First Year Experience Programs & Attrition

First Year Experience Program is "an intentional and comprehensive program that consists of different components working together to increase academic performance, provide a cohesive learning experience, increase student persistence, assist in the transition to college, facilitate a sense of commitment and community to the university, and increase personal development. (Barefoot, Fidler, Gardner, Moore, & Roberts, 1999)

• Low GPA is the major contributing factor for attrition at AUS. (American University of Sharjah, 2003)
• Data suggests that student success and loyalty to an institution is influenced by experiences encountered during their first year. (Upcraft, Gardner & Barefoot, 2004)

New Students’ Impressions Of Libraries

• The library represents a new experience for many first-year students at AUS. (Alwan and Carlson, 2014)
• Most new students in the US believe the library is irrelevant to their lives. (Merrill, 1996)

Reasons Include:
| Prior experiences |
| Nature of first-year university courses |
| Lack of information literacy instruction |
| Online resources available 24/7 via Google |

Strategies For Building Loyalty

Customer Service: Build emotional commitment to the university by providing quality library experiences and services.

Personability: Librarians should be perceived as a supportive group, willing to provide resources and services that encourage academic success.

Approachability: The library is not a looming cathedral that houses mysterious and elusive texts.

Going Beyond Instruction At AUS

• The ACRL's online annotated bibliography on FYE programs and libraries demonstrates that the majority of scholarship focuses on information literacy instruction.
• Although libraries must encourage information literacy skills, the library can and should go beyond instructional services in its FYE offerings.
• The AUS library is accomplishing this by providing two new and innovative initiatives.

FYE Initiatives

Reference At LAN Building

Reference services targeting first-year students at the point of need (i.e. the language building)

Initiated in Fall 2014 semester

Students targeted are enrolled in general education (GED) courses WRI102 & ENG204

Data shows AUS students spend most of their time in the buildings where their classes take place (e.g. WRI 102 and ENG 204)

Service coincides with the final assignment due date

Marketing via social media and WRI 102 and ENG204 faculty

Open Workshop Series

Open workshop series targeting students, faculty and staff

Initiated in Spring 2014 semester

To date: 37 Workshops offered & over 216 participants

Workshops focus on academic and professional topics

Large selection of workshops for first year students

Workshops offered by librarians, students, faculty and other departments (e.g. Academic Support Center, Writing Center, International Exchange Office etc.)

Marketing via posters, digital signage, social media and the AUS Events Department

References

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