

<b>Project Name:</b>	<b>Expansion of FIG (First Year Interest Group) Program</b>
<b>MIU Round:</b>	Round 1
<b>Sponsor(s):</b>	College of Letters and Science
<b>Coordinator(s):</b>	Greg Smith
<b>Report Date(s):</b>	Year 1, August 2010; Year 2, June 2011; Year 3, July 2012; Year 4, July 2013

<b>Project Specific Goal and Measures</b>	
<b>Project Impact Measure(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of FIGs offered each year to 60.</li> <li>• Work with each school/college to implement at least one FIG.</li> </ul>
<b>Project Impact Data Source(s)</b>	The FIGs annual report.
<b>Baseline Measure(s)</b>	Fall 2009: 32 FIGs, 598 students.

<b>General MIU Goals and Measures (applicable to project)</b>	
D	<p>Increased student learning and teaching excellence</p> <p>Students will learn to see interdisciplinary connections between courses and students will value interdisciplinary approaches to learning. These two goals will be assessed through focus groups with FIG participants and through feedback on end-of-semester surveys.</p>
F	<p>Decreased achievement gaps</p> <p>Many FIGs include a course that meets the ethnic studies requirement as one of the three linked courses. Other FIGs have themes connected to diversity issues. The FIGs program has developed partnerships with targeted minority support programs and reserves space in FIGs for students in AAP, CEO, SCE, and First Wave. Targeted minorities now comprise 20% of FIG students (compared to 11% of the overall new freshman class).</p>
H	<p>Other goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with small departments who do not have funds to release faculty.</li> <li>• Fund a FIG section of a course when departments don't have money to do on own.</li> <li>• Pilot new FIGs in areas that were not previously well served (Business).</li> </ul>
I	<p>Unintended Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty report that FIGs gave them opportunities to develop new courses, involve students in research and community service projects, and develop grant funded projects for themselves and their graduate students.</li> <li>• A number of FIGs faculty reported that they have developed new collaborations with faculty peers and with campus resources such as the library, the Writing Center, Residence Life, and the Morgridge Center.</li> </ul>

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### Progress Reports

Year 1, 2009-10

- Expanded FIGs coordinator position from 50% to 100%.
- Added a 33% PA position.
- For Fall 2010, offered a FIG in each school/college that has an undergraduate major.
- Planned and coordinated FIGs program for 2010-11 (Plan is for 44 FIGs in Fall 2010 and an additional 5 in Spring 2011).

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Year 2, 2010-11

- 52 FIGs were offered in Fall 2010 enrolling 809 students.
- 8 FIGs were offered in Spring 2011 enrolling 119 students.

Five of the Spring 2011 FIGs were offered as a continuation to Fall 2010 FIG students. Three of the Spring 2011 FIGs were offered to students who did not have the opportunity to participate in the fall. These three FIGs were designed to appeal to students in particular majors – one for biological sciences (kinesiology in particular), and the other two for students interested in Journalism, Communication Arts, Political Science or related majors.

A research study assessing the learning outcomes in the FIG program was conducted during the 2010-11 academic year by Erica Halvorson (Assistant Professor, Curriculum and Instruction), Greg Smith (Director, FIGs Program), Geoff Mamerow (Graduate Student, Education Leadership and Policy Analysis) and Michelle Bass (Graduate Student, Educational Psychology) using funding provided by the University Assessment Council. The purpose of the study was to better understand how the integrative learning components of a FIG occur. Results from the study, when completed, will be shared with FIG instructors in order to maximize the integrative learning that is the foundation of the FIGs program.

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Year 3, 2011-12

- 58 FIGs were offered in Fall 2011 enrolling 1050 students.
- 8 FIGs were offered in Spring 2012 enrolling 147 students.

Piloted the use of “peer educators” in several FIGs. The responsibility of the peer educators is to help FIGs students organize study groups, helping the faculty instructors plan co-curricular and community-building events, facilitating communication between the FIGs students and instructors, and helping students recognize and understand the connections between the FIGs courses. Ten FIGs participated in the pilot in Fall 2011 and one participate in Spring 2012.

Continued working on three studies designed to assess the impact of FIGs on targeted minority students, the connection between students’ choices of a major and their choice of a FIG, and the integrative learning component of the FIG.

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Year 4, 2012-13

- 57 FIGs were offered in Fall 2012 enrolling 987 students.
  - 8 FIGs were offered in Spring 2013 enrolling 160 students.
  - Assessment: Activities in 2012-13 included a classroom observation initiative focused on six FIGs of different types (major-related, language-related, general). The purpose of this activity was to contribute to the understanding of how integrative learning occurs in FIGs and which behaviors on the part of the faculty instructor contribute to learning. Other assessment activities looked at the effect of FIGs on minority students and which components of them are most effective with at-risks students.
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