

**2007 Comprehensive Program Review Follow-Up Report
for the First-Year Experience Program
University College, Department of First-Year Programs**

This narrative, with the accompanying appendix, fulfills the university's Comprehensive Program Review Requirement for the First-Year Experience program (i.e. KSU 1101). Before addressing quality, productivity and viability issues, a situational context is in order.

Situational Context

When KSU 1101 was originally reviewed in 2001, and when the follow-up report was written in 2003, the course was one of many interdisciplinary initiatives housed in the Department of University Studies. At that time, University College did not exist. With the exception of Professor Kathy Matthews, who served as Director, there were no faculty dedicated to teach KSU 1101 (all had other responsibilities in addition to KSU 1101), and it was not a part of a curriculum requirement for first-year students. All of that has changed since 2003.

The course is now housed in the newest academic department on campus, the Department of First-Year Programs, which began operations July 1, 2007. It has a dedicated interdisciplinary faculty, and it is the primary aspect of the first-year curriculum requirement. The course has not only grown in size but also stature, with a revised curriculum, a new custom textbook, a common reader program, and national recognition. That being said, the faculty recognize that KSU 1101 received some well-deserved criticism during the 2001 review. We want to ensure reviewers that our first-year programs are being improved continuously and that through assessment, collaboration with academic and support departments across campus, and alignment with the university's strategic goals, we will continue to enhance an already strong program.

First-Year Curriculum Requirement

In 2005 the UPCC voted to require all first-time, full-time students to enroll in either KSU 1101 or a learning community. (Biology majors took BIOL 2101 to fulfill this requirement.) Residential students enrolled in learning communities, while commuter students chose either an LC or an independent section of KSU 1101. Not every LC includes a section of KSU 1101, so there is no requirement that a first-year student take KSU 1101 specifically. (This is a common misperception.) Still, KSU 1101 has experienced rapid growth (Appendix A, Slide 1); the LC program has expanded as well (Appendix A, Slide 2). The overall growth of the first-year program is revealed in Appendix A, Slide 3.

KSU 1101 and learning communities are discussed in tandem within First-Year Programs, but they will not be treated that way in this report. Learning communities are integrated combinations of General Education and/or lower-division major courses which may or may not contain a section of KSU 1101. Other than KSU 1101, the courses in learning communities are outside the purview of the Department of First-Year Programs. Only the overall impact of LCs will be mentioned. Like Residential Life initiatives, there are many aspects of courses and programs associated with LCs but housed in other departments that positively impact first-year students. However, if the Department of First-Year Programs is not directly accountable for them, they will not be included in this discussion.

Evidence of Quality Enhancement since 2003

The quality of KSU 1101 has been enhanced via several substantial changes since the 2003 Follow-Up Report. The faculty are one of the changes and the key to additional changes. The Department of First-Year Programs includes two Associate Professors, seven Assistant Professors, three Instructors, and one Lecturer, in addition to two full-time temporary Instructors. While only two members of the faculty are tenured, 10 are tenure-track. (The two tenured faculty serve in administrative roles as Interim Chair and as Director of First-Year Retention Initiatives.) Eight hold terminal degrees (one MFA and seven Ph.D.s). The academic disciplines represented include communication, education, English, finance,

political science, and theater/performance studies. A majority of Department of First-Year Programs faculty teach General Education in their academic disciplines in addition to KSU 1101. We feel this serves to enhance the learning communities program, promote collaboration with those discipline departments, and keep the faculty current within their disciplines.

In addition to the full-time faculty within the department, KSU 1101 is taught by trained support faculty, members of the Department of University Studies (including the Chair), and SSES professional staff members (including Dr. Michael Sanseviro, director of Residence Life, and Kathy Alday, director of Student Life). Since 2003, select faculty from across campus have also taught the course, including Dr. Michael Ross (education) and Dr. Martha Myers (computer science). There are no full-time faculty members outside of University College teaching the course this fall, and none are expected to do so in fall 2008. Their departments must also meet increased student enrollment and course demands.

The second major change was a revision of the curriculum. In fall 2004, the University College Advisory Council's subcommittee on KSU 1101/Learning Communities began drafting learning outcomes for both the first-year seminar and the LC program. While the Council no longer exists, the 11 learning outcomes chosen by the subcommittee are still used today for both KSU 1101 and LCs. Ten of the outcomes were taken from the Policy Center on the First Year of College's study of seminar courses, and the final outcome (global perspectives) was added because of KSU's longstanding commitment to multicultural and international education. A new custom textbook was developed for KSU 1101 in 2005 to ensure the integration of the learning outcomes, and faculty developed instructional materials to provide greater consistency in the assignments and assessments for multiple sections. This fall, KSU 1101 students are reading a custom textbook written completely by KSU faculty, and each chapter corresponds to at least one of the learning outcomes. Technology is now an integral part of the course, with faculty utilizing WebCT/Vista, the Online Career Portfolio, and Pearson Publishing's online resources for the textbook.

The third major change was the development of a common reader program for all KSU 1101 students. Beginning in 2004, students engaged with a different text each year. *The Diary of Anne Frank* was selected as the inaugural common reader to compliment the opening of the Anne Frank in the World exhibit on campus. The 2005 reader was *It's Not about the Bike* by Lance Armstrong. There was also a diversity reader in 2005: Dr. Eugen Schoenfeld's *A Reconstructed Life*. Faculty found it too disjointed to teach two common readers in addition to the course textbook, so the Common Reader Investigation Team (a faculty committee) changed the criteria to ensure the annual common reader dealt with diversity and global issues. In 2006 the reader was *Sounds of the River* by Da Chen. This year, KSU 1101 students are reading Dr. David Batstone's *Not for Sale: The Return of the Global Slave Trade – And How We Can Fight It*. Readers promote motivation, triumph over challenge, a global perspective and issues requiring discussion and dialogue.

The fourth change was an explicit focus on increasing academic rigor. In 2006 the now Interim Department Chair charged a faculty team to implement a study of rigor and to determine common course mandates for all sections of KSU 1101. Those mandates include, but are not limited to, exams, research activities, and oral communication presentations. The overall GPA of the course has been steadily decreasing, falling from 3.45 in fall 2003 to 3.31 in fall 2005 to 3.24 in fall 2006, even as the number of sections steadily increases. In spring 2007, although only 20 sections were offered, the overall GPA was 2.73, significantly lower than the overall GPA for undergraduate courses of 2.95. Each semester, the Department of First-Year Programs charts the KSU 1101 GPA against the University College GPA and the overall undergraduate courses GPA. We recognize, however, that grades are earned by students rather than given by faculty, and we do not consider course GPA to be the sole indicator for academic rigor. As the university continues to admit students with higher high school GPAs and SAT scores, we would expect students to do well in KSU 1101.

Students who enroll in KSU 1101 complete the course at higher rates than other undergraduate courses. According to Institutional Research data, the withdrawal rate for all KSU courses in fall 2005 was 9%, and University College's "W" rate was 5%. KSU 1101's withdrawal rate was only 3%. A similar pattern is found for fall 2006 data. KSU courses overall had a "W" rate of 8%; University College's rate

was 4%. Once again, KSU 1101 only lost 3% of its enrolled students to withdrawals. This is, of course, important for the progression part of the RPG initiative.

The fifth change was an explicit enhancement of students' social and academic connections to campus, a central aspect of retention. Beginning in fall 2004, a First-Year Convocation ceremony was held for incoming students and their families, and this tradition continues on an annual basis. This fall, President Papp and other dignitaries welcomed 800 students, their family members and friends, and many of their faculty members in the Convocation Center for a ceremony that featured State Rep. Sean Jerguson as the alumni speaker and Aaron Graham, of Sojourner's, as the keynote speaker.

In an effort to connect first-year LC students with the campus, a Welcome BBQ was held in University Village prior to the beginning of fall semester. After being fed and entertained the students were grouped in their LC, and faculty gave them campus tours and discussed expectations for college courses. This allowed new students to connect with their peers and their faculty prior to the start of classes.

Finally, a Meet & Eat program (originally called the Lunch-n-Learn program) was initiated for learning communities. This program combines multiple LCs in gatherings that are theme-related to assist in meeting the program's learning outcomes. The programs are diverse, focusing on topics such as academic advising, career development, wellness, citizenship, global issues, and study abroad. The Welcome BBQ and the annual Meet & Eat programs are examples of collaborative efforts between First-Year Programs and the Department of Residence Life.

The sixth change was the development of initiatives to support the institution's retention goals. Working with the Center for Student Leadership and the CAPS Center, KSU 1101 faculty piloted the Advising Team program, complete with Peer Leaders/Peer Advisors in 2006. Due to its initial success, the program was expanded to promote academic advising and declaration of majors in the first semester. This fall an Early Alert Program was launched within KSU 1101 sections to identify students who are in need of academic support in their first semester. The Director of First-Year Retention Initiatives works with faculty to contact and track students who are not getting off to a good academic start. The first assessment results will be available in spring '08.

The seventh change was the focus on faculty development programs. A Maymester program inviting all instructors involved in LCs to attend was held for the first time in 2004; this program has been an annual event to promote the growth and integration of LCs. Approximately 50-60 faculty attend each May for a multi-day program that includes guest speakers, interactive discussions, and protected time to work within the LC cohorts to plan the integrative components. This program may not continue due to budgetary constraints and a shrinking number of faculty participants in LCs, but it was essential to build the LC program. There have also been faculty development programs specifically designed for KSU 1101 faculty. When the majority of the current faculty were hired in 2004, a multi-day Augmester course was designed for them. This summer, the Interim Chair and the Acting Course Coordinator conducted a half-day orientation to assist support faculty with course preparation, mandated course components, and campus resources. In addition, the Dean of University College provided incentive grants to faculty for the development of specific modules for KSU 1101 that enhance the ability to meet the stated learning outcomes.

Faculty Engagement in Program Assessment

Department faculty embrace the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL) and understand the importance of utilizing their classrooms as laboratories to both strengthen KSU 1101 and LCs while also advancing their own research agendas. We also recognize that the 2003 Follow-Up Report promised a comprehensive, longitudinal assessment plan. This was not implemented in 2003 or 2004, but it is a top priority for the new department. (Tom Pusateri has already agreed to meet with the full faculty in January 2008 to facilitate the design of a comprehensive assessment plan. Faculty will allocate specific aspects for which they will be responsible)

The Acting KSU 1101 Coordinator surveyed a sample of several hundred students to assess the course's effectiveness this fall. This is one of many survey instruments developed and utilized in the last

few years to assess students' attitudes toward the course and fulfillment of the learning outcomes. This year's survey data, combined with KSU's Institutional Research data, should result in findings that are rich and will be used to improve the program's positive impact and campus perception. Additionally, a committee gathered data from more than one-third of the 2,000 students enrolled in KSU 1101 this semester to assess the success of the Common Reader Program. Those data will be analyzed in early spring. Each semester, beginning in fall 2005, LC faculty have assessed the fulfillment of the 11 learning outcomes within their community. Data comparing student and faculty assessment of the LCs were recently presented at a national assessment conference. (Hill, K., & Smith, D. (2007) *A comparison of student and faculty assessment of learning community outcomes*. Paper presented at the 2007 Assessment Institute, Indianapolis, IN.)

Assessment is also a component of new departmental initiatives. For example, several department members are actively involved in the American Democracy Project/Political Engagement Project. These faculty are developing a Special Topics course (KSU 2290) using the Center for Strategic and International Studies' project on the Seven Revolutions (www.7revs.org) to develop a theme-oriented first-year seminar course. Between eight and 10 sections of KSU 2290 will be offered in fall 2008. The assessment instruments for the course are being developed even as the syllabus template and course materials are being developed.

All of the changes discussed above – and our department's clear focus on assessment – clearly illustrate our goal to improve the overall effectiveness of KSU 1101 in promoting student success. We feel that our new location (within the newly named University College building), new leadership, technology-equipped classrooms, and innovative teaching methods are helping us accomplish that goal. We are pleased and proud that *U.S. News & World Report* recognized us a program of excellence for the fourth year in a row (out of six years that the magazine has been tracking first-year programs). We were the only First-Year Experience program in Georgia recognized with this prestigious designation. We were also chosen in 2003-04 to serve as one of the original benchmarking programs for the Policy Center's "Foundations of Excellence in the First Year of College" self-study. Our learning communities program has received national recognition as well. Two years ago we were asked to join the consortium of institutions that plans the national Learning Communities Conference each year. KSU will host that conference for the first time in 2009. Finally, our department developed and runs the *Journal of Learning Communities Research*, a scholarly peer-reviewed journal dedicated to advancing the scholarship of teaching and learning within LCs.

In summary of question #1, we argue that the due to the faculty's dedication to aiding student success that the program's quality has increased since 2003, and although it still faces some challenges, that the Department of First-Year Programs is meeting its mission to serve first year students and assist with RPG.

Evidence of Productivity Enhancement since 2003

The productivity of FYP has greatly increased since the 2003 Follow-Up Report. As noted in the previous section the program has grown, and that growth is at a higher percentage than the university's overall growth. According to data from Institutional Research, KSU 1101 enrollment grew 89% in fall 2005 as the curriculum requirement took affect, while the university's overall growth was 3%. In fall 2006, KSU 1101 had a 15% growth in enrollment; the university's growth was 7%.

In fall 2003 there were 40 sections of KSU 1101 offered; this increased to 80 for fall 2007. Approximately 2,500 students will enroll in KSU 1101 this academic year (80 sections in the fall and 20 in the spring). We anticipate more than 90 sections for fall 2008 and at least 25 for spring 2009.

We also want to offer evidence of success in supporting the BOR's RPG initiative. The following data were taken from the EIM website at <http://vic.kennesaw.edu>.

First-Year Retention Rates Improving

KSU's first-year retention rate increased in 2007 for the fall 2006 cohort of First-Time/Full-Time First-Year students. Here is the breakdown within the cohort:

Enrolled in an LC with KSU 1101 (or BIOL 2101)	82% retained
Enrolled in an Independent Section of KSU 1101 (or BIOL 2101)	76%
Enrolled in an LC without a KSU 1101 (or BIOL 2101)	71%
Not enrolled in an LC, a KSU 1101 or a BIOL 2101	68%

First-year students who maintained high GPAs, earned at least 30 credit hours to progress to the sophomore level, and declared a major were much more likely to be retained in the second year than those who did not. Several of the key comparisons of cohort subgroups from the RPG Tracking System update in 2007 are as follows:

- The first-year retention rate of the Fall 2006 cohort of FT/FT students who had enrolled in KSU 1101 (in either an LC or as an independent course) during their first fall was three percentage points higher (79%) than the retention rate for the total cohort (76%) and nine percentage points higher than the rate for those who did not enroll in KSU 1101 (70%). Thus, the course clearly has a positive impact on RPG goals.
- The first-year retention rate of the fall 2006 cohort of FT/FT Freshmen who had enrolled in a learning community during their first fall was also three percentage points higher (79%) than the retention rate for the total cohort (76%) and six percentage points higher than the rate for those who did not enroll in a learning community (73%). Again, this includes LCs with a section of KSU 1101 (73% in fall '06, n = 37) and those that did not (27% in fall '06, n = 14).

There are other items in EIM's report that deal with retention rates of high academic achievers and students who have declared a major by the end of their first year as well as an increase in progression from freshman to sophomore standing that can be attributed, at least in part to KSU 1101 because of a specific course focus on academic success strategies, academic advising, declaration of major/career exploration, and four-year graduation plans as part of its curriculum. Students who successfully complete the course have been intentionally introduced to aspects of their college career that promote retention – and eventual graduation. (EIM has not provided crosstabulations of students who take KSU 1101 with the variables of GPA, declaration of major, and achievement of sophomore status. They have been requested and will be incorporated into the assessment plan for the Department of First-Year Programs.)

Faculty Productivity

First-Year Programs' faculty are actively involved in research/creative activity endeavors, even with their full teaching loads, substantial service requirements, individual time spent with students, and relative inexperience within the academy. Faculty are fully engaged in conference presentations related to first-year programs, and some also present within their disciplines. Their combined vitas showcase more than 40 conference presentations, panels, and proceedings. Additionally, there have been 14 scholarly publications, which include book chapters and both refereed and non-refereed journal publications related specifically to first-year initiatives. Faculty also have publishing success within their disciplines. In an effort to enhance their effectiveness, numerous faculty have attended various professional development workshops and conferences.

Our faculty realize that grant funding is becoming an ever-increasing expectation at KSU. Faculty have been successful securing CETL grants for SoTL projects and a Faculty Learning Community, however, we realize that more faculty and administration effort needs to be put into grant development, application, and acceptance.

Our department recognizes the importance of students and faculty giving back to the community. We feel that this not only serves those in need, but it also is a character-builder for students and faculty that reinforces KSU's active membership within the local, state, national and international community.

We also wish to note that several of our faculty have received awards from both the university and also from outside sources. We believe this recognition supports the notion of a faculty dedicated to their task of assisting and improving our programs as well as the institution.

In summary of question #2 we argue that our program's productivity is substantial and our faculty are active and productive both in and out of the classroom. We recognize that an increase in grant acceptance and scholarship output is needed. But our main focus and charge is teaching and service, and in those areas we are most productive.

Identification of the Action Plan/Priorities from the 2003 Report that have been Accomplished

We would again like to note that only one member of the Department of First-Year Programs was employed at KSU to teach KSU 1101 when the 2003 report was written. Even so, many of the priorities within the Action Plan (AP) have been accomplished, because they were obvious aspects of growing and enhancing the first-year seminar course and the LC initiative.

The AP called for four full-time faculty to "help orientate students to academic life." The addition of multiple dedicated faculty more than accomplished this goal. The program has continued to encourage faculty and staff participation from across campus. For fall 2007 13 faculty and staff not in FYP taught KSU 1101.

The Plan also called for one member from the College of Science and Mathematics to "teach in a seminar as part of an initiative aimed at improving the success of women who study science and mathematics." In fall 2006 that goal was achieved when Dr. Myers taught KSU 1101 in an LC dedicated to women in the sciences. (This can no longer be taught because faculty across campus are needed to teach in their home departments. This is why the Department of First-Year Programs only requested joint-appointment positions in its FY09 budget request. The goal is to hire jointly appointed faculty with mathematics, biology, and/or English expertise.)

Noting the AP's call for greater assessment, the former Director of KSU 1101 (now the Director of First-Year Retention Initiatives) received assessment training from the National Policy Center on the First Year of College, and the current KSU 1101 Acting Coordinator attended the same Assessment Institute in June 2007.

KSU is now one of hundreds of institutions participating in the UCLA Higher Education Research Institute's annual surveys of first-year students. The CIRP-FS (Freshman Survey) is administered during New Student Orientation sessions to provide data on the entering first-year class. The YFCY (Your First College Year) instrument is administered near the end of spring semester. These "book-end" instruments allow KSU to adhere to Dr. Alexander Astin's protocol for first-year assessment and ensure that our interventions (like KSU 1101 and LCs) are positively impacting student success.

The plan also called for "faculty development opportunities." Two members of the faculty have been honored as participants in the Governor's Teaching Fellows program, and a majority of the faculty participate in a variety of professional development programs as time permits. The development of the Maymester Faculty Development Program for all learning communities faculty is an example of University College's commitment to provide professional development for our faculty and others across campus. Also the incentive grants provided by the Dean of University College represent an additional opportunity for faculty development.

First-Year Programs is particularly proud of its enhancement of diversity within the KSU 1101 curriculum. The AP promised delivery of "a more focused unit on diversity in all sections of KSU 1101, with specific learning outcomes." The custom text has a dedicated chapter on diversity in addition to one on global issues and one that also deals with ethics, leadership and citizenship. Diversity is promoted through the Common Reader Program, and many of the community service projects aid in diversity

appreciation. Funded by one of the incentive grants offered by the Dean of University College, the Acting KSU 1101 Coordinator created, in summer 07, an ethics module containing global ethical scenarios with a PowerPoint teaching presentation and instructions to faculty for an Ethics Bowl. This is just one illustration of faculty focus on diversity, ethical leadership, and global citizenship. First-Year Programs is playing a significant role in KSU's QEP, and we are continually looking for opportunities to increase our QEP participation.

The AP called for an "increase in technology in the KSU 1101 Program." As noted previously, this has been accomplished through a course mandate requiring research activities and by a chapter in the custom text focusing on Sturgis Library resources, plagiarism and source viability. This same part of the AP called for an increase of use of WebCT (now Vista). Although the goal of all faculty using that platform was not reached by spring 2004, it is now being used by all full-time faculty and support faculty with some variance in the scope of use. KSU 1101 students also learn to use the Online Career Portfolio and are encouraged to keep it current throughout their college career. Finally, Pearson Custom Publishing worked with First-Year Programs faculty members to produce online resources to accompany the custom textbook. These resources form the foundation for a hybrid section of the course, which will debut in fall 2008. The department is also exploring the development of a fully online course, with the goal of offering it to BBA students working toward that online degree in fall 2009.

A majority of the departmental faculty have met the goal "to incorporate service learning and/or community service projects" into their sections.

Another stated goal was to "offer and promote activities outside the classroom" and that is part of the course's new mandates. This includes Convocation, Meet & Eats and attending campus events – ranging from concerts, to ballgames, to major fairs, to health programs to career fairs.

Finally, as said earlier, faculty recognize the need to seek grant funding, and there has been some activity in this area. For example, one of the Instructors teamed up with an Instructor in University Studies to design a study of experiential education. They were successful in securing a CETL SoTL grant, and their preliminary findings were recently presented at an international education conference. Neither have terminal degrees or formal training in research methods, yet they are clearly rising to the challenge for greater research accomplishments and grant funding. It is important to state once again that only two members of the department are tenured. The tenure-track faculty were hired in fall 2004 or later. This is a young faculty, compared to many academic departments, and they are still developing their research agendas.

Identification of the Action Plans/Priorities from the 2003 Follow-Up Report that Still Need to be Addressed (with an Indication of a Timeline for their Completion)

Some aspects of the AP are no longer applicable based on the new structure for KSU 1101. Other aspects are simply not within the control of the Department of First-Year Programs and, therefore, should not be a part of an action plan related to improving the department's curriculum.

For example, the department does not have the ability to mandate that faculty from other departments/colleges teach KSU 1101. Yet, the AP made the recruitment of two faculty from the Coles College of Business to teach KSU 1101 a priority. There is strong support for KSU 1101 and LCs within the Coles College, but there are currently no members of the Coles faculty teaching the first-year seminar course. Growth within their own programs necessitates their teaching business courses. Coles faculty work with the department to plan and deliver discipline-specific LCs for students who want to major in one of the business programs, and Prof. Nancy Prochaska teaches – and recruits others to teach – BUSA 1000 (Introduction to Business) each fall in those communities.

The Sophomore Year Experience was anticipated to "prepare students for 'advance study'." This program was a worthwhile effort, but, for a variety of reasons, it is being phased out as a University College initiative. Regardless, it is housed within University Studies and is only indirectly related to KSU 1101 and LCs. It is, therefore, no longer a part of the long-term plan to enhance first-year curriculum initiatives.

In the Follow-Up Report it was a goal for KSU 1101 students utilize “E-Portfolios” and training by the Presentation Technology Department. Although some sections have used the E-Portfolio since 2003, its use is sporadic and perhaps better suited for KSU 4401, the Senior Year Experience. Since PTD no longer exists in its 2003 form – and no longer offers student training on the E-Portfolio or any other multimedia computer application, this priority is no longer achievable even if the First-Year Programs faculty felt it should remain a priority. However, a majority of KSU 1101 sections do integrate the Online Career Portfolio into the curriculum, inviting Career Services representatives into their classrooms to train the students or conducting the training themselves. Other faculty encourage the development of an online portfolio without taking class time to teach students how to build it.

Finally, the AP called for a “longitudinal study for KSU 1101 residential students to determine impact of the residential experience on persistence and retention.” We realize that this information would be rich and valuable and should be generated, but to date it has yet to be compiled. According to Dr. Sanseviro, director of Residence Life, this data may be impossible to gather. Banner does not accurately list the residential status of students and is not updated automatically when a student’s status changes, so data pulled by Institutional Research (now EIM) comparing residential students to non-residential students is suspect. First-Year Programs has been represented at several meetings to explore options for improving the accuracy of the data and to note the need in analyzing students by residential status. Again, it is not within the department’s control to alleviate this dilemma. Until the data are accurate, this is one aspect of assessment that cannot be reported.

In conclusion, the Department of First-Year Programs is developing its strategic plan – which will align with the recently completed plan for University College as well as the institution’s strategic plan – and engaging in fruitful discussions about growing and enhancing its already strong programs. Everyone in the department understands the need for a comprehensive assessment plan. We are pleased, however, to have accomplished so many of the priorities listed in the 2003 Follow-Up Report and have appreciated the opportunity to review the 2001 self-study, the University Council’s response to that study, and the 2003 report to learn more about the history, strengths and perceived weaknesses of our award-winning first-year seminar course.

Current Status of the Program’s Viability

Indicate how the program advances specific goals and action steps of KSU’s strategic plan

The evidence, particularly the RPG data, shows that KSU 1101 should not only be sustained but enhanced. We are excited about the future in our new department with a clear focus on student success.

Our department advances specific aspects of the university’s strategic plan. For example, we have already met or are working diligently to meet several strategies under Goal 1 (to enhance and expand academic programs and delivery):

- we are actively engaged in QEP through our curriculum, textbook, and common reader program;
- we are currently developing our departmental strategic plan in concert with the University College and institutional plan; and
- we are developing a hybrid version of KSU 1101 and investigating a fully online version of the course.

Under Goal 2 (to improve retention, progression and graduation rates while maintaining high quality), we are integrally involved in the following strategies:

- every KSU 1101 student receives academic advising from his/her instructor and learns how to receive academic advising from CAPS as an undeclared student and from departmental/college advisors once a major is declared;
- we are dedicated to learner-centered teaching and are quite productive in SoTL projects to assess and enhance our effectiveness; and
- the Director of First-Year Retention Initiatives’ (who is responsible for the development and implementation of the early identification and intervention programs for at-risk students)

departmental home is First-Year Programs and our faculty are actively involved in early alert/intervention initiatives.

Additionally, we actively support Goal 4 (to enhance student life activities and prepare students to be leaders) through our requirement for students to attend/participate in campus activities, our emphasis on community service projects, and our inclusion of the KSU Model of Ethical Leadership in our curriculum. We also work closely with the Center for Student Leadership on a variety of initiatives including our Peer Leader/Peer Advisor program. We also work closely with the Institute for Global Initiatives to publicize study abroad opportunities, getting students to begin planning to take part in this program their first semester.

Goals 3 and 5 are clearly at the institutional level, with little opportunity to directly impact them at the academic department or individual course level. Still, we are clearly contributing to the advancement of the university's strategic plan.

Resources needed to meet the goals of KSU's Quality Enhancement Plan

The Department of First-Year Programs could strengthen its globally focused common reader program if funding for the program did not rely primarily on the KSU 1101 textbook manuscript preparation money. It is imperative to have the author or an individual who can essentially "bring the book to life" present a lecture on campus each fall. We currently pay speaker fees and travel expenses that average \$8,000 each fall. A consistent source of funding for the program would allow us to broaden the common reader program across campus, engage community members, and possibly lengthen the stay of the invited speaker.

The faculty would benefit from professional development opportunities to develop study abroad programs for first-year students, especially during the "summer bridge" between their first and second years at KSU. This would aid retention and progression as well as QEP. Development money for the QEP-related course modules, special topics versions of KSU 1101, and QEP-focused learning communities would be beneficial.

Resources Needed to Enhance the Quality & Productivity

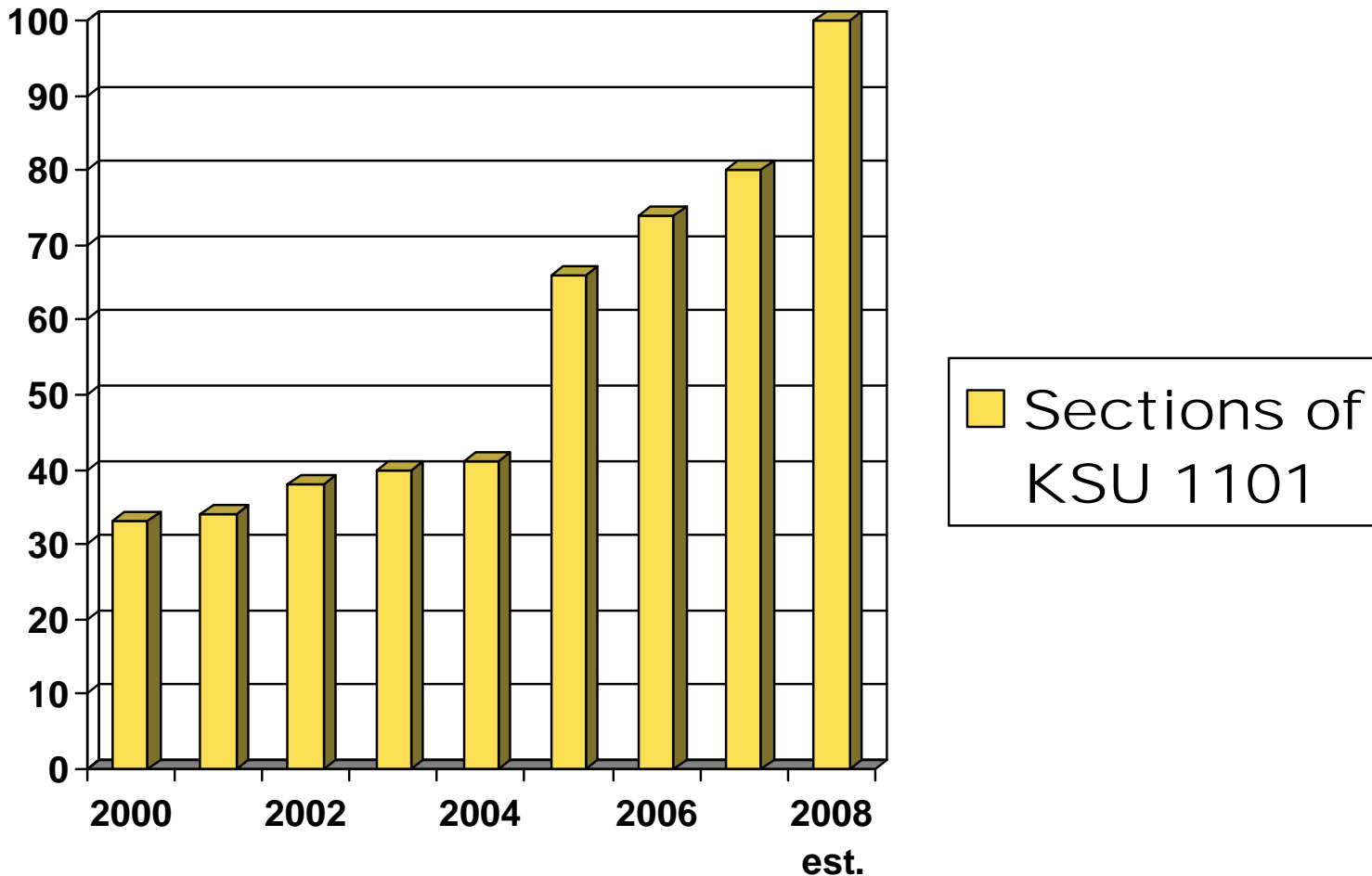
As with most academic departments, our greatest need in First-Year Programs is additional faculty and staff positions. We detailed our need for faculty positions in our FY09 budget request but realize that we have little hope of receiving all the lines we need to continue to deliver KSU 1101 in a seminar style with trained, competent faculty who are familiar with our campus and its programs. Unlike some other undergraduate courses, it is quite challenging to place a support faculty member into a KSU 1101 section. That individual must have the ability to not only teach the course curriculum but also have a familiarity with our campus, be comfortable serving as an academic advisor to first-year students (explaining the General Education curriculum and options for degree programs), be available on campus for one-on-one conferences with students, and be trained in active pedagogical techniques. If we do not have the number of support faculty we need, but we experience increased student enrollment each year, we will be forced to either (1) raise student enrollment in the sections or (2) force students to wait until their second semester to take KSU 1101 and/or an LC. Neither option advances the university's retention goals and both may actually hurt KSU's retention initiatives.

A decision by the Biology & Physics Department to drop BIOL 2101 from its curriculum beginning in fall '08 will result in a needed increase of at least 8-10 sections of KSU 1101 simply to keep up with the current student enrollment. First-year student enrollment has been rising each year; however, since the KSU 1101/LC curriculum requirement was approved. There were 74 sections of KSU 1101 offered in fall '06. Assuming that a six-section increase was sufficient to accommodate enrollment growth from '06 to '07 – and assuming that enrollment growth in '08 is similar, a minimum of six additional sections will need to be provided. Finally, the number of learning communities will likely decrease for Fall '08 due to pressures on full-time faculty teaching General Education courses across campus. The "best case" estimate is 45-50 communities, down from 54. Any decrease in communities requires an increase in KSU 1101 sections to accommodate incoming students who are striving to complete their

curriculum requirement. Therefore, the Department of First-Year Programs will need to offer approximately 100 sections of KSU 1101 in fall '08. Given the current teaching loads of the full-time faculty (35 sections)¹ and assuming that the number of sections covered by faculty in University Studies (eight sections) and part-time faculty remains consistent (27 sections), the Department will need faculty to teach 30 additional sections in the fall. This is simply the need for next fall. As growth continues at a 3-5% rate each fall, additional sections of KSU 1101 and LCs will be needed to meet the demand. This is why we are asking for jointly appointed faculty lines, individuals who can teach both KSU 1101 and General Education courses in communities. This is our primary resource request for program growth and enhancement.

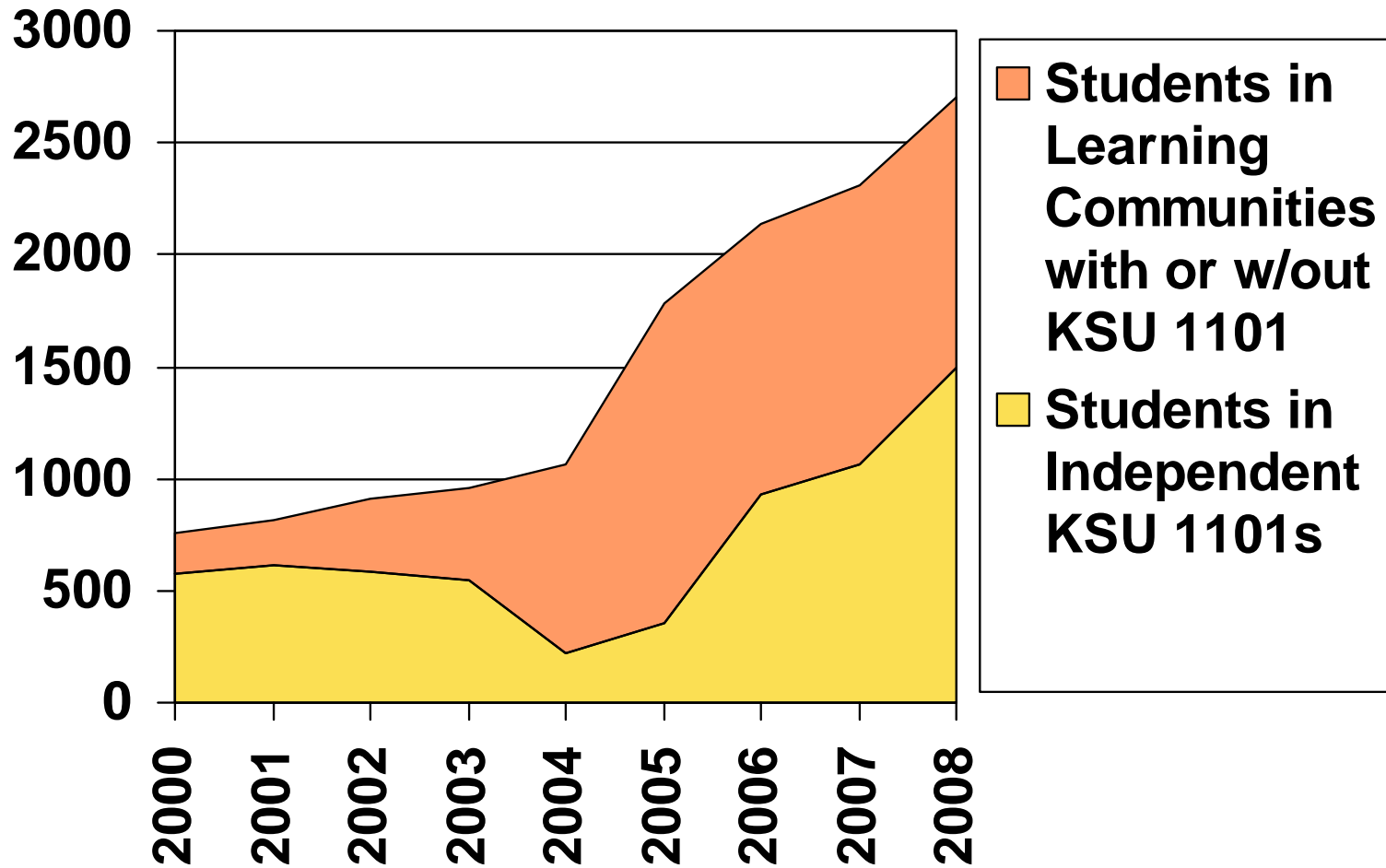
¹ FYP Faculty also teach ENGL, COM, ART, and TPS courses within learning communities in the fall. Two of the faculty teach Regents courses for University Studies, and one teaches LSP Math. Thus, their 35 sections of 1101 do not constitute their full teaching load.

Number of KSU 1101 Sections 2000 – 2007 with '08 Estimate



Total number of sections includes those in LCs and independent sections

Number of Students Enrolled in Learning Communities or Independent KSU 1101 Sections



Total Number of First-Year Students Served By KSU 1101 and Learning Communities

FALL SEMESTERS ONLY	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	
KSU 1101 (No LC)	579	611	585	543	220	352	925	1065	
LCs (with or w/out KSU 1101)	180	204	327	415	845	1430	1212	1246	
Total Students	759	815	912	958	1065	1782	2137	2311	