

**The Students First Success
System:
Promoting Academic Success through
Expertise-Development Mentoring**

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Students First Success System

(SFSS) is an on-line student support resource that matches multimedia resources to individual needs and specific University Studies' learning goals.

background

- shift in in-coming student demographics -- approximately 50% 1st generation
- in Summer AAC&U presentation we asked “what are consequences of treating 1st generation students as a co-culture?”
- seemed clear that University Studies, PSU’s general education curriculum, was the logical means of delivering this “intervention”

University Studies Program

- Founded in 1994
- Addresses Four Goals
 - Communication
 - Diversity
 - Critical Thinking
 - Social and Ethical Responsibility
- Interdisciplinary
 - Core faculty represent multiple disciplines
 - 40 academic departments participate
- Four-year program
 - Integrated courses
 - 1,000 courses per year

University Studies Program Map

Freshman Inquiry (FRINQ)

UNST 100-level class

A year-long, theme-based course with a mentor section that corresponds with the class.

Transfer Transition

UNST 200- and 300- level classes

One-term course designed specifically for transfer students, with a mentor section that corresponds with the class.

Sophomore Inquiry (SINQ)

UNST 200-level classes

One-term courses with a mentor section that corresponds with the class.

Upper Division Cluster

Classes designated with a "U" offered by academic departments. Three courses in one cluster linked to one of the Sophomore Inquiry courses.

Senior Capstone

UNST 400-level class

A 6-credit, community-based learning class.

Student Success



Academic Preparedness/Plan

Connectedness

Financial
Resources

Strategy for Action

- **Early identification** of students at risk.
- **Ongoing communication** with all students.
- **Quick intervention** where needed.

University Studies' Student First Success System

Underlying SFSS is the idea that new-to-the-university students will make an easier adjustment to college if they are given opportunities to utilize the expertise of already successful students

Expertise development mentoring

involves sharing useful information
about

- what to do in order to succeed at college,
- insights into the culture of higher education, and
- tips on how to become “more expert” students.

First, **SFSS** explicitly identifies
a range of potential college
adjustment issues that new students
are likely to encounter during their
first year on campus.

http://sfss.pdx.edu/resources.php?doc_id=3&res_id=21

Second , **SFSS** connects
students a wide range of
available campus support services.

http://sfss.pdx.edu/resources.php?doc_id=2&res_id=27

Third, **SFSS** provides students with a variety of scripts for how to use specific campus resources appropriately

http://sfss.pdx.edu/resources1.php?doc_id=2&res_id=30

as well as

strategies for key campus

Interactions

http://sfss.pdx.edu/resources.php?doc_id=3&res_id=22

Expertise-development mentoring emphasizes the fit between students' relative level of expertise and message format

e.g. messages for *novice* level students work best in the form of “context free rules”

Incorporating SFSS in assignments

e.g. Core Values Reflection Essay
2009 Pilot Transfer Gateway Course
handout

University Studies' Students First Success System

- View site at: <http://sfss.pdx.edu>
- View developmental site at: <https://sites.google.com/site/sfsssfs/>

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