**In attendance:** Connor Baade, Stacey Bradley, Sara Corwin, Dan Friedman, Maegan Gudridge, Stuart Hunter, Nichole Knutson, Jeremy Lane, Gene Luna, Aaron Marterer, Kim McMahon, Bethany Naser, Mary Wagner

1. Ideas for making the process inclusive and transparent
   1. Post a link from the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support website with the agendas and meeting minutes.
   2. Inform the university community about the group through a USC Times feature and/or through the Stay Informed email listserv and Provost listserv.
   3. Provide a “Submit Comments and Recommendations” button online.
      1. To engage faculty, be very specific when requesting feedback.
      2. Create categories for feedback based on the different functional areas of the group.
2. Announcement of “Redesign of First-Year Orientation” group
   1. Stacey Bradley will convene a subcommittee work group to advise the restructuring of orientation
      1. Members will include First-Year Study Group members Dan Friedman, Gene Luna, Bethany Naser, Dennis Pruitt, and Scott Verzyl. Other members include Helen Doerpinghaus, Anna Edwards, Loren Knapp, and Jed Lyons.
3. Analysis of our students
   1. The committee reviewed the “Profile of USC First-Year Students” document and discussed implications for the committee’s future work.
      1. Input variables
         1. Considering the SAT average and freshman class size, what is the average SAT score apart from the Honors College & Capstone Scholars students? The total average SAT score can hide a lot of variance.
         2. As about half of USC’s first-year students are out-of-state students, we recognize that homesickness, cultural differences, and financial strains are prevalent implications for this population. Also, out-of-state students may reflect a more advanced academic readiness.
         3. With the decreasing number of students in which USC was their first choice, we will want to design our programs to emphasize creating a sense of belonging and helping them to connect to the university.
         4. Since about 67% of our incoming students bring some type of college credit, we need to empower students to become better managers of their own learning. It is our responsibility to let them know how their credits transfer, what classes their credits count towards, and how their credits work towards a degree.
            1. The development of the Degree Audit System will help us inform students, ideally before orientation, of where they stand in terms of degree completion.
         5. AP scores arrive July 1, so students will be able to make more informed decisions during course registration as orientation sessions are held later in the summer.
      2. Retention and graduation rates
         1. The data reveals lower retention rates for first-time, full-time freshmen males, suggesting that this is a demographic we should focus on engaging.
         2. 20-25% of students are receiving Pell grants, and this population has lower graduation rates. What can we do to help this population?
      3. Financial
         1. These slides are to remain confidential.
         2. Specific policies may breed confusion, so there is a need for clarifying the policy and communicating that to the advisors and then the students.
            1. In order to retain financial assistance like the LIFE scholarship, students must make sure they have the accurate number of credit hours each term to meet the qualifications.
      4. Expectations, attitudes, and characteristics
         1. In regards to student expectations to graduate in four years or less, we must be explicit in our messaging related to degree programs that are not necessarily possible to fulfill in four years due to additional internships and co-ops (e.g. music, engineering, some business degrees).
            1. Because of their incoming transfer credit, students may believe they have a cushion of time regarding the work they need to do to complete their degree.
            2. How do we communicate the importance of making progressive work towards degree or productively moving towards graduation during their time here?
         2. Based on students’ reported social and personal expectations, there appears to be a gap between expectations and reality that suggests a need for resiliency during this transition.
      5. Actual engagement and behaviors
         1. Looking at the areas in which USC is the “Lowest Performing Relative to Southeast Public,” we need to examine the quality of interactions with both faculty and other administrative staff and offices on campus. One way to improve these interactions would be through integrating services and processes to decrease the number of times we send students on a hunt around campus for correct answers.
            1. Implications for the committee would include improving major communications issues to send a clear, consistent message.
            2. The committee should also examine all of the processes students need to complete between the time they submit their deposit and move-in day so that we can integrate processes that overlap.
            3. University staff members frequently do not understand the processes as well, so the committee should recommend that an overview of the procedures be distributed university-wide (especially for financial aid, bursar, and advising).
   2. We will continue our discussion beginning on page 15 of the “Profile of USC First-Year Students” document during the next meeting.
4. Preparing for next meeting
   1. Committee members were asked to review the “Profile of USC First-Year Students” document in order to identify additional implications.
   2. Committee members were asked to review the comprehensive SWOT analysis about USC’s approach to the first-year experience.