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I. Background
The position of First Year Seminar Commissioner is one that was introduced in June 2010. It was created by Johannes Rebane (Alma Mater Society VP Academic 2009-2010). First Year Seminars (FYS) lay a major component of his platform. Therefore, one of the main goals of the Alma Mater Society’s Academic office was to bring a FYS program to the UBC Vancouver campus. The FYS program directly answers the call to, “Expand educational enrichment opportunities, including research, a first year small class experience, international learning, community service learning, and co-op/practicum/internship opportunities.” This excerpt taken from our new strategic plan, Place and Promise, presents the fact that there is no better time than the current to implement a seminar program for our first year students.

1.1 Justification

Student-Faculty and Peer Interaction
According to the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) conducted in 2008,

- 24% of first-year students find, “Their faculty is available, helpful and sympathetic.”
- 32% spend time with professors discussing topics unrelated to course material.

These numbers remain among some of the lowest in our country. Our hope is that through FYS programs, professors are provided with a more intimate setting where they can both challenge and guide students as mentor and teacher. Foremost, this intimate setting of a seminar program allows for students to engage in meaningful and high-context discussions with their professors and allows for professors to get to know individual students. This is an opportunity not presented in most large, first-year lecture courses.

- 50% of first-year students report that they have friendly interactions with peers in class

A FYS program can increase this percentage because of the class size and its unique structure that cultivates dialogue within class time.

Interdisciplinary Spaces
The call for interdisciplinary initiatives on campus is continuously increasing. First Year Seminars shall answer this call in two ways. First, there will be seminars offered in a variety of topics, thereby increasing the branches of knowledge available to first years. Secondly, each seminar is open to first years regardless of faculty and no prerequisites will be mandated. Professors receive the chance to teach students across faculties, while students receive both classmates and a professor from different concentrations.

Smooth Transitions
There exists a significant transition from high school to the first year of university. Failure rates for certain second year courses are 25% (SoTL) and first years face even higher numbers. Often times, first year students feel overwhelmed. Seminars provide a place where professors can ease the transition. An established list of outcomes focusing in areas of research, writing, and critical thinking will be common to all seminars. These are key learning outcomes that will be useful to students throughout their degree.

Atypical Classroom
Complementary to the LEAD initiative, a FYS program is an opportunity to be creative through teaching. The typical classroom in first year is a large lecture hall filled with unfamiliar faces. More than half of the students are preoccupied with material that is not related to the course and
the professor is speaking continuously. There is the common notion that the professor knows all and the student is an empty vessel to be filled. This is not the optimum setting to fully engage all students. A FYS is a chance for the professor to recreate the learning environment and to set the necessary conditions for students to be inspired. Professors decide the material, resources, assignments, grading system, and location of seminars. For example, seminars can be held in a different location on campus each week or in a park or city landmark. This presents students who are not local to Vancouver, the opportunity to explore both the campus and the city.

A prominent FYS program does not exist in the region where UBC is situated and offering more diverse programs at UBC can enhance our reputation and brand image. It may also affect a potential student's decision in choosing universities.

1.2 Building upon Existing Models

There is a vast number of universities across North America and the world, that offer First Year Seminar Programs. First Year Seminars have proven to be an effective model for creating positive and engaging, teaching and learning environments, for years.

Our research looked mainly to two established and successful FYS programs. These were chosen based on the success of the program and/or because the university hold similarities to our Vancouver campus. These are only two examples though many exist globally.

University of Toronto
Seminars are offered as either full or half credit courses. Their hugely successful program has grown to include 199 seminars in four main areas: humanities, sciences, social sciences, and interdisciplinary.

Sample Course:
SCI 199Y1Y: Lies, Damned Lies and Statistics
The title of the course is a quotation attributed to Disraeli, a British statesman of the nineteenth century. Does it still apply today? This course will consider how statistics and statistical thinking get used (and abused) in a variety of activities, including polling, lotteries and marketing, and with special emphasis on issues in public health and medicine. Some questions that will be addressed are: Why do newspapers report a “margin of error” for poll results, and what does it mean? Is chocolate/coffee/wine really good for your health? How do new cancer drugs get tested, and why do promising new treatments often fail to deliver over the longer term? How do studies on mice get extrapolated to humans, and do the results make any sense? How are the short and long term health effects of air pollution assessed?

Harvard University:
Described as “one of the best things Harvard offers its students,” Harvard's FYS program was one of the first in the world. It began in 1959 and is currently celebrating its 50th anniversary.

Students are not graded for their work, but are deemed either satisfactory of unsatisfactory. Unsatisfactory students are denied credit. One seminar per semester is permitted.

Sample course:
Freshman seminar 33i: What is music?
This course is an introduction to what is conventionally called music theory, permitting students to hear and think about music in sophisticated and creative ways. The seminar explores music from fully sensible and intellectual perspectives avoiding needless abstraction. Web-based materials designed for this course will be used for activities of close listening, analysis, and composition. Repertory will center on Western Classical music of the 18th and 19th centuries.
Note: Open to Freshmen only. This course includes student art-making as part of the Harvard Arts Initiative. Students need to be able to read music only and a wide diversity of musical backgrounds are welcomed.

Thoughts from those who have experienced a FYS:
“Freshman Seminars are important not only because they offer an intellectual experience of research, reading, and writing that is not so easy to get in very large classes, but also because their size and the relation between students and teacher humanizes this great but awesome University.”
- Stanley Hoffmann, instructor, Moral Choice and Politics as Represented in Literature

“I learned a lot from my FYS, but what really amazed me was how close the twenty of us became by the end of the course. That was the only class where some of us were tearing up on exam day when we were getting ready to leave, and hugging each other because we had found friends who were interested in many of the same things that we ourselves were. Something about the experiences we had in that class brought us all together, and I think that is one class that I will not easily forget.”
– Amanda J. student from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

1.3 Support and Feedback
Many integral members of the UBC community provided the Academic office with insight and thoughts on the proposed First Year Seminar Program. Meetings with those who might provide insight into what currently exists, what first years need, and how this program might look logistically, as well as several recommended professors should the possibility of leading a first year seminar arise, were conducted. Meetings and major summaries are listed.

Katriona Macdonald
Assistant Dean and Executive Director, Academic Programs at the Sauder School of Business
- raised issue of release time for professors
- stressed the need for a champion be it a UBC professor or a coordinator
- thoughts that we would gain maximum support from students by presenting seminars as an elite thing where students could have a the opportunity to be a part of it
- ultimately leading to a presentation at the council of deans in order to pass

Geoff Costeloe
Past Student Senator
- look to NSSE
- have professors act as mentors
- link to Trek 2010
- apply to a TLEF
Karol Traviss  
Dietetic Education Coordinator  
- look into first year elective space  
- look up senate curriculum committee dates and deadlines  
- possibly launch with pilot program  
- Who will act as the faculty sponsor?  
- Such a project needs guidance and partners (LEAD, Trek 2010)  
- Proposal is really an end point, not the beginning  

Andrew Riseman  
Associate Professor, Agroecology, Land and Food Systems  
- speak with Peter Dauvergne  
- the seminars need COMMONALITY, learning outcomes common to each  
  (perhaps sustainability can link the seminars?)  
- communication skills need to be taught to first years, how to communicate and connect with faculty members can be improved  
- SERVICE activity is important (LFS 100)  
- Concerns over lack of room in students’ schedules  

Dave Farrar  
Provost and Vice President Academic  
- students need exposure to a wider range of topics  
- cover writing concepts should be introduced  
- may be more beneficial to work with faculties, instead of individual departments, not senate  
- begin in arts and science as these are the two largest faculties  

Peter Marshall  
Associate Dean/ Professor Undergraduate Students Dean’s Office, Forestry  
- speak with Christopher Eaton to discuss how model might work logistically (one umbrella of FYS, any faculty can register a course as a FYS)  
- possibility of having student advisors within each faculty?  
- Seminars need specific learning outcomes  
- 3 credits = 3 hours per week  
- speak with Brian Sullivan  

Nancy Gallini and Kathryn Harrison  
Former Dean of Arts and Associate Dean, Arts  
- could be linked to this idea of the Parade of the Stars  
- feel ASTU answers the outcomes of first year seminars  
- model is resource-intensive, number who would benefit is small  
- speak with Brian Sullivan  

Tracey Rollins  
Student Development Officer, Arts  
- Coordinates FAACT program for first year commuting students  

Margot Bell  
Associate Director, Student Development  
- similarities can be drawn between FYS and the SDS program proposed by Vivian Hoffman
organized and invited the Academic office to Corey Goldman’s presentation on First Year Learning Communities initiative at U of T

**Carl Wieman**  
Director, CWSEI  
- supports concept  
- FYS would be useful in sciences, especially to Biology department (receives many students who have not grasped what biology is about, have chosen dept. because they would like to apply to medicine)

**Christopher Eaton**  
Academic Governance Officer and Triennial Returning Officer, Enrolment Services

**Anna Kindler**  
Vice Provost and Associate Vice President Academic Affairs

**Paul Harrison**  
Associate Professor, Associate Dean, Botany  
Notes provided under Section 3.2

**Dave Sanderson**  
Dean of HKIN

**Potential Professors Contacted (As recommended by Students)**

**Arts**  
**Kim Snowden**  
Women and Gender Studies

**Dennis Danielson**  
Department of English Head and Professor

**Christopher Erickson**  
Sessional Lecturer, Political Science Department

**Allen Sens**  
Senior Lecturer, Political Science Department

**Sciences**  
**Greg Bole**  
Instructor, Botany and Zoology

**Jason Read**  
Instructor, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

**Commerce**  
**Janina Kon**  
Sessional Lecturer, Organizational Behaviour/HR
**1.4 Proposed Structure**

Through research and dialogue with UBC academics, the following structure was proposed.

The First Year Seminar Program is designed to promote a small-scale, interactive learning environment early on in a student’s academic career.

Seminar courses would carry the following characteristics:
- Seminars capped at 25 students
- Open to students from all faculties
- No prerequisites
- Students limited to one seminar per semester
- 3 credits
- Class time occurring 1-1.5 hours per week
- Creative assignments
- Focused around niche/hot topic areas not currently addressed in first year courses
- Unconventional classroom setting
- Learning outcomes common to all seminars in areas of research, writing, and critical thinking

The pedagogical structure would include a faculty member who is either a current professor, alumni, or emeritus professor. Professors design a course in a unique and specific subject area that he/she is passionate about.

Within the classroom, professors act as the teacher of seminar material, facilitator of dialogue, and mentor to first year students. The range of curricular activities that could be pursued by the class is not limited to discussion and readings, but could also incorporate field trips, community based learning, and other creative mediums for teaching and learning.
II. Efforts

2.1 Proposal
A ten page proposal was written in order to thoroughly outline the justification for such a program, how a pilot project might play out, and prospective sources of funding. This document is not included as much of it is outlined in this document.

In addition, contacts with the Harvard First Year Seminar office were established and they have offered to review any proposals the office would like to send their way in the future.

2.2 Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund
Based on recommendations of various faculty members and students, the office applied for a Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund, pushing for a pilot program in September 2010. This initiative was presented to the Alma Mater Society council. Motion for support was postponed. A copy of the TLEF is attached. (See appendix 2.2)

2.3 First Year Seminar Advisory Committee (FYSPAC)
To push the program further, faculty members and prospective professors were gathered to begin an advisory committee. The first and only meeting was held in November, 2009.

Date: November 19th, 2009
Time: 5-7PM
Venue: Room 266J, Student Union Building

In attendance:
Johannes Rebane | Vice President Academic, Alma Mater Society
Eunice Hii | First Year Seminar Commissioner, Alma Mater Society
Allen Sens | Senior Lecturer, Poli Sci.
Peter Marshal | Chair of the Senate Curriculum Committee, Associate Dean of Forestry
Kim Kiloh | Proxy for Margot Bell, Student Development
Kim Snowden | Instructor in Women’s and Gender Studies
Greg Bole | Instructor, Botany and Zoology
Jason Read | Instructor, Biochem and Molecular Biology
Janina Kon | TLEF Principal Applicant, Senior Lecturer, OB/HR
2.4 Flexibility Analysis

A main concern for many faculty members, is that students do not have space in their course schedules to take on a first year seminar. Through thorough examination of all concentrations, a flexibility analysis was conducted demonstrating that space does exist for students to take on a seminar as an elective. Flexibility Analysis attached. (See appendix 2.4)

2.5 Conference on the First Year Experience

The First Year Seminar Commissioner applied for and received one of five Undergraduate Fellowships to attend the 29th Annual Conference on the First Year Experience in Denver, Colorado. As described by the body that organizes the conference, the National Resource Centre, this national conference gathers to,

“Share ideas, research, experience, and strategies aimed at improving the quality of education for first-year students… The First-Year Conference series continues to provide a relaxed environment conducive to intensive learning and professionally enriching discussions. The Annual First-Year Experience Conference is designed to provide educators from nearly every corner of higher education a comfortable, welcoming environment, which invites innovative ideas, programs, tools, and research critical to the first-year experience. The conference aims to promote a comprehensive and engaging community open to the diversity of ideas, in which all delegates are given the opportunity and resources to grow personally and professionally. The conference continues to welcome undergraduate students to attend and participate, encouraging them to grow their knowledge of the academics, experiences, and communities that surround them.”

With over 1500 attendants, this conference offers many resources, contacts and information to those universities just developing in areas of the first year experience. Main ideas and learnings were highlighted in a meeting with Margot Bell, Associate Director at Student Development. They can also be found in the Recommendations section of this report.
III. Current First Year Initiatives

Though no first year seminar model that encompasses all faculties exists, many faculties in alignment with Place and Promise, are looking/ have developed first year initiatives. Details and an analysis are provided by faculty and/or students. The following will hopefully be used by faculty as a working list of best practices and places students would like to see improvements made.

3.1 The Faculty of Sciences

I) Looking to Implement a First Year Seminar
Currently, the faculty of Science holds three main options for a first year student. There is the Coordinated Science Program (CSP), Science One, and general sciences. In addition to these, and after a meeting with Dr. Paul Harrison (Associate Dean), the faculty is looking to implement a first year seminar based around the topic of 'What is Science?'

Science FYSP
- beginning next winter session (2010)
- 2-3 times a week
- every other week all seminars will meet
- may replace an English requirement
- 25 students per class
- will start with 8 sections, 4 each semester
- as more sections are added, eventually looking to make this mandatory
- 'What is Science?' and will act as an introduction to the faculty/ its options

II) Comments on the current Coordinated Science Program
Through discussions with one student who went through the CSP in the 2008-2009 year, here are the main points outlining how effective the program may be and areas it can improve in.

Concerns:
- "If you know where [what option] you want to go, you end up taking courses you don't need."
- CSP requires you take all courses even if you may already have AP credit for them
- the workshops were not helpful nor did they enhance the experience, described as a "waste of time"

Why this program works:
- CSP acted as a transition for students from high school to university life
- the lounge for CSP students was a great thing about the program as it brought students together uniting them in a way that no other science student was entitled to

Suggestions:
- stronger integration between CSP, Science One, and general sciences to create more of a community
- reach out to commuting students who need that feeling of belonging (for CSP students, this was accomplished through the CSP lounge)

3.2 The Faculty of Commerce

Commerce has just launched its first year business fundamentals course, 486G, this past January, 2010.

Faculty Comments from Jeff Kroeker

Jeff Kroeker, both designed and taught this course to first year commerce students alongside Paul Cubbon. It is looking to be called COMM 101: Business Fundamentals in the next year and hopefully, will be offered to all first years.

The introduction of this course, looked to accomplish the following:
- increase engagement, knowledge of disciplines, ethics, sustainability
- connection to first years
- ties to faculty
- uniform platform for all first year Sauder students
- guest speakers
- ability to think on your feet**

Current model
- 90 students (filled up in 26 seconds), signed up November started mid through this year, first come first serve
- looking to offer to all first years, could be 125 per class
- 3 credits, takes place of an elective
- 5-6:20pm Tues and Thurs
- 2 1 hr seminars offered by TAs
- TAs also attend all classes

Evaluation
- 10 blog entries accounts 10%
- 5 mini cases (third of course) newspaper, decision brief have them be managers individually
- no final or midterms
- looking to up participation
- group projects
- reflective paper each day

Best practices:
- variety - 6-8 other faculty
- 5/6 companies focus on
- 2 ideas, concepts and an activity
- clicker, upload onto projector, doc camera
- do not give powerpoints ahead of time
- read articles ahead of time to answer q in class

Concerns - a little fast
Feedback - interactive, engaged, lots of technology (laptops, 3 projectors, mics)

Outstanding questions: what promotional materials did you use?

**Student Comments**

Would you take this over again?
Yes, it's more effort but there's also the benefit of more exposure

Favorite Things
- finance prof - concrete things, posing tougher questions, challenging
- recent sauder grad came in to speak - she started her own sustainable company
- Passion from Teachers
- seeing the bigger picture
- choosing majors, get faculty from all options
- participation during class
- do a good job of pulling everyone in
- real world examples
- bringing in sauder grads
- shows possibilities
- 'chatzy'
- blogging "feels unnecessary"
- lots of little projects outside - adds up, but also are justified by no final
- course materials expand general knowledge, helpful general sense

What does an average class look like?
- warm up - iclickers, based on readings (students enjoy the instant feedback of iclickers)
- chat, move into topic of day
- whole course cycles through options
- if time, reflections, worksheets
- believe it more with multiple professors, interesting

Concerns
- to get more concrete outcomes out of each class
- missing one class = missing lots of homework
- would like to get to know class more, was expecting this

What have you learned?
- general business sense
- opening your eyes to options
- realize what else is out there
- compared to 'me inc' throughout the year
3.3 Music
First year students in the Faculty of Music generally take 36-37 credits. These include 3 credits english, 6 language credits, and 28 music credits. Within the 28 music, 6 are for theory and 6 for opera (for voice students).

Concerns
- course materials are confusing
- lack of someone leading first years through process immediately, need advisor for options esp. minors
- competitive program
- connection with upper years
- common course- theory/ history

What distinguishes this experience?
- tight knit
- very competitive, hard work, long hours
- often separated from rest of UBC

3.4 Land and Food Systems
The first year mandatory course, LFS 100, in the LFS Faculty is 1 credit and requires that students meet for 1.5 hours each week. It has been changed this year to an online format with a community service requirement.

Faculty Comments
Andrew Riseman provided insight into the goals of LFS 100. It is meant to provide students with the following:
- communication skills
- strengthen connection to faculty
- guest lecturers who may speak about writing, plagiarism, peer editing, career preparations
- service activity**
- insight into the relevance of all courses

Student Comments from one student who took the course over the 2008-2009 year
Concerns
- described as a 'waste of time'
- 'No one took the class seriously. Out of 200 people, on average 20 showed up to classes.'

Why this program works?
- relevant to the faculty
- speakers from each of the different options within the faculty visit the class enabling students to learn more about each major
Suggestions
   - make it worth more credits

3.5 Forestry
It is the office’s understanding that students in each option take one course common to all within that option. For example, all first year students in the area of Conservation take a common 1 credit course.

Student Comments
Concerns
   - described as 'monotonous' due to the 'same format' each class
   - certain guest speakers are not helpful

Why this program works?
   - field trips to the salmon hatchery and aquarium
   - broad introduction to the faculty and details what courses students will take in coming years
   - this course unites students who would be dispersed otherwise as most first year forestry courses are taken with students from all different faculties

3.6 The Faculty of Arts
There are mixed reactions among students over the current model, Art Studies.

A common request among students:
   - tell students beforehand what themes/ readings they are focusing on on the registration page. Currently students enter a study centered around an entire topic they may have no interest in

3.7 Human Kinetics
Through conversation with Dave Sanderson, the office has learned that student development is still within its early stages within the faculty of HKIN. There is no one common course introducing students to the faculty, though students take 6 of the same courses within their first year thereby receiving introductions throughout these.
IV. Recommendations

4.1 AMS
As much headway has already been made with regards to the first year seminar initiative, and because the Alma Mater Society, as liaison between faculty members and students, is in a place to do so, First Year Seminar efforts should continue to be made. Be it through attending conferences, (look to the National Resource Centre), speaking with key members on campus who work towards improving the experience of first years, taking one idea such as the Common Reading Program outlined in 4.3 and working towards making it happen, or through lobbying faculties to ensure they are taking some form of action to answer the small class experience promise, it is important that first year work is continued in the Academic office.

Those working on the FYS initiative must continue to research models that are successful and continue to promote the idea on our campus. Commissioner work is reliant on how well the ideas are received. If no First Year Seminar Commissioner is hired, designate a person within the office to take a focus on first years as a part of his/her job. Make sure there is a focus on results as opposed to simply gaining support. It takes time to initiate a university-wide program. Key in bringing this idea into reality is finding a champion to bring the proposal to senate.

4.2 Faculty
If each faculty takes on seminars separately, it is hoped that in the future, a collaborative cross-faculty seminar can eventually come into reality with ease. However, we see that currently, faculties remain very separate in their initiatives. Despite this separation, many faculties are beginning to work toward bettering the experience for first years. They are accomplishing many of the goals of a first year seminar program without a first year seminar. Look to these faculties and take from what they are doing well or build upon areas they can improve. Many students simply want to know more about the major they are entering and what other options exist. Providing students with this knowledge before they make their choices is of great importance.

The main goal of the first year seminars is to increase student faculty engagement through that small class experience. Are there other ways to increase this engagement if the university cannot currently support a FYS program?

4.3 Campus/University Wide
From the 29TH Annual Conference on the First Year Experience, three main ideas were brought back and shared. These are outlined below and as successful as they are elsewhere, they would greatly contribute to our campus.

1. The idea of the first year experience as one whole unit. At our university, this would mean everything from Imagine Day to first year courses operate out of the same office.

2. The common reading program. Every first year on his/her first day of school receives a book from the university. In addition, every professor that teaches a first year reads this book. In early October or November, the university then invites the author out for a symposium.
3. Peer Mentors/ Leaders. This idea takes TAs to the next level. At certain universities, peer mentors teach a seminar every other week on a topic such as alcohol awareness or creating good study habits. These are topics that a professor may not feel comfortable teaching, but are necessary to a student in their first year. In addition, the peer mentor is able to offer the professor feedback in ways they can improve.
Appendix

2.2 Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund Application

Project Title: First Year Seminar Program

Principal Applicant’s Name: Janina Kon
Email: janina.kon@sauder.ubc.ca
Faculty/VP: Commerce
Department/School: OB/HR

This project is: New
Budget Requested from TLEF 2010/2011: $95,000
From Other Sources: none

If this is a New Project:
Future TLEF Requests are Anticipated for this Project

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Project Summary

The proposal at hand is for the creation of a First Year Seminar Program (FYSP) at UBC-V. The FYSP would consist of seminars of approximately 15-25 students focusing on hot topics and niche subjects taught by professors who are given relative independence in the creation of course material.

Through these seminars, we hope to create “pockets of community” amongst the first year cohort, where students from across all faculties who are passionate about certain subjects can engage with each other and with similarly impassioned professors in a small-scale and engaging teaching and learning environment.

The mandate of the program is to be flexible and, through its flexibility, empowering. Through these seminars, we hope to engage top first year students and the faculty in
unforgettable learning experiences that could spur on further interests and relationships that can add to academic and innovative texture of UBC.

The proposal is asking for the funding to instate the position of a First Year Seminar Coordinator to facilitate the overall coordination of the program and to ensure continuity and consistency through the length of the program.

**Project’s Rationale and Objectives**

Through First Year Seminar Programs, we hope to accomplish the following:

1. Increase student faculty interaction
2. Engage and inspire first year students through a variety of unique topics outside of one’s discipline or intended major
3. Give first year students an opportunity for small scale, interdisciplinary learning
4. Ensure smooth transition for first years in areas of research, writing, and critical thinking

In short we truly wish to create a medium through these seminars for first year students and faculty to engage in innovative and inspiring teaching and learning experiences. The flexibility of the course structure, the small scale environment, and the interdisciplinary accessibility of the program provide a very engaging setting for learning and academic exploration to occur, and we believe that this is an experience that would truly benefit the developing First Year Experience at UBC.

**Rationale:**

Our university is research intensive and therefore, many academic resources already exist that would make the FYSP very successful. In addition, the diverse student body brings a variety of perspectives to the seminar experience.

**Student-Faculty Interaction**

According to the National Survey of Student Engagement conducted here at UBC in 2008, only 24% of first-year students find “their faculty is available, helpful and sympathetic” and only 32% spend time with professors discussing topics unrelated to course material.

**Interdisciplinary Focus**

The call for interdisciplinary initiatives on campus is continuously increasing. First Year Seminars shall answer this call in two ways. First, there will be a variety of seminars thereby increasing the branches of knowledge available to first years. Secondly, each seminar is open to all first years regardless of faculty and no prerequisites will be required. A FYSP offers professors the chance to teach students across faculties and students are offered the same opportunity to network and build relationships with peers from different areas of campus.

**Smooth Transitions**

The leap from high school to the first year of university is enormous. Failure rates for
certain second year courses are 25% (SoTL) and first years face even higher numbers. Often times, first year students feel overwhelmed. Seminars can ease the transition and decrease the gap between grade twelve and university. An established list of outcomes focusing in areas of research, writing, and critical thinking will be common to all seminars. These are key learning outcomes that will be useful to students throughout their degree.

**Methods Used**
The First Year Seminar Program is designed to promote a small-scale, interactive learning environment early on in a student’s academic career. It is largely based on established and successful FYSPs at the University of Toronto, Berkeley, and Harvard.

Seminar courses would carry the following characteristics:
- Seminars capped at 25 students
- Open to students from all faculties
- No prerequisites
- Students limited to one seminar per semester
- 3 credits, class time occurring 2-3 hours per week
- Focused around niche and “hot” topic areas not currently addressed in first year courses
- Flexible classroom setting and creative assignments
- Learning outcomes common to all seminars in areas of research, writing, and critical thinking

The pedagogical structure would include a faculty member who is either a current professor, alumni, or emeritus professor. Professors design a course in a unique and specific subject area that he/she is passionate about. Within the classroom, professors act as the teacher of seminar material, facilitator of dialogue, and mentor to first year students.

The range of curricular activities that could be pursued by the class is not limited to discussion and readings, but could also incorporate field trips, community based learning, and other creative mediums for teaching and learning.

Sample FYSP offerings at other FYS-offering universities include The Psychology of Powerpoint, International Relations of the Obama Administration, and Mechanical Physics of Skateboarding

**Thoughts from those who have experienced a FYS**
“Freshman Seminars are important not only because they offer an intellectual experience of research, reading, and writing that is not so easy to get in very large classes, but also because their size and the relation between students and teacher humanizes this great but awesome University.”
-Stanley Hoffmann, instructor, Moral Choice and Politics as Represented in Literature

“I learned a lot from my FYS, but what really amazed me was how close the twenty of us became by the end of the course. That was the only class where some of us were tearing up on exam day when we were getting ready to leave, and hugging each other because we
had found friends who were interested in many of the same things that we ourselves were. Something about the experiences we had in that class brought us all together, and I think that is one class that I will not easily forget.”
—Amanda J. student from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Implementation
Our implementation plan would ideally see the implementation of 6-9 seminar courses to be offered for September 2010 (2-3 seminars from the faculties of Commerce, Arts, and Science).

A committee consisting of both students and faculty has been formed to steer this project onward. Members of this committee include Margot Bell (Associate Director of Student Development), Peter Marshall (Chair of the UBC Senate Curriculum Committee), Geoff Costeloe (student and vice-chair of UBC Senate), Dr. Paul Harrison (Associate Dean of Science), and Dr. Nancy Gallini (Dean of Arts). With this committee on board, we hope to gauge the success of our pilot courses and guide the expansion of the program in future years.

Departmental Control
One of the key administrative components to the successful implementation of this program is the amount of authority that Departments will retain in the delivery of these seminar courses. Though the seminars will be coordinated mainly by the First Year Seminar Coordinator, after looking at successful FYS models, we came to the conclusion that the approval of the details of those courses will be the responsibility of the department. This would include deciding:

- How many professors from the department would teach FYSs in any given year
- Whether the seminar courses credits could be attributed to the required course credits of any departmental academic program
- Whether professors’ seminar proposals will be approved/funded or not

Selection of Professors
Interested professors should have a firm grasp of the FYS project and submit completed course proposals to the FYS committee. From there, the committee will review the proposals and notify seminar professors. Seminar professors may also sit on the committee. However, they will not have a say in reviewing their own proposal. As mentioned previously, the course would have to still be approved by the faculty member’s department before being offered.

Selection of Students
It is up to seminar professors to decide how they would like to select students either through an online application, interview, or other process. This is the professors’ opportunity to pick their own handful of motivated students for the term. Professors are permitted to choose a minimum of 15 students and a maximum of 25.

Class Setting
The class would be offered primarily in a classroom setting and periodically host
components at locations both on and off campus. For example, for courses on sustainability, excursions could include trips to ecological destinations.

Cost to Students
As this program would be for credit, it should be priced according to the amount of credit earned. Seminars will be offered at the same amount as any 3 credit course within the specified faculty. Any extraneous course fees should be outlined in the course description and adhere to all relevant university policies. Ideally we want to make these courses as accessible as possible to students.

Expected Outcomes
Short Term Benefits: Foremost, the intimate setting of a seminar program allows for students to engage in meaningful and high-context discussions with their professors and allows for professors to know each individual student. This is an opportunity not presented in most large, first-year lecture courses.

A FYSP is also an opportunity to be creative through teaching. The typical classroom in first year is a large lecture hall filled with unfamiliar faces. There is the common notion that the professor knows all and the student is an empty vessel to be filled. This is not the optimum setting to fully engage all students. A FYSP is a chance for the professor to recreate the learning environment and to set the necessary conditions for students to be inspired. Professors decide the material, resources, assignments, grading system, and location of seminars.

Long Term Benefits: Through the implementation of this program, we hope to see a positive cultural shift happening at the first year level where a culture of innovative learning can be created between students and other students, and students and faculty, and ultimately students and UBC. For many universities currently offering such a program, alumni have stated that their FYS experience was their most memorable university experience. If we can offer more opportunities for first years to get connected to that level with the university through this program, that would be a considerable success.

Is this sustainable? Yes this model is resource intensive and will initially benefit a handful of students, but we see and have seen in other institutions, that this model has the potential to grow and to dramatically impact the experience of first years thereby laying the foundation for successful and more meaningful future years at university. It would be up to departments, who would like to take part in this initiative, to financially contribute to this endeavor and students to continue to pay for credited courses.

Evaluation Process
The FYSP would look to using the student evaluation system that already exists at UBC. In addition to this university wide system, the committee will be key to ensuring the success of the program. This group will draft up learning outcomes that are carried throughout all first year seminars as well as a separate evaluation form that addresses these learning outcomes being met as well as gains feedback from students and professors as to how engaged or inspired they are through this initiative. We hope that the FYS Committee
will be able to utilize the program feedback and act as an advisory group to ensure that it is incorporated as effectively as possible into any changes made to the program on an annual basis.

**Student Involvement**
The FYSP initiative has been centrally driven by students who have realized the need for more engaging learning opportunities at the first year level. This initiative was first brought forth by Johannes Rebane, VP Academic at the Alma Mater Society, who then hired a First Year Seminar Commissioner, Eunice Hii. They have conducted extensive research, written a detailed proposal and, and met with countless members of the UBC community to promote the initiative and gauge support for the program. Throughout the process of the program development, students from across campus, including VPs Academic from the student constituencies and AMS committees, have been involved in a consultative role for the project.

It was students who created a FYS committee consisting of 15 faculty, students, and staff to steer the program onward, and it was students ultimately who are bringing this proposal forward as an initiative worthwhile for the university to pursue.

**Total Budget**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description with Justification</th>
<th>Unit Cost</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salary</strong></td>
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| - Compensation for the position of a First Year Seminar Program Coordinator. This will be a largely administrative position. The FYSP coordinator’s role will consist of the following responsibilities:  
  - The active recruitment of faculty for the teaching of seminars  
  - Room booking, course logistics, and other administrative tasks  
  - The development of promotional materials for the program  
  - Marketing the program to prospective incoming first year students  | $30,000/year* | $90,000 |
|  
*Calculated at either $24/hr for 25 hr/wk for 50 wks or $30/hr for 20 hr/wk for 50 wks (To attain this number, we consulted with Dr. Yoshio) | $1,500 | $1,500 |
|                               | $3,500    | $3,500     |
Yanadori Assistant Professor, Organizational Behaviour/HR and Sandy Tanaka, Director, Finance and Administration at the Sauder School of Business

$95,000

Website

Promotional Materials

Both the website and promotional materials are key in ensuring that there is a healthy number of students who know and are interested in this project.

Total:

Principal Applicant's Signature & Date

Head’s (or equivalent) Signature & Date

Dean's Signature & Date

Dean's Ranking (optional): # of

2.3 First Year Seminar Program Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference- DRAFT

Date: November 19, 2009

To: The First Year Seminar Program Advisory Committee (FYSPAC)

From: The Alma Mater Society VP Academic Office- Eunice Hii and Johannes Rebane

Subject: Terms of Reference for the First Year Seminar Program Advisory Committee

Background
The idea for a First Year Seminar program has grown out of a demand for a more engaging and inspiring first year experience within the classroom. The FYSP initiative will be most successful if it is embraced by all faculties. For this reason, the members of
FYSPAC are academics from the UBC-V community that represent the interest of students from all corners of campus.

Purpose
The role of FYSPAC is to advise on the proper development and growth of First Year Seminar offerings at UBC-V.

Objectives
1. To review, discuss, and make recommendations for the final proposal for FYSP which will be presented to the senate curriculum committee and later, senate.

2. To search for existing initiatives that hold similar objectives to the First Year Seminar Program and verify that FYSP has little overlap.

3. To identify where resources to support FYSP shall come from and how the program can be sustainable and continue to expand.

4. To review seminar proposals submitted by recommended professors and select a handful for the pilot project.

5. To advise on marketing and promotional efforts to attract prospective and current first year students to participate in the the First Year Seminar Program.

6. To advise on effective methods for the evaluation of FYSP and seminars within.

7. To advise on future direction of FYSP across UBC.

8. To bring together stakeholders to determine how various departments and faculties can best work together on the propagation of this project.

Committee Composition
1. FYSPAC consists of students, faculty, and staff from various faculties and academic areas on campus.

2. The VP Academic Alma Mater Society shall chair the advisory committee.

3. Minutes shall be taken by the First Year Seminar Commissioner.

4. Depending on the tasks and issues at hand, other members of the UBC community may be invited to provide insight and feedback.

Timeframe
4. Our goal is an implementation of 6-9 seminars from the faculties of arts, science, and commerce in September 2010.

5. The First Year Seminar Program Advisory Committee will meet once a month for two hours at a time that is convenient for committee members.
2.4 Flexibility Analysis

Flexibility Analysis

The First Year Seminar Program (FYSP) will be offered for credit to students in their first year at UBC. Students would then be given the choice of taking on a first year seminar as a part of their electives. This means that any elective space is also space for a first year seminar. Though the first year seminar concept has received much interest and support from both faculty members and students, there has also been concern surrounding the elective space within various disciplines. The following analysis addresses each major first year option and clearly highlights the areas where space for seminars currently exists.

Clearly identifying elective space is not meant to steer students in the direction of a more flexible discipline. It is merely to show that space does in fact exist for students to take a first year seminar is all faculties. Note that the following analysis is based on the assumption that students enroll in a minimum of 5 courses or 15 credits per semester (10 courses, 30 credits in total)

Table of Contents
A) Graph and key findings
B) Breakdown of the following faculties and all options:

1. Arts
   I. Standard Program
   II. Arts One
   III. Coordinated Arts Program (CAP)
   IV. Herstmonceux

2. Sciences
   I. General Science Option
   II. Science One
   III. Coordinated Science Program (CSP)

3. Commerce
   I. Direct Entry
   II. Pre-Commerce

4. HKIN

5. Engineering

6. Land and Food Systems

7. Music
A. Graph and Key Findings

The following graph represents the amount of elective space in sample options. It addresses one option from each of the seven first year faculties. Note that all quantities here are based on a 30 credit year with the exception of engineering, which is 35 credits.

As is evident here and consistent throughout the analysis, there is an abundant amount of space especially in Arts, Commerce, HKIN and Music for students to take on a First Year Seminar. It would make sense to target students within these four faculties as they would be more interested in taking on a challenging seminar.
B. Breakdown of Faculties and Their Options

1. The Faculty of ARTS

I. Standard Program
   This is a timetable that allows students much flexibility and freedom. Students are must fulfill the English or writing and research, language, science, and literature requirements within their first 60 credits at UBC. Other than this there are no mandatory specific courses, allowing much room for a first year seminar.

   Assuming the requirements are met over two years, the first year is half of the requirements:

   3 credits English
   6 credits Language (assuming none met during high school)
   3 credits Science
   3 credits Literature

   TOTAL MANDATORY CREDITS: 15

II. Arts One Program

   6 credits of first-year English
   6 credits of first-year History
   6 credits of first-year Philosophy

   TOTAL MANDATORY CREDITS: 18

III. Coordinated Arts Program (CAP)
Currently, 4 CAP streams exist. Each stream is a STT consisting of 6 courses or 18 mandatory credits. The offered streams are subject to change, however, the number of credits in a STT and the remaining elective space remain consistent.

CAP streams currently offered:
   Global Citizens
   Individual and Society
   New Media and Society
   Philosophy, Political Science, and Economics (PPE)

Ex: PPE
   6 credits ECON 101/102
   6 credits PHILO 100
   6 credits Poli Sci 100/101
TOTAL MANDATORY CREDITS: 18

IV. Herstmonceux
Since the First Year Seminars will be UBC-V based initially, those pursuing studies at Herstmonceux will not be able to take first year seminars.

2. The Faculty of Science

I. General Science Option

6 credits of first-year English
3 credits Math
6 computational credits
6 credits CHEM and/or PHYS
(if credit exists for BIOL 11 or 12) 3 credits of ASTR, BIOL, EOSC, or PSYC
LABS stand alone or exist as a part of other requirements

TOTAL MANDATORY CREDITS: 24

6 additional credits- Electives (exist if the student takes BIOL 11 or 12, CHEM 12, and PHYS 12 as part of secondary school curriculum)

(if PHYS 12 or CHEM 12 was not completed in high school) 6 credits CHEM 111 AND PHYS 100

(if BIOL 11 or 12 were not completed in high school) 3 credits 100-level BIOL

II. Science One

“The core component of the Science One program is a single academically rigorous multidisciplinary 25-credit course consisting of lectures, tutorials, laboratories and field trips which is supplemented by interdisciplinary modules. BIOL 140 (2 credits) is a mandatory co-requisite to Science One and is co-scheduled through the use of standard timetables.”

http://www.scienceone.ubc.ca/home/

25 credits lectures, tutorials, labs
2 credits BIOL 140
III. Coordinated Science Program (CSP)

A Sample CSP timetable held the following:
- 3 credits BIOL 112
- 3 credits BIOL 121
- 2 credits BIOL 140 (LAB)
- 4 credits CHEM 121
- 4 credits CHEM 123
- 1 credit CSPW (DISCUSSION)
- 3 credits MATH 100
- 3 credits MATH 101
- 3 credits PHYS 101
- 3 credits PHYS 102

TOTAL MANDATORY CREDITS: 29

3. The Faculty of Commerce

I. Direct Entry
- 3 credits first-year English
- 6 credits ECON 101/102
- 3 credits MATH 104 or 184
- 3 credits COMM 293
- 3 credits COMM 292
- 1 credit COMM 299

TOTAL MANDATORY CREDITS: 19

II. Pre-Commerce
- 3 credits first-year English
- 6 credits ECON 101/102
3 credits MATH 104 or 184

TOTAL MANDATORY CREDITS: 12

4. The Faculty of Human Kinetics

3 credits first-year English
3 credits HKIN 151
3 credits HKIN 161
3 credits HKIN 190
3 credits HKIN 103
3 credits HKIN 191

TOTAL MANDATORY CREDITS: 18

5. The Faculty of Engineering

Not for credit APSC 122
5 credits APSC 150
3 credits APSC 160
3 credits CHEM 154
3 credits ENGL 112
3 credits MATH 100
3 credits MATH 101
3 credits MATH 152
6 credits PHYS 153
3 credits PHYS 170

TOTAL MANDATORY CREDITS: 32

Despite an already heavy course load, students are encouraged to take on 3 credits of a complementary studies elective.

6. Land and Food Systems
3 credits of math
3 credits first-year English
8 credits first-year BIOL
8 credits first-year CHEM
3 credits ECON 101
3 credits first-year PHYS

TOTAL MANDATORY CREDITS: 28

A first year seminar may fulfill the CHEM, BIOL, or PHYS requirements.

7. Music

3 credits MUSC 100
3 credits MUSC 101
3 credits MUSC 120
3 credits MUSC 121
3 credits writing requirement

TOTAL MANDATORY CREDITS: 15