

On Being Named an Institution of Excellence in the First College Year

The Process and the Places

Suppose you wanted to find a campus or campuses that had become truly excellent in delivering the first year of higher education. Where would you look for models? Would you know such a campus when you saw it? What would be your criteria? These questions guided a two-year research project begun in February 2002 by the Policy Center on the First Year of College and supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts, The Atlantic Philanthropies, and Lumina Foundation for Education. The project, called Institutions of Excellence in the First College Year, was designed to move beyond a random collection of good ideas for first-year programs to a more systematic selection of colleges and universities that can serve as exemplars for achieving first-year excellence. Although this book contains many examples of specific first-year programs—orientation, residence life, learning communities, first-year seminars, advising structures, and others—the primary focus is on the totality of the first year: how these various components become embodied in a campus’s overall approach to its new students.

This book provides portraits of excellence in the first year in the form of case studies of each of the thirteen institutions selected for this recognition. Case studies were constructed following an intensive review of written materials submitted by each campus in nomination portfolios and a campus visit conducted by a two-person

research team in the fall of 2002. These teams authored each of the thirteen case study chapters in the book. On campus visits, researchers met students, faculty, and administrators; heard their stories; and experienced firsthand the institutional environment. Each case study reveals a unique mix of institutional history, leadership, student characteristics, and programmatic initiatives that converge to create an exemplary first year. We believe that educators from any sector of higher education can learn from the experiences of these thirteen institutions—not only about their successes but about challenges, past and current, that frame the ultimate shape of what these campuses have been able to accomplish. Each institution has its own story to tell, and with the inevitable shifts in student characteristics, available funding, and administrative leadership, each continues on its own evolutionary path.

The research project, which culminated in this book, started with an invitation. This invitation, sent to all chief academic officers of regionally accredited two- and four-year institutions of higher education in the United States, requested that they consider nominating their institution as an Institution of Excellence in the First College Year. The call for nominations was also posted on two electronic listservs, First-Year Experience Listserv (FYE-List) and First-Year Assessment Listserv (FYA-List). Collectively, these listservs reach over 2,000 college and university educators. Institutions that chose not to respond to the invitation were never potential candidates for selection. But 130 institutions (listed in Appendix A) did respond by sending detailed descriptions of their first-year efforts along with evidence of effectiveness. From that initial cohort of 130, we narrowed our selection to fifty-four semifinalists (listed in Appendix C) and ultimately to the thirteen finalists whose compelling stories are chronicled here.

Was this selection process simply another ranking system in disguise? The answer to this important question is a resounding no. By offering descriptions of thirteen colleges and universities that model best practice in the first year, we do not mean to imply that these institutions have been somehow compared to all others and judged to be “the best.” What we can say with some assurance, however, is that the colleges and universities highlighted in this book are representative of “the best” in their varied and innovative approaches to the first year.

From the project's beginning, we recognized that excellence would have to be identified within the framework of institutional size, type, and mission. Therefore, the finalists include community colleges, private liberal arts colleges, regional comprehensive universities, and research universities, in addition to one special-purpose institution, the U.S. Military Academy. Although each campus is different, we discovered many cross-cutting themes and lessons that we develop thoroughly in the concluding chapter.

Why the Policy Center on the First Year of College Conducted This Study

The Policy Center on the First Year of College opened its doors in October 1999 with initial grant support from The Pew Charitable Trusts. As an outgrowth of the University of South Carolina's National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, the Policy Center was founded to achieve a specific mission: to promote and conduct assessment of the first year. In the Policy Center's early years of operation, staff members engaged in the development of new first-year assessment instruments and methodologies. The Policy Center also convened educators from campuses in five southeastern states to conduct qualitative evaluations of the first year and conducted two national surveys, in 2000 and 2002, to collect information about current practices in the first year (<http://www.brevard.edu/fyc/Survey/index.htm>). These surveys of both curricular and cocurricular life produced valuable data about the way institutions, for better or worse, are organizing and delivering the first year. But these data did not purport to define excellence.

In 2000, as we prepared proposals for additional grant funding from Pew and The Atlantic Philanthropies, we requested support to take our investigation to the next level by engaging in a systematic research process to identify those campuses that we could legitimately call Institutions of Excellence in their approach to this critical period in the undergraduate experience. We subsequently received additional support from Lumina Foundation for Education to transform the research findings into a major book, which we believe will be an important addition to the literature of the first year. While the programs and policies at these particular

campuses may change in the future, the innovative ideas and lessons learned from these examples will continue to be valuable to both researchers and practitioners for years to come.

Moving the First Year from the Periphery to the Center

A second driving motivation for undertaking this research study was our intention to advance the conversation about the first year of college from the periphery to the center of the collegiate experience. Higher education's focus on the first year is a three-decades-old movement that on many campuses has become known as the "freshman" or "first-year experience." In practical terms, this focus has often been realized through a menu of innovative but piecemeal programs. The most common of these are first-year seminars, the largest proportion of which are offered as one-credit-hour courses (National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, 2002). Other programs include preterm orientation, residence life activities, campus organizations designed for first-year students, volunteer service, and various mentoring initiatives, learning communities (linked or clustered courses), Supplemental Instruction, and service-learning (the inclusion of required service in courses across the curriculum). With the exception of efforts that have an inherent link to the curriculum, many of these efforts exist at the margins of institutional life—barely connected, if at all, to student learning and vulnerable to the whims and exigencies of campus change. In his 2003 book, *The Learning Paradigm College*, John Tagg quotes Kay McClenney as she argues that "innovation does not equal transformation, and multiple innovations do not add up to fundamental change. . . . The willingness [for higher education] to allow innovation on the margins is a way of containing it, preventing it from contaminating 'core functions.' Innovation on the margins relieves pressure on the institution to create more essential change" (p. 11).

Many faculty and administrators in American colleges and universities seem to labor under the false assumption that somehow students can be prepared for the realities of college through a single programmatic initiative. Therefore, many of these efforts, although well designed and sincerely executed, serve as only an antidote for the remaining core functions of the first year. Another

false assumption is that by their very nature, first-year efforts lower standards or lessen students' accountability so that more students can meet institutional requirements.

An explicit agenda for this project was therefore to identify campuses that have moved beyond the notion of the first-year experience as a patched-on, isolated program to a much broader and inclusive recognition of the first college year as a critical time period—a fundamental unit of analysis—that can serve as a meaningful platform for the undergraduate years. The project was also intended to show that first-year efforts, carefully crafted, do not lower standards but maintain high expectations coupled with support, thereby laying the foundation on which a solid collegiate education is built.

Addressing the Challenge of Defining Excellence

A third intention for the Institutions of Excellence project was to confront the challenge of defining and measuring excellence in the first year. The diversity of American higher education provides both a good reason and a convenient excuse for our collective lack of clarity about excellence. The much-maligned institutional rankings produced annually by *US News & World Report* have produced one template for institutional excellence that relies primarily on campus resources and “input” characteristics. These characteristics include size of endowment and amount of alumni giving, qualifications of entering students and faculty, and a number of other attributes that have little to do with what actually happens to students. Beginning in 2002, *US News* added additional rankings for programmatic components of the collegiate experience, including the first-year experience (“America’s Best Colleges,” 2002). But those rankings were created by surveying chief academic officers about their *opinions* or *perceptions* of other institutions’ performance in a number of key areas, not by gathering actual documentation or evidence of excellence.

Campus educators understandably do a good bit of grouching about external rankings—unless they happen to be at the top of those rankings. But they have also been extremely resistant to working with similar institutions to create their own internal definition of excellence. The familiar argument, even among colleges

and universities sharing the same objective characteristics, is that campuses, courses, students, and faculty are just too different to impose standards from one institution to another. While we agree that standards development is difficult, we also find that educators are nevertheless hungry for information about models of excellence or best practices to which they can aspire. Hardly a day goes by when we are not asked to provide either a blueprint for first-year excellence or examples of institutions that have been successful in achieving higher levels of student learning and retention. This book takes a first step toward clarifying what we mean by excellence in the first year of college by presenting thirteen case studies representing institutions of all types and sizes. We recognize the need to take this notion of defining, measuring, and recognizing first-year excellence even further, and the Policy Center is currently engaged in efforts to do just that. The Epilogue at the conclusion of this book describes an ongoing project begun in 2003 that is designed to define and measure institutional achievement of first-year standards of excellence. These standards, still in draft form in spring 2004, are being developed collaboratively by the Policy Center, Penn State University's Center for the Study of Higher Education, and more than two hundred higher education institutions in the United States.

Selection Criteria

An obvious prerequisite to implementing a recognition process of this type is the determination of criteria by which an institution's approach to the first year might be evaluated. We began this project by drawing on available scholarly literature, in addition to the collective experiences of Policy Center staff, to determine a set of common criteria by which diverse approaches to the first year could be evaluated in two-year and four-year, public and private, large and small campuses. Five criteria resulted from our lengthy deliberations and provided the yardstick by which an eighteen-member panel—Policy Center staff and thirteen external reviewers—measured the efforts of the 130 nominees:

- *Criterion 1: Evidence of an intentional, comprehensive approach to improving the first year that is appropriate to an institution's type and mission.* Institutions of Excellence are characterized by an approach

to the first year that spans the curriculum and cocurriculum. This approach is central and systemic rather than appended or patched on to the core institutional mission.

“Down with serendipity and up with intentionality!” This statement, often made in public settings by John Gardner, is at the heart of this first criterion. Throughout the history of higher education, Gardner would argue, we have relied too much on serendipity—those special chance meetings of students and faculty, or students and other students, that shape the educational experience. Through the years, we have found that serendipity is not sufficient; rather, being intentional about the way we engineer meaningful student-faculty and student-student interactions is a key to success. It is also important that campuses have a clear rationale for the first year—what the first year is intended to do that goes beyond a low-level functional purpose (for example, making money for the institution, weeding out undesirable students) to a first-year philosophy that serves as a platform for the achievement of institutional mission.

- *Criterion 2: Evidence of assessment of the various initiatives that constitute this approach.* Institutions of Excellence are committed to an assessment process that results in data-driven continuous improvement in the first year. They should be able to report what was studied, how assessment was conducted, and how results were used.

A bird’s-eye view of first-year assessment discovers some disturbing trends—first, an overwhelming focus on measuring retention and the absence of evaluation of higher-level cognitive and affective outcomes. Of course, retention is important; but we believe most educators would agree that the purpose of the first year is more than simply keeping students at the institution where they began their undergraduate journey. A 2002 national survey of the nation’s chief academic officers conducted by the Policy Center discovered a second troubling trend: 31 percent of two- and four-year institutions conduct no assessment of the first year using national or regional comparative data, and another 31 percent collect data but make no meaningful use of these data (<http://www.brevard.edu/fyc/survey2002/findings.htm>). Such data tend to languish unused—a waste of institutional energy and resources. An obvious key to achieving excellence is not only conducting assessment, but also using assessment findings for institutional improvement.

- *Criterion 3: Broad impact on significant numbers of first-year students, including, but not limited to, special student subpopulations.* First-year initiatives are characterized by high expectations and essential support for all students at all levels of academic ability.

What is a reasonable level of student participation in first-year initiatives? 100 percent? Less than 100 percent? This question has no one-size-fits-all answer. Rather, we argue that institutions should determine how they can realize maximum impact through a variety of first-year efforts and whether desired impact can be achieved if all students are not required to participate. We also maintain that a college or university's design of the first year should take into account both the special needs of students who may be underprepared or at the honors level, and the needs of students in between—those who on many campuses are considered just too average to require special attention. Our collective experience argues that all students are potentially at risk in one way or another for failing to realize maximum benefit from the first college year.

- *Criterion 4: Strong administrative support for first-year initiatives, evidence of institutionalization, and durability over time.* Institutions of Excellence have a demonstrable track record of support for first-year initiatives. First-year programs and policies enjoy high status and receive an equitable share of fiscal and personnel resources.

Among multiple competing institutional priorities, the achievement of high status is no small feat. And for many campuses, where attention to the first year is a peripheral responsibility managed by entry-level employees, a high-status first year is only a dream. But for others, the first year is supported in high places, has been institutionalized, and has become the centerpiece of campus marketing—the way the institution proudly presents itself to its various publics, including, but not limited to, incoming students. High status also implies a reasonable and equitable level of financial support for organizational structures that support the design of the first year.

- *Criterion 5: Involvement of a wide range of faculty, student affairs professionals, academic administrators, and other constituent groups.* Institutions of Excellence involve all campus constituent groups in the design, implementation, and maintenance of first-year initiatives. These institutions are characterized by partnerships in support of the first year across divisional lines.

“Why can’t we get the faculty more involved in first-year initiatives?” This common question has many possible answers, but it is clear that first-year excellence cannot be achieved, much less sustained, without the involvement of an institution’s faculty. Faculty ownership, however, is not enough. Achievement of first-year excellence requires meaningful partnerships among various campus constituent groups—faculty, administrators, student affairs professionals, and students. The first year is also a focal point around which such partnerships can be created and sustained.

The institutional stories as provided in this book breathe life into these five criteria and provide multiple examples of the way institutions of varying sizes, types, and missions have achieved excellence according to this model.

A Snapshot of the Institutions of Excellence

Although the institutions selected for this honor are described in depth in the thirteen case study chapters, what follows is a brief general description of each of the campuses presented in the order in which their case studies appear (see Table 1.1).

Two-Year Institutions

Community College of Denver

The Community College of Denver (CCD), the city’s only community college, shares its main downtown Auraria Campus with Metropolitan State College of Denver and the University of Colorado at Denver. Together, the three institutions have a student population of approximately 44,000—13,000 of which are enrolled at CCD. CCD operates three additional branch campuses, all within an eleven-mile radius of the Auraria campus. It has received national recognition from the League for Innovation in Community Colleges as a Vanguard College for learner-centered educational excellence. The college offers degrees and certificates in more than 125 programs and is Colorado’s most diverse higher education institution, with a 58 percent minority student population representing more than seventy countries. The average age of

Table 1.1. Institutions of Excellence

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Student Population</i>
Community College of Denver	Denver, Colorado	13,000
LaGuardia Community College	Queens, New York	12,000
Eckerd College	St. Petersburg, Florida	1,600
Kalamazoo College	Kalamazoo, Michigan	1,300
Drury University	Springfield, Missouri	4,450
Elon University	Elon, North Carolina	4,500
United States Military Academy	West Point, New York	4,000
Lehman College of CUNY	Bronx, New York	9,700
Texas A & M University- Corpus Christi	Corpus Christi, Texas	7,700
Appalachian State University	Boone, North Carolina	14,000
Ball State University	Muncie, Indiana	18,000
Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis	Indianapolis, Indiana	28,000
University of South Carolina	Columbia, South Carolina	25,000

students is twenty-eight years old, and 59 percent of the student population is female (<http://ccd.rightchoice.org>).

LaGuardia Community College

LaGuardia Community College is one of the nineteen two- and four-year campuses that comprise the City University of New York (CUNY) System. LaGuardia, located in the borough of Queens, enrolled its first class of students in 1971 and now has a student enrollment of approximately 12,000, including students from approximately 170 countries. LaGuardia is CUNY's only cooperative education college, offering day students two mandatory work experiences as part of their associate degree program of study. Three on-campus high schools are acknowledged forerunners of similar college–high school collaborations elsewhere in the nation. LaGuardia is well known for its success in acquiring grants to support educational innovation and for its history in implementing learning communities for students at all levels of academic preparedness and English proficiency (<http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu>).

Four-Year Institutions with Fewer Than 2,000 Students

Eckerd College

Eckerd College is a private, coeducational, residential college of liberal arts and sciences located on the Gulf Coast in St. Petersburg, Florida, and is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church, USA. Since its founding in 1958, Eckerd has developed programs that have been adopted nationwide and have earned the college an international reputation for academic excellence. As a residential campus of about 1,600 students, Eckerd boasts a curriculum grounded in the liberal arts and committed to the integration of the liberal arts and career preparation. In 2003, Eckerd became one of the youngest colleges to receive a Phi Beta Kappa chapter. Eckerd is well known for its Autumn Term, a three-week period in late summer that functions as an early start to the academic curriculum for first-year students and includes traditional orientation activities as well (<http://www.eckerd.edu>).

Kalamazoo College

Kalamazoo College is a private, coeducational, residential college of liberal arts and sciences founded in 1833 and located in southwest Michigan in the city of Kalamazoo. Kalamazoo College is nationally recognized for its innovative Kalamazoo Plan, a program that combines optional off-campus career development internships and study abroad experiences with on-campus courses, a required electronic portfolio, and a senior individualized project. Kalamazoo's student population is approximately 1,300; 85 percent of students study and live in another country during their undergraduate experience, making Kalamazoo a language-rich and internationally oriented community. Students also have the opportunity to participate in LandSea, an optional eighteen-day wilderness orientation that takes place in Ontario's Killarney Provincial Park during the summer before the first year (<http://www.kzoo.edu>).

Four-Year Institutions with 2,000 to 5,000 Students

Drury University

Springfield, Missouri, is the home of Drury University, a residential, coeducational university founded as Drury College in 1873 by Congregational missionaries. Drury's enrollment is approximately

4,400 undergraduate and graduate students. Every Drury undergraduate earns a minor in global studies through Global Perspectives 21, a unique core curriculum that combines the sciences, social sciences, and humanities to enhance communication and problem-solving skills. Drury offers a comprehensive liberal arts curriculum. In addition, students can pursue degrees in the university's Breech School of Business Administration, Hammons School of Architecture, and the departments of education, science, mathematics and computer science, behavioral sciences, and exercise and sport science, to name a few. Drury was one of the first universities in Missouri to offer continuing education and evening classes to meet the needs of nontraditional students. The centerpiece of Drury's first year is the ALPHA seminar, a year-long required course for beginning students (<http://www.drury.edu>).

Elon University

Elon University is a private, residential, coeducational institution founded in 1889 by the Christian Church, now the United Church of Christ. Elon's student population is just over 4,500, and the campus is located in central North Carolina between the cities of Greensboro and Burlington. Elon's curriculum operates on a four-one-four academic calendar, which includes a three-week January term. First-year students take four core courses in common. Students may choose among forty-nine major fields of study leading to bachelor of arts, bachelor of fine arts, or bachelor of science degrees. Elon also offers a dual-degree engineering program that is affiliated with North Carolina State University, Virginia Tech, North Carolina A&T State University, and Washington University in St. Louis. The majority of Elon courses carry four credit hours and include an experiential component (<http://www.elon.edu>).

U.S. Military Academy

The U.S. Military Academy (West Point) is located on the banks of the Hudson River in eastern New York State. The academy is a coeducational institution with a cadet population of approximately 4,000. Founded in 1802 during the presidency of Thomas Jefferson, West Point is the nation's oldest engineering school. In recent years, greater numbers of minorities and women have been admitted to the academy and the Corps of Cadets. Academy graduates

are awarded a bachelor of science degree and a commission as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army and serve a minimum of five years on active duty. Since its founding more than two centuries ago, the military academy has accomplished its mission by developing cadets in four critical areas—intellectual, physical, military, and moral-ethical—a four-year process called the “West Point Experience” (<http://www.usma.edu>).

Four-Year Institutions with 5,000 to 10,000 Students

Lehman College of the City University of New York

Lehman College was founded in 1931 as the Bronx campus of Hunter College. In 1968, Lehman was established as an independent coeducational college and now serves more than 9,000 students, most of them residents of the Bronx. Lehman is a nonresidential campus located on thirty-seven acres along the Jerome Park Reservoir in the Bronx. The college offers more than ninety bachelor’s and master’s degrees. Its mission is to offer its students a liberal arts education and preparation for careers and advanced study. The college, committed to meeting the educational needs of its urban population, serves as a center for the continuing educational and cultural needs of the region through access to the college’s facilities and expertise in the academic disciplines, professional fields, and the fine and performing arts (<http://www.lehman.cuny.edu>).

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

The 240-acre Ward Island site that is now the home for Texas A&M-Corpus Christi has been the location for other higher education institutions, both private and public, since 1947. From 1971 to 1993, the institution, consecutively part of Texas A&I, the University System of South Texas, and Texas A&M Universities, enrolled only juniors and seniors. Beginning in 1994, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, enrolled first- and second-year students. The student population now numbers more than 7,600 students; approximately 1,500 live on campus. The institution is committed to serving the needs of the South Texas region and prides itself on its system of undergraduate education that includes a core curriculum and learning communities. Program offerings include sixty-one degrees at the bachelor’s and master’s levels (<http://www.tamucc.edu>).

Four-Year Institutions with 10,000 to 20,000 Students

Appalachian State University

Appalachian State University is a public, comprehensive, residential university located in the mountains of North Carolina in the town of Boone. Founded in 1899 as Watauga Academy, the coeducational campus now enrolls more than 14,000 students and offers ninety-five undergraduate and eighty-one graduate majors. Almost 90 percent of students are state residents. In its early history, Appalachian was a teachers' college designed primarily to serve the educational needs of citizens of the western North Carolina mountains. In the 1960s, the campus grew dramatically, becoming what it is today: a multipurpose regional university. Appalachian's mission, "the practice and propagation of scholarship," is accomplished particularly through instruction, but also through the research, creative, and service activities of the university community. Appalachian has won numerous awards for its innovative efforts, including its 2001 selection as *Time* magazine's College of the Year for the Freshman Year Experience (<http://www.appstate.edu>).

Ball State University

Ball State University, a residential, public, coeducational campus in Muncie, Indiana, enrolls about 18,000 students who complete undergraduate and graduate degrees in forty-eight academic departments. The university began in 1899 as a private normal school but was purchased by the Ball brothers, Muncie industrialists, and given to the state of Indiana in 1918. Currently, more than 90 percent of Ball State students are state residents. Ball State is known nationally for its attention to assessment, the infusion of technology into instruction, and its University College, which coordinates the university's core curriculum and provides various forms of academic support as well as academic advising to all first-year students, regardless of major (<http://www.bsu.edu>).

Four-Year Institutions with More Than 20,000 Students

Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) is a metropolitan university, contiguous to the downtown area of Indi-

anapolis, and enrolling more than 28,000 students. Although the overwhelming majority of students are commuters, IUPUI offers residential accommodations to about 300 students and is building additional residence halls. IUPUI was created in 1969 as a partnership between Indiana and Purdue universities with Indiana University as the managing partner. Thus IUPUI is a campus of Indiana University that grants degrees in some 185 programs from both Indiana and Purdue universities. IUPUI offers the broadest range of academic programs of any campus in Indiana and is the home for the Indiana University Medical Center. IUPUI's nationally recognized University College is the academic entry point for all first-year students, regardless of major (<http://www.iupui.edu>).

University of South Carolina

The University of South Carolina (USC), founded in 1801, is an urban institution located in Columbia, South Carolina. Seven additional campuses of the university offering both two- and four-year degrees are located around the state and are part of the university system. The Columbia campus enrolls more than 25,000 students. Minority students represent approximately 25 percent of the total student population. The campus features various types of residential accommodations, including a residential college, honors housing, housing focused on academic themes and interests, and first-year residence halls. The university offers more than 350 degree programs in sixteen colleges and schools. USC has become nationally known for its focus on the First-Year Experience through its widely replicated University 101 course and the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition (<http://www.sc.edu>).

A Snapshot of Programmatic Initiatives

Collectively, these thirteen institutions offer an amazing variety of opportunities and services for their first-year students. Table 1.2 provides a list of the most common first-year initiatives described by the thirteen institutions in the nomination portfolios submitted in spring 2002 and investigated during the site visits. Undoubtedly, each campus could create a much longer list of its first-year efforts, but the table lists those that we and the thirteen campuses judged

Table 1.2. Programmatic Areas of Emphasis, Institutions of Excellence

	<i>Central Advising Center</i>	<i>Common Reading</i>	<i>Convocations</i>	<i>Curriculum/General Education</i>	<i>Electronic</i>	<i>Portfolios Experiential Learning</i>	<i>Faculty Development</i>
<i>Advising</i>	Appalachian Ball State CCD IUPUI	Appalachian Ball State Drury Elon Kalamazoo LaGuardia USMA USC	Appalachian Kalamazoo LaGuardia USC	Appalachian Ball State Drury Eckerd Elon IUPUI Kalamazoo TAMU-CC USMA	Kalamazoo LaGuardia	Appalachian Elon Kalamazoo USMA	Ball State CCD IUPUI LaGuardia Lehman USC
<i>First-Year Seminars</i>	Appalachian Drury Elon IUPUI Kalamazoo LaGuardia Lehman TAMU-CC USMA USC	Appalachian IUPUI Kalamazoo USMA	Appalachian Ball State CCD IUPUI LaGuardia Lehman TAMU-CC	Drury Eckerd Elon Kalamazoo	Drury IUPUI LaGuardia USMA USC	Appalachian Drury Eckerd Elon IUPUI Kalamazoo USMA	Ball State Drury Eckerd IUPUI Kalamazoo USMA USC
<i>Peer Leaders/Advisers</i>	Appalachian Eckerd Elon USC	Appalachian IUPUI Kalamazoo USMA	Appalachian Ball State CCD IUPUI LaGuardia Lehman TAMU-CC	Drury Eckerd Elon Kalamazoo	Drury IUPUI LaGuardia USMA USC	Appalachian Drury Eckerd Elon IUPUI Kalamazoo USMA	Ball State Drury Eckerd IUPUI Kalamazoo USMA USC

<i>Residence Life</i>	<i>Service Initiatives</i>	<i>Academic Programs</i>	<i>Summer Supplemental Instruction</i>
Appalachian	Drury	CCD	Appalachian
Ball State	Eckerd	Eckerd	IUPUI
Univ of SC	Elon	LaGuardia	
	IUPUI		
	Kalamazoo		
	LaGuardia		
	Lehman		
	USMA		

Note: For specific contextual meanings of each area of emphasis, see the case study chapters. CCD = Community College of Denver; USC = University of South Carolina; IUPUI = Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis; USMA = U.S. Military Academy; TAMU-CC = Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

to be most important. Readers whose interests may focus on a particular first-year program or service will find that this table directs them to campus case studies in which specific first-year initiatives are described in detail.

Final Thoughts

If additional time and money were available to enable the Policy Center to undertake a broader and more sustained investigation, undoubtedly we could identify hundreds of colleges and universities that model first-year excellence. As campuses continue to interact in professional meetings and through a personal and technological exchange of ideas, the dissemination of innovative and effective first-year initiatives increases year by year.

We hope that this book will give additional credence to our belief that achieving excellence in the first year requires time, energy, and the willingness to invest in more than innovation on the margins. If the first year is to reach its potential, it must take center stage and involve all the actors who have roles to play in institutional life.