

# New Student Onboarding Taskforce

## July 2019 Report

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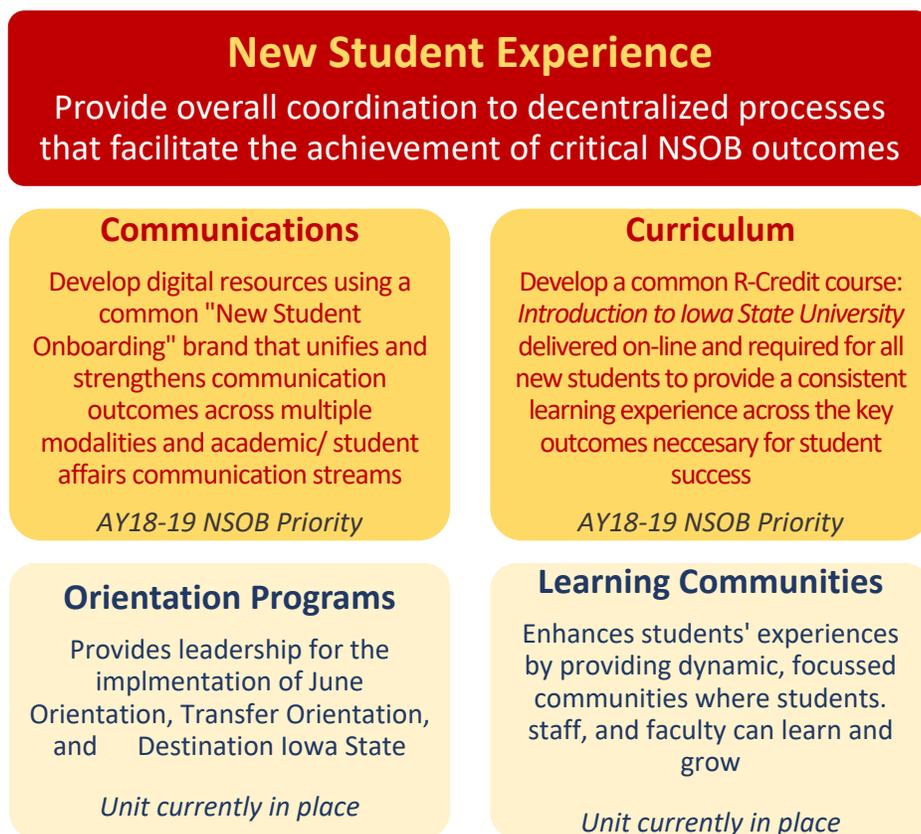
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### Executive Summary

This report summarizes the progress made by the New Student Onboarding (NSOB) Taskforce during 2018-2019. The overarching goal of this work is to make new student onboarding a distinctive part of the Cyclone experience. An intentional, well-coordinated, and holistic new student onboarding program ensures students are familiar with important information and resources critical to their success and have a stronger sense of belongingness, community, and connection to others. These onboarding outcomes lead to higher retention and graduation rates, particularly for historically underserved student populations – a key institutional priority.

This year, the New Student Onboarding Leadership Team focused on two priority areas as a part of a larger emphasis on improving the experiences and transitions for all new students: 1) Coordinating new student **Communications**; and 2) Developing the Cyclone Core Competencies **Curriculum**. These focus areas build upon and enhance the existing programs and services for new students, as illustrated below.

**Figure 1**



## **NSOB Task Force - Key Successes AY18-19**

- Reconfigured NSOB Leadership team to include representation from Learning Communities, New Student Programs, and the University Academic Advising Committee; integrating NSOB change initiatives with ongoing orientation programs, learning communities, and courses.
- Conducted a site visit with colleagues at Michigan State University in conjunction with the UIA convening in October 2018 where we learned that MSU did not implement significant changes as a result of their communications process mapping, instead publishing campus recommendations via a “Communications Improvement Playbook.”
- Collaborated with University Marketing to select ZLR Ignition to create a New Student Onboarding communications and branding strategy.
- Developed the new position “Assistant Director for New Student Onboarding” in the Office of New Student Programs and conducted a national search to fill the position: Mark Hull began his 2 year appointment on May 6, 2019.
- Partnered with staff using EAB Navigate and leadership in CELT to explore options to connect Canvas with EAB Navigate through Salesforce.
- Collaborated with instructors of ISU “orientation courses” to develop sample syllabus for new “Introduction to ISU” course based on current best practices.
  - Facilitated approval of UNST 123X as a new course.
  - Identified a group of students in LAS who do not currently have an orientation course option to serve as the pilot cohort for Fall 2019 implementation.
  - As of July 15, 2019 there are 60 students enrolled in UNSDST 123X for Fall, 2019. Academic Advisors reported enthusiasm that this options was now available.

## **Challenges**

- Creating institutional change across the entire New Student Onboarding ecosystem is a significantly complex set of interconnected initiatives. There are a few (if any) peer comparator institutions who have successfully completed cultural change on this scale.
- Implementation of Workday and Improved Service Delivery (ISD) diverted IT and human resources from NSOB AY18-19 priorities; for example, the hiring process for the newly created Assistant Director position was delayed several months, and several IT related projects were put on hold.
- Additionally, Workday and ISD implementation priorities have caused an increased sense of change fatigue for staff and faculty across campus resulting in a loss of momentum for NSOB change efforts.
- Decentralization continues to focus attention on individual areas of improvement instead of coordinating efforts across the entire NSOB value stream; for example, the various Closing The Achievement Gap (CTAG) initiatives through the Student Success Council, and the relatively uncoordinated implementation of multiple mobile apps across various campus programs (New Student Programs Guidebook, My State, ISUPD Guardian, ISU Alumni Association App, etc.).
- Perceived and actual competing institutional priorities and budget constraints limit capacity to implement grand scale NSOB change projects, restricting potential to become “best in class.”

## **Recommendations for AY19-20 Strategic NSOB Priorities**

- Implement Salesforce (inclusive of the marketing cloud option) to coordinate communications for all new and continuing ISU students.
  - Ensure all new students receive critical information and achieve common learning outcomes to positively impact retention and student success.
  - Support a broad adoption of Salesforce across campus. Make Salesforce available to all departments with administrative support to foster department utilization.

- Use Salesforce to 'push' information to students based on student characteristics and time within onboarding cycle.
- Develop a New Student Experience website portal to house all digital onboarding resources (curricular/course materials, and college/institutional communications). Initial website would focus on New Direct from High School students in AY19-20, and expand to transfer, graduate, professional, and non-degree seeking students in AY20-21.
- Implement "Introduction to ISU" pilot R-credit on-line course: refine curriculum based on student and instructor feedback and develop plans to expand to campus-wide delivery to all new direct from high school students in AY20-21.
  - Future plans would further expand to all new students and make course a registration/graduation requirement in Fall, 2021.
- Hire a UNST123X course coordinator/instructor to curate and update content annually, and facilitate the course in Fall, Spring, and Summer terms (anticipated 20-21 enrollment 6,000+).
  - NOTE: At the University of Iowa, this position is a full time P&S position at the P-34 level working in the Office of New Student Services.
- Create more intentional linkages with other student success initiatives, and re-engage efforts to serve graduate students, professional students, and underserved/special populations.
- Identify efficiencies gained and improved retention to demonstrate value of centralized New Student Onboarding efforts across academic departments and stakeholder groups.

## **Appendix A: New Student Onboarding Taskforce Cyclone Core Competencies**

### **Outcome 1: Ensure all students have the knowledge and ability to navigate the university.**

#### 1.1 Safety

- ISU Alert
- ISUPD/Emergency Contacts

#### 1.2 Paying for College

- Complete Financial Aid Documents
- Apply for Scholarships
- International Student Needs
- Graduate Student Needs

#### 1.3 Basic Technology

- NetID/e-mail
- AccessPlus
- Learning Management Systems (Canvas, etc.)
- Wireless Connectivity

#### 1.4 General Academic Skills

- Reading/Understanding a Syllabus
- Time/Task Management
- Goal Setting
- Library Resources/Information Literacy

#### 1.5 Clear Sense of Purpose: Academic/Career Pathway

- Understanding role(s) of student and advisor/major professor
- Understanding the curriculum or program of study of the primary major(s): Degree Audit System; 4/5 year plan (degree Maps); Required classes/electives
- Course Registration Process
- Awareness of Academic Calendar: Last day to drop a course, scheduling preliminary/final exams; thesis submission, etc.
- Academic Policies (Course Catalog, Graduate Handbook)

### **Outcome 2: Integration into ISU community and culture.**

#### 2.1 Campus Resources: Where/how to ask for help

- Academic Engagement and Success
- Health and Wellness
- Needs as members of specific communities

#### 2.2 Transitions to Independent Living: housing, dining, transportation (CyRide, parking, etc.), health and well-being, living in Ames

#### 2.3 Establish Behavioral Expectations

- ISU Principles of Community
- Student Code of Conduct
- Academic Integrity
- College/Departmental Honor Codes

#### 2.4 Clear Sense of Belonging/Social Integration

- Connecting to peers
- Getting involved/engaged on campus

## 2.5 Diversity and Inclusion

- Understanding the lived experiences of self and others
- Recognizing the impact of systems of oppression
- Taking actions to create a safer, more inclusive campus

### **Outcome 3: Increase awareness of ISU Experiences and practices that promote academic success and integration.**

#### 3.1 Building relationships with Faculty/Academic Advisor

- Roles and Responsibilities of both parties

#### 3.2 Promoting a Growth Mindset and Resiliency

#### 3.3 Participating in High Impact Educational Practices

- Learning Communities
- Study Abroad/Study Away
- Undergraduate Research

### **Outcome 4: Ensure compliance requirements are met.**

#### 4.1 Title IX Education

#### 4.2 Alcohol and Other Drug Education

#### 4.3 Financial Literacy Education