

## **Access to Success Day: First-Year Transition (FYT) Courses**

---

Nigel Rothfels  
Director, The Edison Initiative, L&S  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

## **Goals**

---

- Increase retention and success rates for all first-year students
- Increase retention rates of students placing in remedial math and English courses
- Reduce gap in retention rates between students of color and white students

**A2S**

## Baseline Data

---

- Already an existing array of courses across UWM serving as First-Year Transition (FYT) courses, including in Architecture and Urban Planning, Criminal Justice, Engineering, Health Sciences, Letters & Science, and Nursing, along with Study Skills courses, Honors Seminars, and undergraduate research opportunities
- In the Fall 2004, 1,721 (46%) of the 3,772 freshmen were enrolled in at least one of these credit-bearing transition courses

**A2S**

## Baseline Data

---

- The average section size in 2004 was 25, and ranged from 7 to 163
- Careful study of the Freshman Seminar Program in L&S (spring 2004, revised fall 2004) revealed a substantial retention benefit from the seminar program.

**A2S**

## **Targeted Improvements:**

---

- Increase student engagement in the first year
- Increase overall UWM capacity in FYT courses
- Increase opportunities for peer and cohort support for first-year students

**A2S**

## **Targeted Improvements:**

---

- Increase opportunities for faculty-student interaction
- Increase connections between first-year and GER courses and student majors
- Continue to use the principles of the scholarship of teaching and learning to improve the learning experience for first-year students

**A2S**

## **Actions in 2005-06**

---

- Coordinate marketing of current FYT courses
  - Brochure prepared for students listing all courses
- Increase attention to matching first-year students to an appropriate FYT course in the STAR programs
  - Coordination with STAR leaders to encourage participation

**A2S**

## **Actions in 2005-06**

---

- Where possible, expand capacity across the university
  - In the fall of 2005, 2066 (48%) of 4300 first-year students registered for a FYT course
- Target mentoring, tutoring, and early warning system to FYT courses
- Survey first-year students about experience at UWM

**A2S**

## Impact

---

- Increased retention and success rate of first-year students
- Ongoing assessment on a campus-wide and divisional bases of first-year courses
- Increased data and coordination facilitating analysis of a wider range of retention factors to clarify causation

**A2S**

## Impact

---

- Increased awareness among faculty and staff of the specific challenges faced by first-year students
- Enhanced campus-wide collaboration of FYT courses and instruction to meet campus objectives

**A2S**

## Plans for 2006-07

---

- Center for Instructional and Professional Development (CIPD) will convene discussions with program directors and faculty to clarify learning and teaching objectives of FYT courses
- Expand FYT capacity where possible to meet as many students as possible
- Further coordinate with tutoring, mentoring, and supplemental instruction programs to provide additional support for students

**A2S**

## Contact Information

---

Nigel Rothfels  
Director, Edison Initiative  
229-6041  
rothfels@uwm.edu  
[www.uwm.edu/letsci/edison](http://www.uwm.edu/letsci/edison)

**A2S**