

HELPING SOPHOMORES SUCCEED

*Understanding and
Improving the
Second-Year
Experience*

MARY STUART HUNTER
BARBARA F. TOBOLOWSKY
JOHN N. GARDNER

SCOTT E. EVENBECK, JERRY A. PATTENGALE,
MOLLY A. SCHALLER, LAURIE A. SCHREINER, AND ASSOCIATES

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER FOR THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION

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THE JOSSEY-BASS HIGHER AND ADULT EDUCATION SERIES

The University of South Carolina's National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition was established in 1986 with a small grant from the South Carolina State Commission on Higher Education and has grown into a multi-faceted center providing professional development, research, and practitioner-focused publications for an international community of higher educators. The Center's scholarship and advocacy on behalf of college students in transition has garnered significant world-wide attention and impacted student success initiatives across the globe.

The Center's stated mission is to support and advance efforts to improve student learning and transitions into and through higher education. The Center achieves this mission by providing opportunities for the exchange of practical and theory-based information and ideas through the convening of conferences, institutes, workshops and other professional development events; publishing monographs, a peer-reviewed journal, an electronic newsletter, guides, and books; generating and supporting research and scholarship; hosting visiting scholars; and administering a robust Web site and numerous electronic listservs.

Although the Center is perhaps best known for its leadership in the first-year experience movement, other significant student transitions are central to the center's efforts and advocacy. National attention on the sophomore, or second-year, experience has been facilitated by the Center through information sharing at its annual National Conference on Students in Transition, the publication of two

monographs on the sophomore year, the administration of two national surveys on sophomore programming, and national dialogue via an electronic listerv. This volume, *Helping Sophomores Succeed: Understanding and Improving the Second-Year Experience*, will provide an even wider audience of higher educators with resources and ideas to assist them as they strive to improve the second-year experience for students at institutions far and wide.

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Like the beginning of a new growing season, starting a new project is always a time for excitement and anticipation. That was certainly the case with this project. What we didn't anticipate at the beginning was how much we would learn as a result of planting the seed of an idea and then cultivating the development of the project. As we now approach the harvest, it is with grateful appreciation to David Brightman at Jossey-Bass for accepting our proposal to undertake the venture in the first place. We have been skillfully guided and gently pushed by his colleague, Erin Null, through each step of the manuscript development process. She pruned where necessary, fertilized when needed, and helped us see the potential when we felt wilted. Her guidance, flexibility, patience, and professionalism are much appreciated.

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We are indebted to our project team, including Scott Evenbeck, Jerry Pattengale, Molly Schaller, and Laurie Schreiner. Our early conversations with them conceptualizing the book and then identifying and inviting potential chapter contributors helped shape the volume you now hold in your hands. Their chapter contributions to this book are central to the book's breadth and depth. And to each of the chapter contributors, we are ever so grateful for your important contributions from the field, from Hawaii to the east coast, that have made this book possible.

And finally, we also acknowledge the thousands of higher educators who share our interest in the undergraduate experience and who are planting new and cultivating existing programs for second-year students on college and university campuses everywhere. As a result of your attention and interest, may sophomore students thrive for years to come!

Mary Stuart Hunter
Barbara F. Tobolowsky
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INTRODUCTION

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As higher educators, even though we may have differing educational philosophies and find ourselves in different types of institutions in terms of mission and student characteristics, our collective overreaching goal is student success. Although we may quibble over definitions of student success (such as GPA, timely graduation, and so forth), our hopes are for students to attend the best institution for them to accomplish their personal goals, whether that is earning a bachelor's or associate's degree or acquiring needed job skills to help them in their future lives or both. To that end, we offer initiatives, programs, and supports along the way to help students achieve their goals. For the past three decades, efforts in the first year have received renewed attention, because one of the first leaks in the higher education pipeline comes when students begin their first year of study. Those first-year efforts (for example, first-year seminars) have often led to many students making better grades, persisting to graduation, being more satisfied with their collegiate experiences, and a host of other positive outcomes (Tobolowsky, Mamrick, & Cox, 2005).

Although there is now extensive scholarship on the first-year and senior-year transitions, fewer scholars and