



President and Provost Roundtable Discussion

Topic: Re-Imagining the First Year (RFY)

The first year of college has emerged as the critical barrier to college success; the point at which colleges experience the greatest loss of students. The RFY project recognizes that no single intervention will solve student performance, and solutions that fail to reflect the differing needs of a changing student body will not be successful. RFY seeks to inspire redesigned approaches that work effectively for all members of an increasingly diverse, multicultural, undergraduate student body, eliminating the achievement disparities that have plagued American higher education for generations. Ultimately, redesigning this critical first year will allow for broader reform of the undergraduate experience in the future.

- **What is Re-Imagining the First Year (RFY)?**

- RFY is a new initiative of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) intended to transform the first-year experience for students and improve student success.
- The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and USA Funds have given grant funding to AASCU to support the RFY initiative.
- Employing a competitive application process, AASCU selected forty-four colleges and universities to participate in RFY, the most ambitious project in the organization's more than fifty-year history.
- Participating in RFY entails a three-year commitment (2016-2018) to comprehensive, institutional change focused on four key areas: institutional intentionality, curriculum redesign, changes in faculty and staff roles, and changes in student roles.
- Participating universities must define their own goals and means of achieving those goals through a "top-down, bottom-up" approach – the more voices involved, the better!
- SHSU's RFY team has a working plan, but this plan is fluid and expected to change as more people become involved in the RFY project. Make your voice heard – share your ideas with the RFY team.
- RFY aims to ensure success for **ALL** students, particularly those who have historically been underserved by higher education:
 - Low income
 - First generation
 - Students of color
- RFY is intended to substantively and sustainably alter the first-year experience, in order to:
 - Dramatically improve the quality of learning and the quality of student experience in the first year.
 - Increase retention rates.
 - Improve student success.

- **The SHSU working plan lists the following as potential benefits of participating in RFY:**

- Form an inter-divisional leadership team to review quarterly the student experience in these areas: academics, admissions, financial aid, registration, graduation, advising, student activities, recreation. In addition, the committee will revise policies and procedures that interfere with students' forward momentum.
- Increase the number of students who are graduating in 4 years by redesigning campus advising.
- Increase the number of students who take credit-bearing math courses by strengthening the developmental math curriculum.
- Increase the number of students who take the college readiness course by redesigning the UNIV 1301 course.
- Engage faculty in the student success conversation on campus.
- Create a 'Welcome to your new home' experience for freshmen and transfer students.

Additional Resources

[AASCU RFY Background & Participants](#)

[SHSU's RFY Toolkit/Proposal & Team Member Listing](#)

[RFY Summary PowerPoint](#)

["Re-Imagining the First Year of College" by George L. Mehaffy](#)