

**From:** Green, Stuart  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 17, 2009 12:45 PM  
**To:** KO-FACULTY; KO-STAFF; KO-HOURLY  
**Subject:** Transition Letter September 2009

September 17, 2009

Dear Campus Community,

In my remarks at this year's Fall Convocation, I suggested that our surge in enrollment and the predominantly full-time profile of our students represents a tremendous opportunity for the campus; provided we can assist a large percentage of these students to succeed and persist to next fall and beyond. You will recall that I called upon the entire campus and especially our faculty and advisors to work towards achieving a 65% fall to fall retention rate. I realize this would represent a jump of eleven percentage points above last year, but I believe we can succeed in reaching this goal. The campus continues to make incremental changes in advising, student life, student support services, financial aid operations, and, most importantly in the campus curriculum, most specifically in the design and delivery of our Learning Communities. We anticipate that these efforts will make a difference come next fall.

At the same time, all of our current efforts, like so many well-intended initiatives in the past to enhance student success and persistence, continue to be incremental and based largely on the good work of a few individuals, rather than the comprehensive work of the institution. Each initiative remains isolated and disconnected from other initiatives and never forms a coherent and unified approach to student success, especially freshmen success which continues to be the foundation for student and campus progress.

I believe this is a unique time in the evolution of the campus. We know we are headed in the right direction. This was affirmed by our resounding success in our HLC reaccreditation process. At the same time, our HLC visiting team cautioned us that we need to stabilize and grow our enrollment. Our diminishing numbers in the senior ranks tell the story: too few of our native students succeed and persist to graduation. If we continue to lose one half of them in

the first year, our graduation numbers will remain dependent on transfer students and the campus' state funding allocation will suffer as the new ICHE formulae adopted by the state increasingly move away from credit hours offered to those successfully completed and to graduation number and rates to determine state support.

Simply put, student success in the freshmen year is critical to the future of the campus and, despite our best efforts in the past, we have not found a way to achieve the retention and student success goals to which we all aspire. In light of these realities, and after much study of the Foundations of Excellence program, the Student Success Committee recommended we engage with FOE. While FOE does not guarantee a magic bullet to increase freshmen success, it does offer a data-driven process of self-reflection that addresses every aspect of the freshmen year. Because the process is comprehensive, it will incorporate one of our key signature themes: connecting and belonging, as it brings together faculty and staff from across the campus to look at and analyze key data sets that speak to the nine dimensions of the freshmen year. We have never come together in this way, with this degree of campus involvement, and with actual campus data at the center of our deliberations.

If you have signed up for one of the FOE committees, you have my gratitude; the work in which you will engage in the next several months has the potential to dramatically transform our freshmen year, our students' success, and the future of the campus. If you are on the fence and wonder if you should get involved or stay involved, let me extend an invitation to become a part of this process. I would never insist that you get involved and I will understand if you decline. At the same time, I expect that you will encourage and support your colleagues who have made the commitment to use this process for the good of all.

The leaders of this process are already passionate about it; I hope you will be infected with their enthusiasm. However, our role is to explain, invite and encourage your engagement, not to demand it. Throughout this process your involvement is welcomed and desired, including when the campus receives the team reports and

recommendations. We intend to provide a monthly FOE newsletter to keep you informed and to continue to invite your engagement.

As this process delivers its recommendation, they will be taken seriously. We expect to begin to bring these recommendations to the appropriate campus bodies for deliberation and action as early as January 2010. Some will surely have budgetary implications; other may require policy or practice changes. All initiatives will be accompanied by evaluation plans so we can measure the effectiveness of all new initiatives.

Clearly, we cannot expect to address all of the recommendations this year (at many institutions this process results in 150 or more individual recommendations). As I observed at the last Faculty Senate meeting, your new chancellor should be delighted that this work has been done and she/he has a series of thoughtful, data-driven proposals to review on improving freshmen outcomes.

Let me suggest that we build on the momentum and energy we created around our HLC Self-Study process and turn our talents and collective wisdom to finding workable solutions to what has been one of our most intractable problems. You are warmly invited to become part of this collegial and important process.

All the best,

*Stuart Green*

Interim Chancellor

[sgreen@iuk.edu](mailto:sgreen@iuk.edu)

756-455-9225