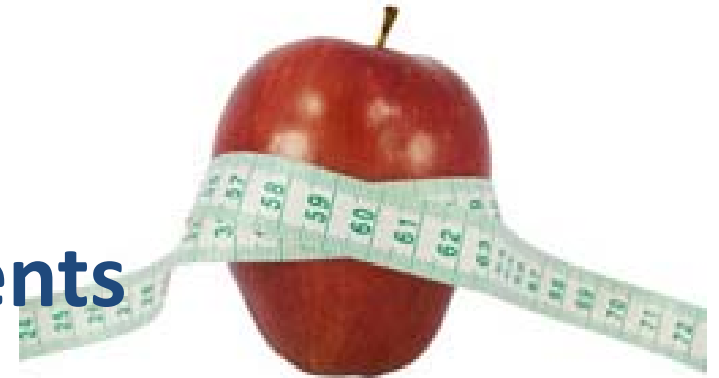
**A. Assessment, and Constant Tinkering;
An “Improvement Oriented Ethos”**



(from *Never Let it Rest, Student Success in College*, 2010)

What does it look like to have an Ethos of Continuous Improvement?

- Appreciation for evidence-based practice
- Self-critical
- Data aid decision making
- Drive for richer improvements & deeper outcomes
- Experiment, take risks to assess & change
- Systematically collect information about student & institutional performance to validate anecdotes and personal experiences.



Quick Activity: How are we Doing? Assessment & Accountability

Swiftly respond to the survey.

Identify questions you're most interested in seeing others response – discuss with person next to you.



Assessing The Climate for Assessment, Accountability and Improvement

1. To what extent do you...

Circle Your Response

- | | |
|---|--|
| a. Wonder how much students are really gaining from the educational experiences created for them | <i>Very Often, Often, Sometimes, Never</i> |
| b. Collect data on the effectiveness of your program/unit | <i>Very Often, Often, Sometimes, Never</i> |
| c. Feel pressure to document the impact of your work on student learning and success | <i>Very Often, Often, Sometimes, Never</i> |
| d. Think it is necessary to create a coordinated system for assessment in your area | <i>Very Often, Often, Sometimes, Never</i> |
| e. Struggle to find evidence to demonstrate the impact of your work on student learning and success | <i>Very Often, Often, Sometimes, Never</i> |

Four Principles For Student Affairs Practice and Accountability

1. Make SA role in promotion of student learning plain – *be explicit about learning outcomes you seek to foster*
2. Assess extent to which students are experiencing practices associated with and making gains on specific learning outcomes
3. Motivation for assessment should come from desire to fully understand strengths & shortcomings of student experience, and then to make changes where necessary
4. It is right to commit to relying on evidence-based practice, to be accountable and to improve

Integrating NSSE and Outcomes Assessment to Inform Student Affairs Practice

- Student engagement is a rich concept to base evidence-driven practice (possible with/without NSSE results)
- Student engagement concept, research, *plus* campus data provide a stronger basis for documenting and improving learning processes and outcomes



NSSE Use Study: Lessons for Student Affairs

(Ahren, Ryan, Massa-McKinley, *About Campus*)

- **Collaborate and communicate results to create a shared vision**
 - Relationship with IR and faculty pivotal; expansive sharing
- **Triangulate data sources to corroborate and deepen initial impressions**
 - Inventory all data sources, combine to review NSSE in tandem with other results; Link NSSE data to student information & outcomes
- **Use NSSE results to learn more about your students**
 - Examine subpopulations, use results to challenge assumptions
- **Use data to set targets and monitor progress**

The Challenge for Student Affairs:

To create energy in our campus systems to create and sustain processes of regular and systematic assessment of student outcomes for continuous improvement.

- Susan Komives, 2006, Reflections on Outcomes and Assessment: Applying the CAS Process



How Does Assessment and Scholarship Influence SA Practice?

Ramapo's Outcomes Driven Programming Model

- **To listen for in Ramapo's presentation:**

- How did research on assessment, student learning & development influence their work?
- What role did assessment data, and specifically NSSE results, play?
- How did this work get underway? What is sustaining it?
- Who was involved and why?





Developing a Four-Year Model of Student Engagement: Collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs

Miki Cammarata,
A.V.P, Student Affairs

Chris Romano,
A.V.P., Enrollment Management

Ramapo College of New Jersey

Ramapo College is New Jersey's Public Liberal Arts College

Mission Statement

Ramapo College is New Jersey's Public Liberal Arts College, dedicated to providing students a strong foundation for a lifetime of achievement. The College is committed to academic excellence through interdisciplinary and experiential learning, and international and intercultural understanding. Ramapo emphasizes active learning and individual attention to all students. We promote teaching excellence, diversity, inclusiveness, sustainability, student engagement, and community involvement.



About Ramapo College

- Approximately 5600 undergraduate students
- Average SAT score of 1170 (Critical Reading and Math)
- 51% of students live on campus
- Designated by the state as “New Jersey’s Public Liberal Arts College”
- Organized underneath Provost Model

Office of the Provost

Deans

Enrollment Management

Student Affairs

AIS, CA, SSHS, TAS, ASB



What led us to focus on Student Engagement?

- Recurring themes in institutional survey results (First-Year Survey, Graduating Senior Survey) of the perception of the College as a “suitcase college”
- Policy decision to no longer allow first-year cars on campus
- Desire to improve retention and graduation rates (SEM intersection)
- Survey data showing unsatisfactory level of student time dedicated to out of class academic work (NSSE)
- Alignment with institutional emphasis on more purposeful, data-driven decision making and institutional priorities
- Student Success!



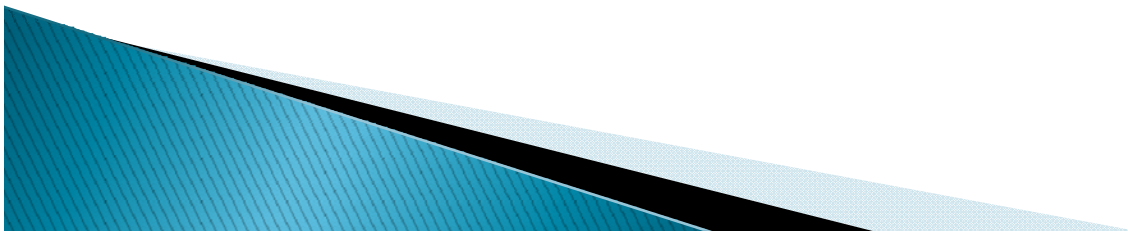
First Steps

- Formed Steering Committee
 - Researched and developed a plan to engage stakeholders in developing a student engagement plan for the College
 - AAC&U sponsored research on high impact practices
 - Student success literature review
 - Student Engagement/NSSE articles
 - Conducted campus retreat (SA, EM, Acad. Affairs, IA, Budget/Fiscal Planning, Pres. Office)
- Student Engagement Measures at Ramapo
 - NSSE data review (vs. peers)
 - Retention and Graduation Rates (vs. competitors)

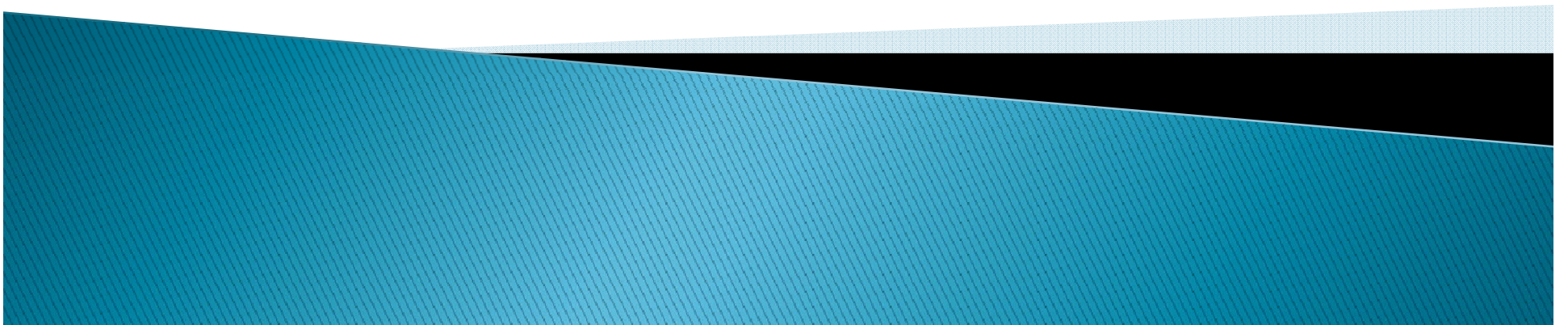


Student Engagement Defined

Student engagement represents the time and effort students devote to activities empirically linked to the intended outcomes of college and what institutions do to both provide these activities and induce students to participate in them (Kuh, 2009).

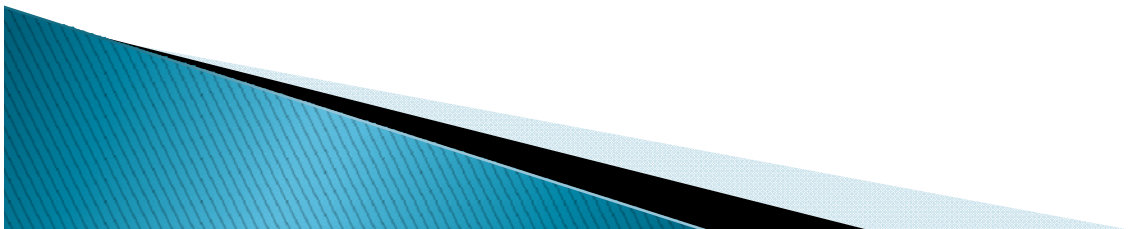


The Student Engagement Project



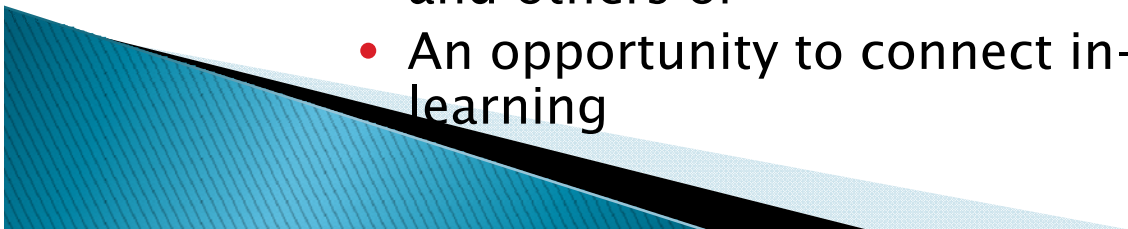
During Campus–Wide Retreats

- Using SE definition, created an inventory of activities that met SE outcomes
 - Placed them on Year 1–4 continuum
- Developed overall SE Plan with 4 overarching goals intended to span across the 4 year college experience
- Reviewed literature and best practices to develop outcomes for each year
 - Activities from inventory most likely to produce desired outcomes identified as Key Points of Engagement (KPEs)



KPE

- Accepted KPEs must include an assessment plan with measures and achievement targets
- Criteria for Key Points of Engagement for First-Year Students:
 - A structured opportunity designed for all first-year students;
 - A structured opportunity open to all first-year students; and
 - A high-impact activity or an activity leading to a high-impact activity, meaning that it is:
 - A substantive interaction, in class and out of class, with peers, faculty, and staff or
 - A common experience that deepens understanding of self and others or
 - An opportunity to connect in-class and out-of-class learning



Map

- Review agreed upon KPEs and how they map to goals and outcomes for particular year
- Identify gaps or weaknesses in map

KPE	Academic				Social			Personal			Campus/Civic	
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	3.2	3.3	4.1	4.2
Orientation					x	x		x				
Summer Reading/Convocation	x		x			x				x		
Alcohol.edu									x			
Arching and First Year Assembly							x					
Maroon Madness					x	x	x	x	x			
Choices and Consequences		x						x			x	
Green Dot		x					x	x			x	
LollaNoBooza					x	x						
Club Fair					x							
FYS/Peers	x		x	x		x		x	x		x	
Advising	x							x	x			

Assessment and Closing the Loop

- Assess the Plan
 - Identified Gaps
 - Established Targets
 - Anticipated Shortfalls
 - Measured Results
- Act on Results
 - Improve KPE (Choices and Consequences)
 - Abandon Program as KPE (Maroon Mayhem)
 - Establish new KPE (World Expo)
 - Redesign KPE (Orientation)
 - Leave It Alone (Arching Ceremony)



Marketing and Tracking

Branded Student Engagement

- Campus Communication Meetings
- Orientation (Student and Parent)
- Welcome Week
- Constituent Groups (SGA, Divisions, Cabinet, Provost Council)
- Delivered messages through multi-media
- Provided Incentives
 - Co-Curricular Transcript (My CCT)
 - Priority housing selection
 - Priority parking for commuters





Search

Have an account? Sign in



Fledge

@Fledge_Ramapo

I'm Fledge, the newest addition to the Ramapo family! I'm your guide to happenings on [campus](#), new events, and more! Follow me while we all fly to success!

Mahwah, NJ <http://www.ramapo.edu/students/>

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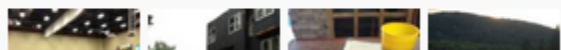
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Fledge @Fledge_Ramapo

25 Jul

Admission is free for this 8 pm concert. Parking is \$5 per car. Bring your [lawn chairs](#) or blanket.

Expand



Fledge @Fledge_Ramapo

25 Jul

Please [join](#) us Thu, July 26, for the third TD Bank Summer Concert, "UNCHAINED," a Van Halen tribute band that promises to rock the house.

Expand



Fledge @Fledge_Ramapo

16 Jul

100 Things to Do at Ramapo Before You [Graduate](#): ww2.ramapo.edu/libfiles/stude...

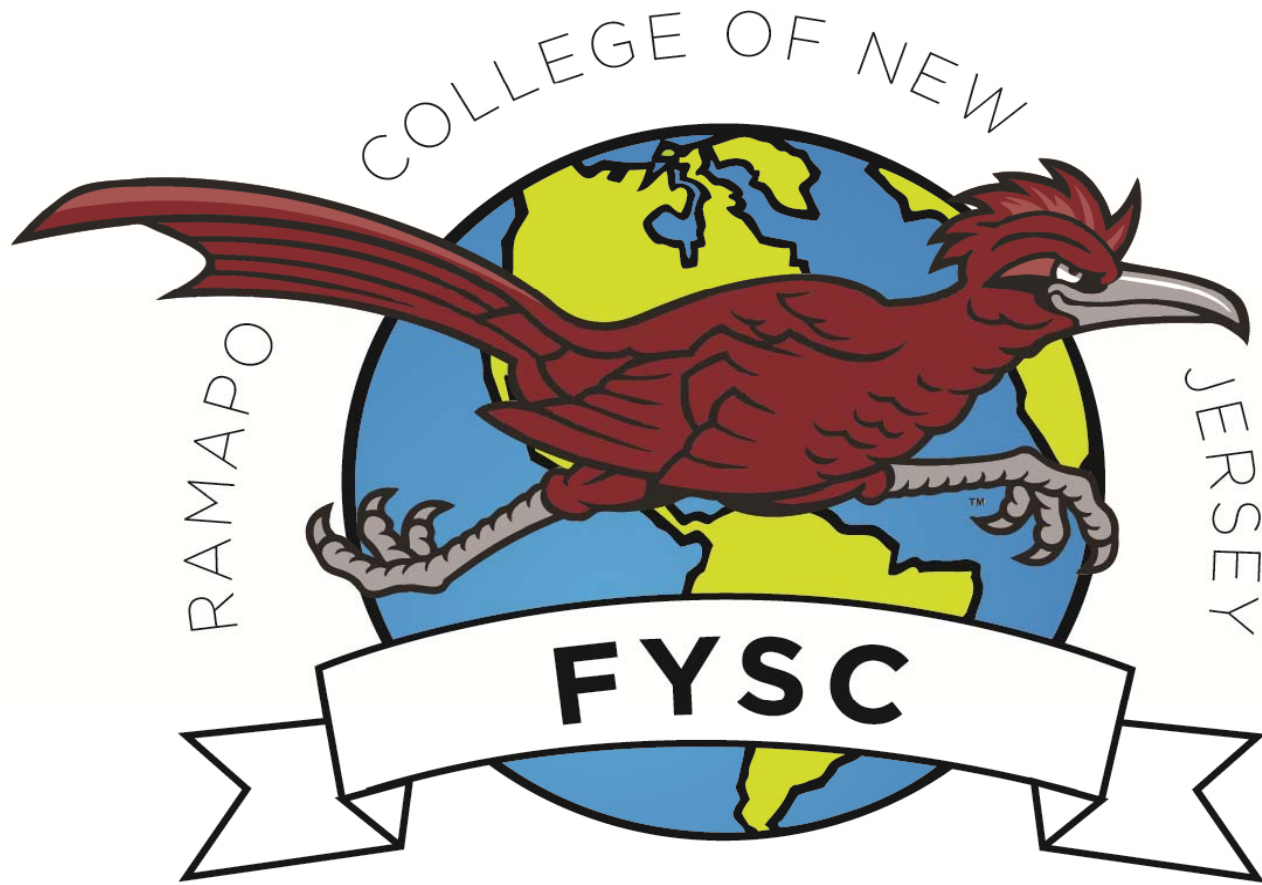
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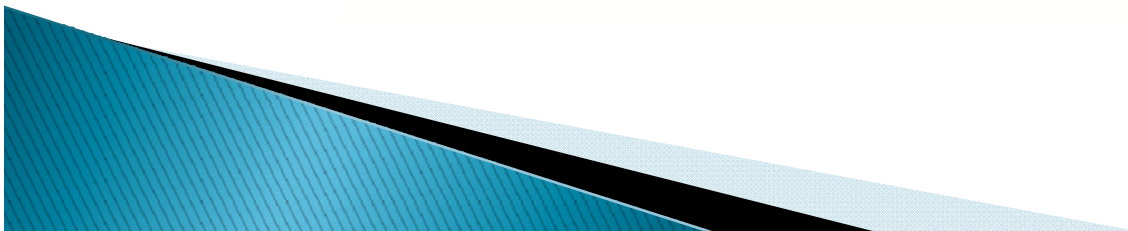
Fledge @Fledge_Ramapo

11 Jul

Fireworks follow after the concert. Admission is free. Parking is \$5 per car. Bring your lawn chairs or blanket.



FIRST-YEAR STUDENT
CHALLENGE



Tracking: The Co-curricular Transcript

My Involvement Manage Involvement Add Involvement Entry

Involvement Summary

Hours Involved Per Month

Top Learning Outcomes

Pending & Incomplete Activities

Event Name	Date	Hours	Organization Name	Status
Development Updates Presen...	Summer 2012	1.0	OrgSync User Conference	Fill Out
Integrating Portfolios and...	Summer 2012	1.0	OrgSync User Conference	Fill Out
Achieving Rockstar Status:...	Summer 2012	1.0	OrgSync User Conference	Fill Out
Involvement: There's an AP...	Summer 2012	1.0	OrgSync User Conference	Fill Out
OrgSync Implementation Rou...	Summer 2012	1.5	OrgSync User Conference	Fill Out
Tracking Student Involvement...	Summer 2012	1.0	OrgSync User Conference	Fill Out
Tips and Tactics: Variatio...	Summer 2012	1.0	OrgSync User Conference	Fill Out
OrgSync Fundamentals	Summer 2012	1.0	OrgSync User Conference	Fill Out
First Year Student Orienta...	Fall 2011	20.0	Center for Student Involvement	Pending
Green Dot	Fall 2011	1.25	Center for Student Involvement	Pending
Club Fair	Fall 2011	3.0	Center for Student Involvement	Pending

Recent Activities [See All](#)

Event Name	Date	Hours	Organization Name	Reports: Full Record	Status	Options
Development Updates Presen...	Summer 2012	1.0	OrgSync User Conference			
Integrating Portfolios and...	Summer 2012	1.0	OrgSync User Conference			
Achieving Rockstar Status:...	Summer 2012	1.0	OrgSync User Conference			
Involvement: There's an AP...	Summer 2012	1.0	OrgSync User Conference			
OrgSync Implementation Rou...	Summer 2012	1.5	OrgSync User Conference			
Tracking Student Involvement...	Summer 2012	1.0	OrgSync User Conference			
Tips and Tactics: Variatio...	Summer 2012	1.0	OrgSync User Conference			
OrgSync Fundamentals	Summer 2012	1.0	OrgSync User Conference			
First Year Student Orienta...	Fall 2011	20.0	Center for Student Involvement		Pending	
Green Dot	Fall 2011	1.25	Center for Student Involvement		Pending	
Club Fair	Fall 2011	3.0	Center for Student Involvement		Pending	

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Tracking: The Co-curricular Transcript

Patrick Chang
505 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah, NJ, 07430 | 201-206-0931 | pchang@ramapo.edu

Activities

Summer Reading and Fall Convocation 06.01.2011 Student Engagement - 2.0 hours
Learning Outcomes: 1.1: Students will apply classroom knowledge to current experiences and future goals, 1.3: Students will use college-level discourse in speaking and writing both individually and in groups, 3.3: Students will become self-reflective and challenge their current view of the world and their place in it.
Approved by: Robert Mentore <rmentore@ramapo.edu> 201-684-7696

AlcoholEdu 06.01.2011 Student Engagement - 3.0 hours
Learning Outcomes: 1.2: Students will explore their own and other cultures, beliefs, and practices, 3.2: Students will take responsibility for their personal development and construct a plan to achieve it, 4.1: Students will understand their roles, rights and responsibilities as citizens of the Ramapo campus.
Approved by: Dr. Judy Green <jgreen2@ramapo.edu> 201-684-7522

First Year Student Orientation 08.28.2011 Student Engagement - 20.0 hours
Learning Outcomes: 2.1: Students will explore opportunities for involvement in campus activities, 2.2: Students will establish connections with their peers, faculty and staff, 3.1: Students will demonstrate their ability to identify and utilize campus resources when needed.

Green Dot 08.30.2011 Student Engagement - 1.25 hours
Learning Outcomes: 1.2: Students will explore their own and other cultures, beliefs, and practices, 2.3: Students will embrace being a member of the Ramapo College community and celebrate college pride.

Arching and First-Year Assembly: During this event, first-year students and their family members receive an official welcome to Ramapo, including remarks from President Mercer, the Director of CAAFYE, and student leaders. 08.31.2011 CAAFYE - 2.0 hours
Learning Outcomes: 2.3: Students will embrace being a member of the Ramapo College community and celebrate college pride.
Approved by: John Yao <jyao@ramapo.edu> 201-684-7587

MAROOH MADNESS: The purpose of this event is to introduce new students to the programs and services available through Athletics, Intramurals and Recreation and introduce them to Maroon Mondays and the concept of being a Ramapo Rowdie. 08.31.2011 Student Engagement - 3.0 hours
Learning Outcomes: 2.1: Students will explore opportunities for involvement in campus activities, 2.2: Students will establish connections with their peers, faculty and staff, 2.3: Students will embrace being a member of the Ramapo College community and celebrate college pride.
Approved by: Kathleen Finnegan <kfinnega@ramapo.edu> 201-684-7683

LOLLAHOBOOZA: LollaHOBooza, is a carnival-like setting with recreational activities such as inflatables, music, mocktails, food and novelties hosted by student groups. The goal is to promote healthy choices by providing entertainment and socialization 08.31.2011 Student Engagement - 3.0 hours
Learning Outcomes: 2.1: Students will explore opportunities for involvement in campus activities, 2.2: Students will establish connections with their peers, faculty and staff, 2.3: Students will embrace being a member of the Ramapo College community and celebrate college pride.
Approved by: Judy Green <jgreen2@ramapo.edu> 201-684-7522

Club Fair 09.14.2011 Center for Student Involvement - 3.0 hours
Learning Outcomes: 2.1: Students will explore opportunities for involvement in campus activities.
Reflection: I got an opportunity to learn about the over 100 organizations here at Ramapo and ended up joining the SGA (Student Government Association)

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7/16/2012

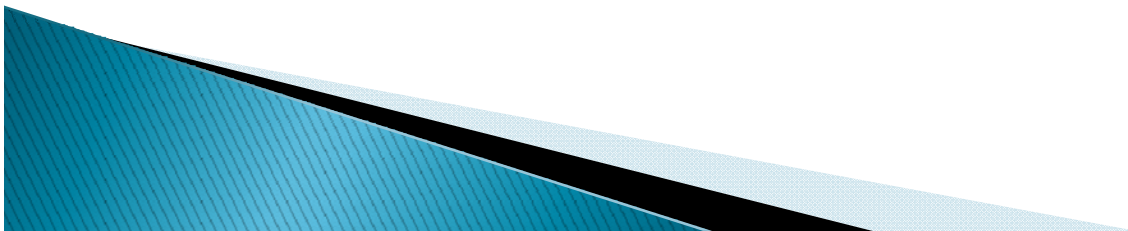
What have we gained?

- Breaking down of silos
- Modest increases in student engagement and student satisfaction
 - First-Year Retention Rate up 2% (86–88%)
 - Modest gains in First-Year outcomes
- Inclusion into new iteration of Strategic Plan
 - Enriched College and Community Life now Student Engagement, with specific achievement targets aligned with SE Plan




What have we learned?

- First-Year easier in some ways
 - Greater body of research and best practices
 - Existing programs that are “institutionalized”
 - First year students are more likely to comply with “mandatory”
- All Goals and *most outcomes* stood the test of two years
 - Changed verbs in outcomes to meet developmental model
- Identify the assessment tool earlier in the process and take advantage of existing measures
- Marketing the intrinsic rewards is more challenging



References used in SE Project

- Brownell, J.E. and Swaner, L.E. (2009). Five high-impact practices: Research on learning outcomes, completion and quality. Washington DC: AAC&U.
 - Bridges, B.K., Buckley, J.A., Hayek, J.C., Kinzie, J. and Kuh, G.D. (2006). What matters to student success: A review of the literature. National Postsecondary Education Cooperative.
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Considering Ramapo's Approach

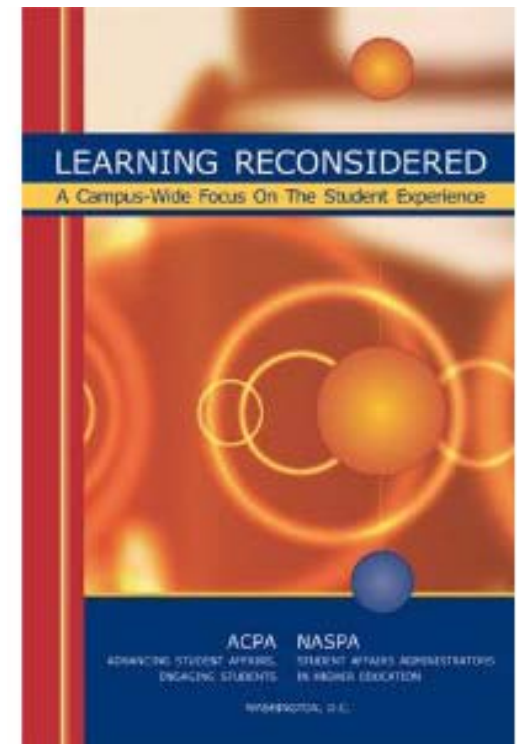


- What is the relationship between assessment scholarship and results, and student development theory? How did this develop?
- What does this suggest for your practice?
- Did you hear anything that relates to your reflections of the climate for assessment on campus?



Student Life Practitioners in the 21st Century Must...

- **Emphasize Student Engagement and Learning - *insufficient to focus only on student services/programs***
- **Provide evidence of effectiveness and contribution to student learning –*collect and use assessment results***
- **Partner with Academic Affairs**



Enacting a Commitment to Student Learning Outcomes in Student Affairs

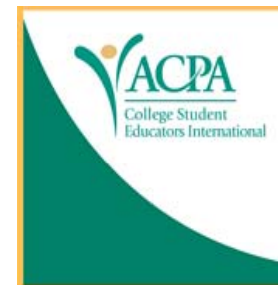
- **Complementary alignment between the student affairs and institution's mission.**
- **Resources allocated to programs that demonstrate contributions to student learning.**
- **Collaborate to foster student learning and personal development.**
- **Student affairs policies and practices are based in research on student learning and informed by institution-specific assessment data.**

Discussion

- What scholarship are you referencing? What has worked?
- What do you need to further your campus assessment work?



Resources



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