

# University Exploration

## Annual Report

FISCAL YEAR 2013

### Enrollment Services & Undergraduate Education

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## Year in Review

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University Exploration is Ohio State's advising unit for undecided undergraduate students housed in Undergraduate Education. University Exploration has been in existence since Ohio State dissolved its University College. Exploration was retained to meet the needs of undecided students and initially was part of advising services in the College of Arts and Sciences. In 2008, University Exploration moved to Undergraduate Education to reflect the unit's work with students to select majors across colleges and disciplines. We continue to expand services for students and try to maximize our impact on the academic experience.

### Highlights from Fiscal Year 2013 (July 2012-June 2013)

*University Exploration's first year retention rate increased in FY2013.*

*University Exploration advisor Stephanie Elliott won an ACADAOS 'Advisor of the Year' award.*

- Easily **transition to semesters**. We provided training to the following advisors: Academy, Metro, regional campus, Preferred Pathways, Continuing (Extended) Education, as well as to advising partners in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Student Athlete Support Services Office and ROTC.
- 894 out of 6,596 New Domestic Freshmen began in University Exploration. This constitutes **13.6% of the class**. Each of these students was assisted by an advisor during new student orientation and throughout the year through individual appointments and enrollment in the university survey course, EXP 1100.
- The university experienced a small dip in first year retention for the first time in several years. However, University Exploration's **first year retention rate increased** from 2011 to 2012. Our graduation rates remain consistent and are at or just below the university average.
- Our optional **early intervention** outreach project had a **49% participation rate**. This program is being enhanced through collaborations with the Dennis Learning Center and Center for the Study of Student Life and a new version will be piloted in FY2014.
- Two Exploration advisors were nominated for the **ACADAOS Advisor of the Year** award. Stephanie Elliott received one of the two awards for 2013 and also completed a NACADA book review during the year.
- Exploration partnered with the Office for **Military and Veterans Services** to offer on-site academic advising two days a week.
- After attending the NACADA Assessment Institute, we finalized our **Strategic Plan** and developed **Student Learning Outcomes** for our unit. We are using FY2014 to develop baselines for these outcomes so we can set further goals and have developed an **advising syllabus** for students.

*We have developed Student Learning Outcomes for advising undecided students.*

- In partnership with University Admissions, First Year Experience and Student Life, we participated in nearly **30 recruitment events** (on and off campus) and hosted **12 student programs**.
- The Outreach Committee updated transfer, referral, and NFYS **Orientation** programs to provide broad career and major information to students, which were suggested additions from past program evaluations.
- **Video presentations** were completed that review each college/school and their majors. The videos are used in the EXP 1100 course and along with other course materials were shared with **regional campus advisors** and participants in the **Preferred Pathways Program**.
- From 2011 to 2012, we **increased the number of appointments** conducted by 2%.
- The number of **transfer students** entering through EXP continues to increase. In Autumn 2012 we had 433 new transfer students which was a 6% increase compared to Autumn 2011.
- We saw a 17% increase in **campus changers** from Autumn 2011 to Autumn 2012.
- An **additional advising line** was added in Autumn 2012. This line allows us to better serve students through more appropriate advising loads and better appointment availability.
- The Curricular Committee completed a **comprehensive review of university survey courses** and enhanced for FY2014 based on student feedback.
- The Ohio State version of a **'What Can I Do With This Major'** series was drafted in our office and sent out for departmental review.
- The Exploration office has maintained an **intact staff** for the past two years; no one has left during this time and we have added an additional advisor.
- Increased **ADA accessibility** in main lobby and hallways.

Our office was able to grow and flourish as a result of adding an additional advising line and having an experienced staff. We have not had any staff members leave for over two years and have been able to add two new advisors during this timeframe. Staff expertise and experience allows us to try new initiatives and better assess our work. We are excited to continue to look at student data and incorporate assessment of Student Learning Outcomes into future annual reports.



Amy V. Treboni  
Director

*"The greatest thing about the Exploration program for me was that even though I felt as though I was wasting time, I realize now that I was saving so much money and not wasting ANY time. I declared my major and it looks like I will be graduating right on time. I was just taking a different approach from my friends!"*

*"I actually preferred not coming in with a major because I was able to see what all of Ohio State has to offer. Explore your different options and be willing to be flexible when deciding what you want to do."*

## Staff & Students

Staff: 1 Director (Amy Treboni)  
 1.75 Support Staff (Deb Stroh and Courtney Wilson)  
 2 Academic Counselor & Staff Assistants (Stephanie Elliott and L. Danielle Whitaker)  
 8 Academic Counselors (Margo Coates, Dan DeMay, Brad Fittes, Ericka Gunn, Glenn Ireland, Jamie Paulson, Peter Spreitzer, Nicole Vangas)

Students:

	Autumn 2011	Autumn 2012
<b>NFYS</b>	962	894 (-7%)
<b>New Transfer</b>	408	433 (+6%)
<b>Campus Changers</b>	310	361 (+17%)
<b>Total 15<sup>th</sup> Day Enrollment</b>	2,843	2,710 (-4%)
<b>Total Appointments for term</b>	3,000	3,741
<b>Answered calls for term</b>	n/a	4,342

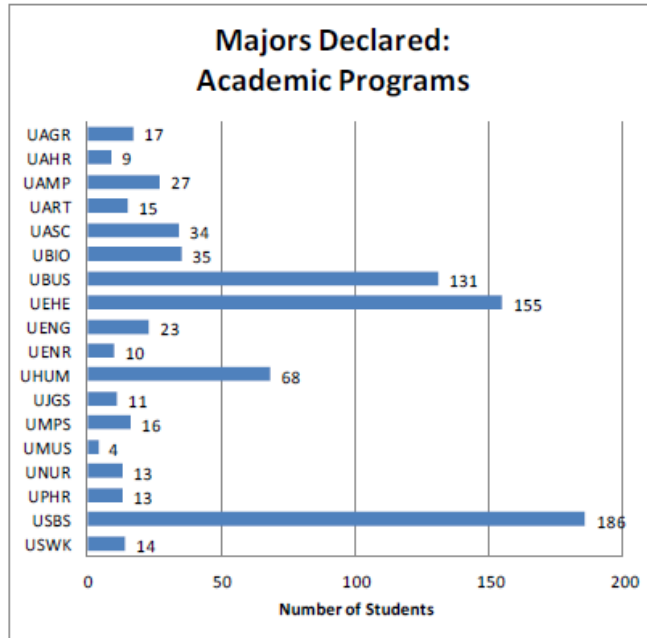
*\*Change from quarters to semesters impacts term lengths and comparisons for appointments and phone traffic. Winter/Spring 2012 and Spring 2013 comparisons not included for this reason.*

New First Year Students (NFYS/freshmen) are given two years to explore their academic options. We find that Exploration students move into every college and school at Ohio State, as is evidenced by the charts on the following page.

*“I have gone on to tell all my indecisive roommates about the wonders that await them in the world of Exploration Academic Advising.”*

*“It is my theory that University Exploration advisors have the most challenging task of any academic advisor on campus—they must be well-versed in every major at Ohio State and an expert at strategic scheduling, to keep students on track for all majors considered.”*

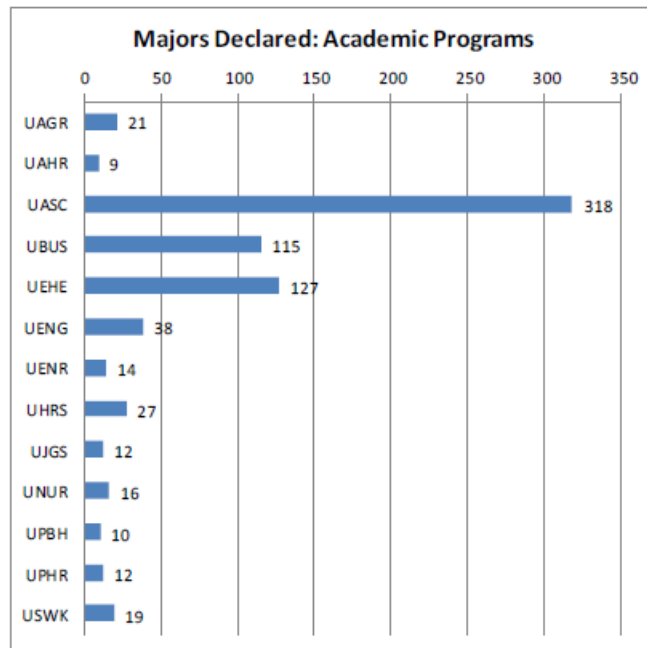
## Autumn 2009 NFYS Cohort



Program	Number of Students	Percentage
UAGR	17	2.2%
UAHR	9	1.2%
UAMP	27	3.5%
UART	15	1.9%
UASC	34	4.4%
UBIO	35	4.5%
UBUS	131	16.8%
UEHE	155	19.8%
UENG	23	2.9%
UENR	10	1.3%
UHUM	68	8.7%
UJGS	11	1.4%
UMPS	16	2.0%
UMUS	4	0.5%
UNUR	13	1.7%
UPHR	13	1.7%
USBS	186	23.8%
USWK	14	1.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>781</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<sup>2</sup>Per the 2011 Common Data Set for The Ohio State University, available at [http://oaa.osu.edu/irp/publisher\\_surveys/2011\\_Columbus\\_Campus\\_CDS.pdf](http://oaa.osu.edu/irp/publisher_surveys/2011_Columbus_Campus_CDS.pdf).

## Autumn 2010 NFYS Cohort



Program	Number of Students	Percentage
UAGR	21	2.8%
UAHR	9	1.2%
UASC	318	43.1%
UBUS	115	15.6%
UEHE	127	17.2%
UENG	38	5.1%
UENR	14	1.9%
UHRS	27	3.7%
UJGS	12	1.6%
UNUR	16	2.2%
UPBH	10	1.4%
UPHR	12	1.6%
USWK	19	2.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>738</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<sup>3</sup>Per the Retention and Graduation Rates for New Freshmen, available at [http://oesar.osu.edu/pdf/grad\\_rates/RETENTION\\_SUMMARY.pdf](http://oesar.osu.edu/pdf/grad_rates/RETENTION_SUMMARY.pdf).

## Strategic Plan

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### Vision

University Exploration will be the premiere advising program for undecided students in the nation, focusing on students first and efforts to assess, enhance, and invigorate advising services for new generations of students.

### Mission

University Exploration advances Ohio State's educational mission by providing holistic, intentional, personalized and collaborative advising to a diverse student population. We promote all majors, minors, and curricular options to help students connect their skills, interests and values to curricular and co-curricular opportunities and to transition to majors. The process of advising helps students maximize their opportunities, supports academic decision making, and leads to timely completion of the desired degree(s).

### Values & Beliefs

We value:

- Individual students; their skills, interests and needs
- The decision students make to engage in intentional academic self-discovery
- Exposure to majors through a variety of means and experiences
- Relationships built between students and advisors that aid in academic planning
- Collaboration that helps students explore the multitude of available degree options and allows students to meet with representatives from every college/school
- Diversity in our community
- Active contribution to the university community and our ability to support students and other divisions across all Ohio State campuses
- Effective use of technology to enhance services and provide greater access to information and advising service

We believe:

- Students are entitled to work with advisors who are invested in understanding them as individuals and helping them explore and choose rewarding majors that fit their skills and interests
- Students deserve accurate, respectful and timely assistance available in a variety of formats
- Holistic advising enhances the university and reduces complications for students
- Academic advising is critical in assisting students in the establishment of their academic and career goals and in selecting appropriate courses for major and career exploration
- Academic advising challenges students to reach their academic potential



- Academic advising assists students in navigating the organizational complexities of university systems, maximizing university resources, and resolving problems they encounter
- Academic advising encourages degree completion and minimizes hurdles to timely degree progress
- Academic advisors serve as role models and mentors

### Strategic Focus Areas

The work that we do focuses largely on **Student Outcomes** as they relate to university goals. We have created a list of Student Learning Outcomes and an assessment plan for each outcome as one method of monitoring our progress.

**Teaching and Learning:** Through mentoring and outreach, provide intrusive advising that contributes to student success.

Tactics	Progress
Collaborate with the Center for the Study of Student Life, OESAR, and Walter E Dennis Learning Center to help increase awareness and usage of university resources to enhance student success (Support from the Start program)	AU13: Run Support from the Start pilot. 40% of EXP freshmen (NFYS) are in pilot and we are conducting pre- and post-tests with all NFYS in EXP 1100.01/H to see if new system of information delivery increases: knowledge of campus resources, use of campus resources, cumulative GPA.  Secured authorization to do single sign-on through CARMEN using Qualtrics for pilot group.

**Research and Innovation:** Develop baselines for student success metrics (such as retention, attainment of degree, movement into major, etc.) and seek to improve these markers through innovative programs and strategies, such as our early intervention project. Better articulate the benefits of starting college as an undecided student.

Tactics	Progress
Review and compare current retention rates from 1 <sup>st</sup> – 2 <sup>nd</sup> year for NFYS students.	AU13: Need more recent report on 2011-2012 cohorts. EXP rate of retention for AU11 for first year went up while university averages went down, but has not yet hit 92.8%.  Baseline for mobility: less than 2% of students who start in EXP move back to EXP after declaring a major or pre-major.  Exploring options to track mobility within colleges/schools to
Review and compare 4, 5 and 6 year graduation rates for NFYS students.	
Collect and report data on student persistence in	

declared majors and assess if improvement is needed. In general, students should move into a major and graduate from that major.	see what percentage of EXP students declare a major and then switch again without coming back to EXP. AU14 goal, assess viability of this data project and if possible, set baseline for student persistence in major.
Develop and assess Student Learning Outcomes (SLO).	AU13: Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) were developed in Spring and Summer 2013. University Survey course was adjusted to ensure that it covers all SLO and students will be assessed at the beginning and end of the course. (SLO assessment mapping available for each EXP SLO.)

**Outreach and Engagement:** Participate in university recruitment, advising and initiatives. Explore opportunities to present at regional and national conferences and benchmark best practices. Collaborate with regional campuses, Preferred Pathways and new programs like STEP and O<sup>N</sup>Pace.

Tactics	Progress
Offer advising services and resources to students in the CSCC Preferred Pathways Program (P3).	AU12: Staff time allocated for advising at CSCC, OSU major videos created and vetted by departments. AU13: OSU major videos updated with new information and distributed to regional campus advisors and P3 coordinator.
Support regional campus offerings of EXP 1100.01 and 1100.02 by providing materials and assistance to regional campus advisors.	AU12: provided EXP 1100 materials and CARMEN access to all regional campuses: videos, workbooks, instructor guides, power points, etc.
Offer advising services through Veteran's Resource Center.	AU12/SP13: 2 advisors each spent an average of 6 hours per week advising out of the Veterans Center, usage is such that we are moving forward with a proposal for a shared line: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>55% advising and transfer credit coordinator (out of EXP) and 45% benefits certifier.</li> </ul> AU13: Continue to send advisors to Veterans Center 10-12 hours/week. Additional training for advisors through attendance at NACADA National Conference.
Partner with Admissions to offer overviews and guidance to prospective transfer students.	AU13: Piloting new presentation and workshops.

**Resource Stewardship:** Increase collaborations to provide better transitions for students moving from University Exploration to a major while managing increased enrollment numbers. Maximize use of technology for better efficiency and to meet our population's needs (see next page).

Tactics	Progress
Conduct annual update meetings with each college/school.	SP/SU13: Used What Can I Do With This Major series for updates.
Partner with each unit to provide lecture and materials for EXP 1100.01, 1100.01H and 1100.02.	SU13: Arranged for college representatives to present at each survey. Updated online video lectures and increased number of recitations associated with online lecture (from one in AU12 to three in AU13).
Collaborate with each unit to offer at least one additional major exploration activity to students per year.	AU13: Future goal for SP14 and beyond.
Increase interactive content on Exploration site (and/or link to such content hosted by the university, for example OnPace).	AU13: Moving EXP website to new platform/management system.
Use iPads to increase advising efficiency and support student development and independence. We are using iPads to help a student schedule themselves, vs. having an advisor complete this process for them.	SP13: Conducted training with Digital First team regarding iPads. Utilized for summer orientation programs.
Provide on-line materials for students. This gives students anytime, convenient access to workshops, which are also offered in person.	<p>AU12: Academic Success Planning Workshop (ASPW), Campus Change Orientation and video lectures all moved to online format.</p> <p>SP13: ASPW online found to be nearly as effective as in person and reduces staff time, allowing for better service to all students (increased appointment availability in particular).</p> <p>AU13: Revised online lectures for survey class, increased number of students enrolled in online lecture (as one method of managing student loads).</p>

## Assessment

### Historic Approach to Assessment

Before the development of our Student Learning Outcomes the efficacy of the Exploration program was largely assessed by observing the following:

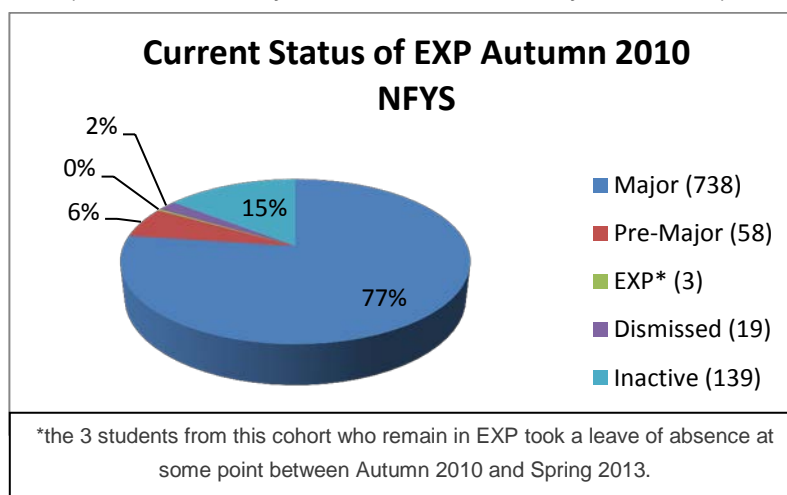
- Attainment: Students who enter the university as freshmen in Exploration should be expected to earn degrees at a rate consistent with the overall freshmen class, and should do so on a similar timeline. University Exploration students entering as New First Year Students (NFYS) are consistently graduating at rates at or slightly below the university averages. We are hoping that the graduation rate for Exploration students moves to be at or above the university average.

	NFYS 2008
EXP	59.7%
OSU	61.4%

- Persistence: Students who enter the university as freshmen in Exploration and who have not yet earned a degree should be expected to persist, or continue enrolling in courses to make progress toward a degree, at rates consistent with the overall freshman class. Again, our hope is to increase the retention rate so that we are at or above the university average. This goal could prove particularly challenging as academic programs increase their competitiveness.

	NFYS 2010	NFYS 2011
EXP	91.2%	91.4%
OSU	92.8%	91.6%

- Academic Programs and Plans: Students who enter the university as freshmen in Exploration should be expected to move into a wide variety of majors. The breadth of programs and plans that undecided students pursue should be reflective of the academic options available at the university. Our NFYS cohort which began in Autumn 2010 needed to declare a major or pre-major by Autumn 2012. 796 of the 799 active students from this cohort declared a major or pre-major within their first two years at Ohio State. Additionally, these students have declared majors in every degree-granting program offered by Ohio State with the exception of Dental Hygiene and Biomedical Sciences (the latter can only be declared at university admittance).



University Exploration also runs programs to assist students in academic difficulty. 49% of the NFYS cohort entering in Autumn 2012 took advantage of a new early intervention program which is being refined and piloted in survey class for Autumn 2013. The Support from the Start pilot is intended to help students more quickly connect to campus resources and to provide encouragement of resource usage. We plan to spend FY2014 running the pilot and assessing results by comparing the pilot group (nearly half of AU13 NFYS) with a control group (also AU13 NFYS). These programs are intended to help students avoid academic difficulty.

For those students who do fall into academic difficulty (first probation or special action probation), we have been requiring that they attend our Academic Success Planning Workshop. In FY2013, this workshop was moved to an online format after assessing the efficacy of the online version. We found that the online workshop led to slightly better persistence to the in-person option while freeing up time for advisors to work with students in individualized appointments. We no longer offer an in person workshop but students can still select between completing the online version or they can come in for an individual appointment.

### **Future Approaches to Assessment**

We will continue to use the historic measures mentioned above to assess our programs, but are adding new layers to our assessment plan as well. In FY2013, the Curricular Committee for Exploration did a complete review of our survey courses and solicited feedback from students and staff instructors. The feedback gathered from this review has led to enhancements to survey for FY2014, including: use of flipped class model for some recitations, increase in case studies and developmentally appropriate lessons and assignments, streamlining of assignments needing to be graded by instructors to provide more time for appointments and less time grading class materials, and required individual advising appointments.

We have also developed a concrete set of Student Learning Outcomes (SLO). Because EXP 1100 comprehensively covers all components of advising, we are using a pre-/post- test model to assess if the course effectively meets our SLO. Our SLO follow. Students:

- will transition from undecided to a best fit major
- set attainable goals and can identify steps to achieving goals
- appropriately self-advocate
- understand role of advisor
- evaluate academic strengths, skills, values and interests and match to available majors
- understand the different types of relationships majors can have with careers
- value a liberal arts education and understand how it fits into their degree planning
- select and schedule for appropriate coursework that meets requirements, fits interests, continues degree progress and keeps options open
- follow policies and procedures
- can identify connections they have with the university (curricular, co-curricular, peers, staff, resources)

We have also developed program delivery outcomes, to ensure that advising:

- Promotes student growth and development by mentoring each student from orientation to major declaration
- Requires mutual responsibility between advisor and student with final responsibility resting on the student to be self-directed and self-sufficient
- Supports and is respectful of students engaged in an individualized process of intentional academic self-discovery and decision making
- Helps students connect skills, interests and values to majors and majors to careers
- Provides accurate and timely information on institutional, general education, and pre-major/major declaration requirements (including appropriate selection of courses)
- Interprets and educates students on university and unit policies and procedures
- Monitors student progress and proactively intervenes
- Engages students with the university community (curricular and co-curricular) to enhance their educational experience
- Uses data and assessment information to refine and improve services and to facilitate student learning
- Recognizes and values the laws, regulations and ethics of the profession and institution

With these student learning and program delivery outcomes we have developed and are in the process of acting upon our assessment plan and map.

Our early intervention program, 'Support from the Start', was initiated to positively impact areas we have historically assessed (retention, graduation, persistence, etc.) and also new areas from our Student Learning Outcomes (such as connections to institution and engagement with university community). We will be comparing data for students in the pilot and control groups and working with offices such as the Center for the Study of Student Life and Enrollment Services' Analysis and Reporting unit to see if we can create predictive models for future iterations of the program. Our goal is to intervene and help students connect to resources that can assist them in being successful at Ohio State as early as possible; preferably before they experience any difficulty.

## Upcoming Initiatives

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For Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 we are planning the following initiatives (also see strategic focus areas):

- First Year Success Series (FYSS) and Second-Year Transformational Experience Program (STEP) programming
- 'Making the Most of Your Time in College' programming series
- Roll out 'What Can I Do With This Major' series (on our website and in collaboration with O<sup>N</sup>Pace)
- Update recruitment materials and develop materials for prospective students, families and high school counselors
- Co-present prospective Transfer Student Overviews with University Admissions
- Implement and assess 'Support from the Start' early intervention/resource referral program
- Create online resources for re-deciding students (in 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year at Ohio State), also appropriate for STEP participants
- Create reception services training manual
- Collaborate with Parent and Family Relations and First Year Experience to create online resources for parents and families
- Introduce Diversity Services webpage
- Convert existing webpage to new template
- Assess Student Learning Outcomes (in survey class) and set baselines and future goals
- Develop and implement exit survey for EXP students moving into a pre-major or major
- Evaluate new versions of NFYS, transfer and referral orientation programs and modify as needed for Summer 2014
- Implement advising appointment survey. Summer participation rate was low, try to increase rate to 10% of those surveyed
- Review staffing and job classifications