



First-Year Testing, Counseling and Advising Program

2008 SUMMARY REPORT

For the fifty-third consecutive year, Division of Undergraduate Studies colleagues administered and implemented the First-Year Testing, Counseling and Advising Program (FTCAP), the University's principal academic orientation for incoming first-year students.

7,343 FIRST-YEAR STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

6,781 students visited University Park for the FTCAP advising day (with an additional 562 students attending make-up sessions in June and August).

FTCAP ADVISING DAYS AT UNIVERSITY PARK

The span of the advising-day program was reduced to 39 days, in contrast to 50 days in 2006 and 2007. On average, 174 students per day visited campus for FTCAP in 2008 (compared to averages of 153 and 125 in the two previous years). Most students were accompanied by one or more parents as well as other family members. On many days, there were more than 350 FTCAP family members on campus, for an estimated 13,000 visiting family members during FTCAP and a grand total of 20,000 student and family participants on campus for the FTCAP advising day.

"BEST ACADEMIC FIT"

644 first-year students at University Park requested change of college of enrollment during FTCAP. These changes were made with the assistance of a FTCAP Educational Consultant to help first-year students begin their Penn State careers in the most appropriate academic college.

KEY PROGRAM CHANGES LAUNCHED

- Collaborated with the Public Writing Initiative to involve junior and senior students in ENGL 202 to assess FTCAP program components;
- Updated FTCAP Web site for first-year students;
- Developed new, interactive Web-based preparatory assignments for students;
- Collaborated with Student Affairs to offer an additional session for parents and families;
- Partnered with University Marketing to present a new video welcome for students and families that includes message from President Spanier; and
- Re-shaped the goals and teaching strategies for the students' FTCAP classroom experience.

STUDENT INSIGHTS ABOUT FTCAP

1,410 students (20.6 percent survey-response rate) provided important insights about their FTCAP experiences at University Park. Of the fifteen themes that emerged from students' responses to a question about the most valuable concept learned at FTCAP, four themes were each identified by more than 10 percent of respondents:

- Importance of non-ability factors in academic success;
- Information about requirements for degree programs;
- How to approach scheduling of courses; and
- Importance of an academic adviser, asking for help, and using available resources.

THESE OUTCOMES ...
SHAPE OUR CONTINUED PLANNING,
AS FTCAP MEETS STUDENT
AND PARENT/FAMILY NEEDS
IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY.

PLACEMENT TESTING AND SUPPORT

18,346 first-year students (admitted to all Penn State campuses for summer or fall 2008 semester) took placement tests online.

Administrative and student support functions enabled students to complete English, mathematics, and chemistry placement testing and also produced Educational Planning Surveys and advising folders and distributed them to appropriate campuses.

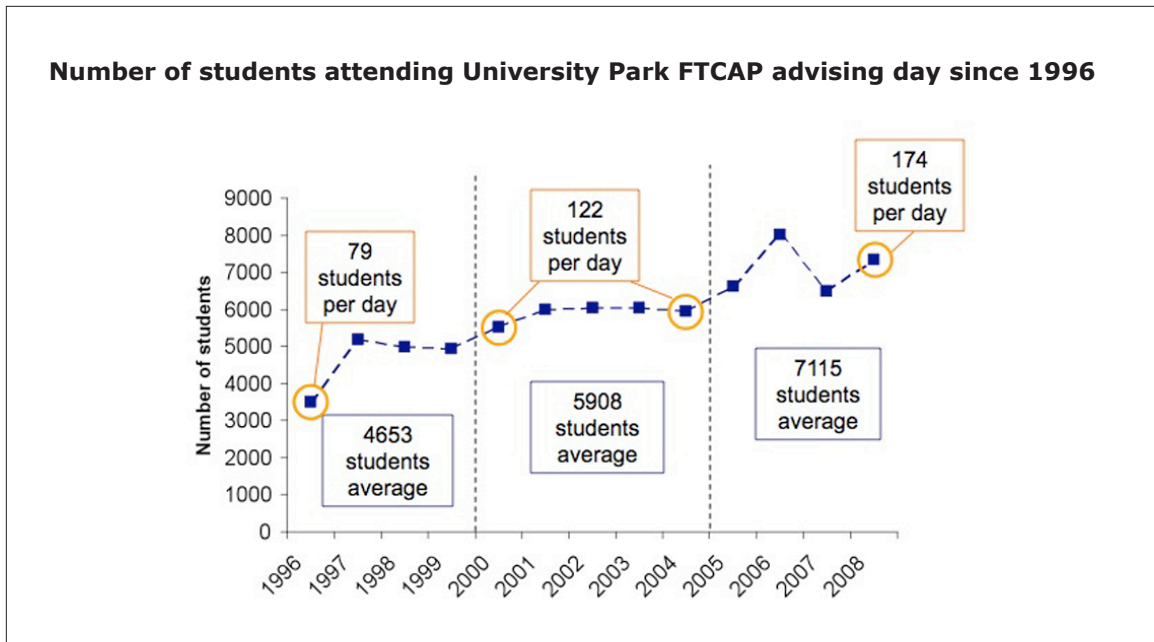
FTCAP Operations staff members responded to 6,468 student/parent phone calls and e-mails to assist with these processes.

These outcomes, along with the helpful student assessment, shape our continued planning, as FTCAP meets student and parent/family needs in the twenty-first century.

First-Year Testing, Counseling and Advising Program

The number of students participating in the FTCAP advising day activity has more than doubled since 1996, growing from 3,299 to 6,781.

Responsible for developing and delivering FTCAP to entering baccalaureate students and their families, the Division of Undergraduate Studies ensured that 18,346 first-year students (admitted to all of Penn State's campuses for summer or fall 2008) took placement tests and more than 7,000 students were scheduled for a University Park FTCAP advising day.



Trends in University Park FTCAP attendance

	1996	2000	2004	2008
Summer admits	66	1037	1232	1661
Fall admits	3442	4484	4705	5483
Total Actual *	3299	5238	5602	6781
Days of FTCAP	42	43	46	39
Avg students/day	79	122	122	174

* also accounts for students in no-show, add-on, walk-in, rescheduled, and canceled categories

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. Discrimination or harassment against faculty, staff, or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Director, The Pennsylvania State University, 328 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802-5901; tel. 814-865-4700/V, 814-863-1150/TTY. U.Ed. DUS 09-08