

### Transition Programs

Senior Year Experience Committee - 2006  
A four year process

- class meetings & celebrations
- departmental events/activities
- capstone experiences
- alumni and parent involvement
- transition courses
- academic advising and career services

### Sophomore Year Program



Gergen & Van Ourek (2008)  
*Life Entrepreneurs: Ordinary People Creating Extraordinary Lives*

Sophomore Year

- Betwixt & Between
- The "Sophomore Slump"



### Optimal Disequilibrium: The Search for Identity

Developmental Tasks

- Choosing a major
- Questioning parents' values
- Search for meaning & community/closeness
- Evaluating decisions vs. opinions of others
- Tentative commitments & self-authorship:  
Moving from absolutes/dependence toward transitional knowing/independence on way to confidence and interdependence

### Curriculum Foundations

The Elon program was designed for sophomores to challenge students to think intentionally and purposefully about who they are, where they want to go, and how to get there.

Leadership  
Core Identity  
Understanding the life entrepreneur


### Timeline towards Success

Planning and preparation

- Developing stakeholders
- Path of the Program
  - Co-facilitators - faculty, staff and students
  - Facilitator Training
- Selection process for participants
  - Recruitment and application process
  - Review and selection

### The Experience

- Pre-program – introductory meeting (book, 360, introductions)
- Retreat – distinctive location, balance of workshop styles and facilitation techniques
  - First year program 3, groups of 30 followed by the transitions course.
- Transition course



### Transition Course Overview

The overall goal of the spring course is for you to gain the ability, experience, and commitment necessary to move forward on the path of a life entrepreneur.

- OPERATIONALIZING THE PLAN
- REFINE THE PLAN
- PEER SUPPORT
- PAINT A PICTURE

### The Winding Path of the Life Entrepreneur

Retreat

- I. Core Identity
- II. Opportunity Recognition
- III. Vision

Course

- I. Goals & Strategies
- II. Support Systems
- III. Action / Service
- IV. Renewal & Reinvention



### Assessment – Year 1

Interviews before and after participation in the program

Before	After
Expectations of the program	Description of the program
Description of self, conflicts among aspects of self, strategy for negotiating conflicts	Description of self, conflicts among aspects of self, strategy for negotiating conflicts

### Effects of Program

At the end of the program, participants reported:		N= 29
Increased focus on and motivation in academics and co-curricular work (e.g., internships)	16	
Increased effort to integrate passions into career goals	16	
Increased focus on and understanding of the value of personal relationships	15	
Enhanced sense of self as a student	13	
Increased willingness to take social and/or academic risks	8	
Increased effort to align current activities with future goals	6	

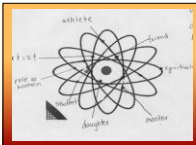
### In one student's words...

*It's just basically all the dreams and the goals that you have become an action plan you could actually see and make decisions . . .*

*And so it forced me to just grab a hold of all the stuff I've been ranting or complaining or dreaming about and actually point it in a certain direction and take a step forward. It was really good. I loved it.*

*Benjamin*

### Multiple Dimensions of Identity Model



Based on Jones & McEwen (2000) and used with permission of Susan Jones and ACPA publishing

### Development of Self-Authorship

Nature of reported conflicts	Before Program	After Program
Expectations of others	22	8
Time for activities, roles	17	11
Passions	1	2
Existential issues (e.g., what is important in life)	0	4
No conflict reported	0	5

### Development of Self-Authorship

Reported strategy for negotiation	Before Program	After Program
No strategy, conflict not resolved	13	7
Pick one perspective, exclude other	8	2
Compromise between two perspectives	9	4
Reframe issues to eliminate sense of conflict	5	17

### In one student's words...

*It made me think what I want to do versus what my parents want me to do. The majority of my life I've tried to please my parents and then I have this constant battle with myself.*

*The program has helped me identify what I'm really interested in.*

*I want to see what internships I can have this summer and next summer. I'm hoping to get an internship in the business/marketing aspect of a fashion industry. Because I'm really interested in fashion and if I can use my major to my advantage in an industry that I'm very interested in then I feel like I would have definitely gotten out of my major what I wanted.*

*Denise*

### Modifications for Year 2

**Structural Changes**

- Double number of students (63 total)
- 1½ - day retreat on first weekend of classes
- Retreat and courses designed as one unit
- Inclusion of an intact first year cohort

**Increased emphasis on civic engagement**

**Assessment of psychosocial wellbeing**  
 Involvement of undergraduate research students in assessment

### Psycho-social Well-being

The Flourishing Scale - the short form of the mental health continuum scale by Keyes (2005)

In the past two weeks how often did you feel ...	
Emotional well-being	satisfied?
Social well-being	that the way our society works makes sense to you?
Psychological well-being	that you had experiences that challenge you to grow and become a better person?

### Selected References

Baxter Magolda, M. B. (2001). *Making their own way: Narratives for transforming higher education to promote self-development*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Baxter Magolda (1995). The integration of relational and impersonal knowing in young adults' epistemological development. *The Journal of College Student Development*, 36, 205-216.

Bridges, W. (2004). *Transitions: Making sense of life's changes (2nd ed.)*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press.

Chickering, A.W., and Reisser, L. (1993). *Education and Identity (2nd ed.)*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gahagan, J. & Hunter, M.S. (2006, July/August). The second-year experience: Turning attention to the academy's middle children. *About Campus*, 11, 17-22.

Jones, S. R., & McEwen, M. K. (2000). A conceptual model of multiple dimensions of identity. *Journal of College Student Development*, 41, 405-414.

Lemons, L.J. and Richmond, D.R. (1987). A developmental perspective on sophomore slump. *NACADA Journal*, 24, 15-19.

Richmond, D.R. & Lemons, L.J. (1985). Sophomore slump: An individual approach to recognition and response. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 26, 176-177.