



**Framingham**  
State University

**OFFICE OF ASSESSMENT**

September 13, 2012

**RESULTS SUMMARY: Assessment of First-year Program**  
2006-2011

**INTRODUCTION**

The First-year Foundations Program consists of several components: instructor of record, classroom, facilitator, seminar, and Peer Mentor. This preliminary report focuses upon the goals for the entire Program. The subsequent, final report for this project will include a comprehensive analysis of the First-year Foundation Program and seminar component. This distinction is important because the indirect assessments conducted thus far emphasize the goals set for the seminar. Since the goals for the seminar are based on the goals for the Program, this preliminary report attempts to include data as appropriate for the Program. This preliminary report also contains some of the data collected from focus groups that were conducted to better understand student perceptions about Black and Gold Beginnings, First-year Foundations, and Orientation.

**Goals of the First-Year Foundations Program**

When the First-year Foundations Program was established in 2006, six goals were established:

1. Promote pedagogies best suited to the development of active learners.
2. Promote the development of faculty, staff and administrators in the delivery of effective and developmentally sound information and resources relating to the overall success of first-year students.
3. Promote development of academic skills that will allow first-year students to be successful learners inside and out of the classroom.
4. Encourage student involvement in activities leading to meaningful social connections.
5. Help first-year students adjust to the academic and social expectations and responsibilities of life at Framingham State College.
6. Provide opportunities for community involvement.

**Goals of Black and Gold Beginnings**

1. First-year students will start the semester more engaged and provide much needed social interaction.  
*Objective 1:* Students will start the semester more engaged.  
*Objective 2:* Students will be socially interactive.
2. Students would have an opportunity to establish campus connections with faculty and staff and gain valuable knowledge of resources prior to classes starting.  
*Objective 1:* Students will have an opportunity to establish campus connections with faculty and staff  
*Objective 2:* Gain valuable knowledge of resources prior to classes starting.

**METHODS**

Data regarding the First-year Foundations Program has been collected through primary and secondary methods. It is important to note that most of the methods are indirect assessments. While institutional data such as retention and graduation rates may provide some inferences, it is difficult to conclude that participation in the First-year Foundation Programs directly correlates to retention or graduation.

Three methods were developed specifically for assessments of the First-Year Foundations Program: student surveys, facilitator surveys, and focus groups.

- *Student surveys*: Conducted at the end of the Foundations Seminar since 2006.
- *Facilitator surveys*: Conducted at the end of the Foundations Seminar since 2006.
- *Focus groups*: Several groups were conducted in fall 2011 to collect qualitative data as a supplement to quantitative surveys.

Data from the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) and National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) have been collected to ascertain student perceptions of their college experience.

- The BCSSE is administered at orientation with incoming freshmen and is designed to measure student perceptions of what they believe their college experience will be.
  - BCSSE data for FSU is available for 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011
- The NSSE is administered during the spring semester to freshmen and seniors. By doing so, the intention is to capture student perceptions of their college experience at the end of their freshman year and right before graduation.
  - NSSE data for FSU is available for 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2010

There has been data collected at the institutional level that has contributed to our understanding of student perceptions regarding their participation in the First-year Foundations Program.

- Retention rates
- Graduation rates
- Grade point averages (GPA)
- Commencement survey (May, 2012)

## OBSERVATIONS

This report addresses each of the goals set for the First-year Foundations Program with the data collected that is relevant to that particular goal and its related outcomes. Survey items were collapsed into appropriate outcomes and annual comparisons were made to identify trends. To protect the confidentiality of participants, identifying information has been removed.

## Population and Demographics

Table 1 identifies the number of participants for each year that the student survey was distributed.

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
N	83	138	116	294	346	347
Completed course	67	183	225	708	702	902
Response rate	*	75.4%	51.6%	41.5%	49.3%	38.5%
Distribution method	paper	paper	paper	paper	online	online

\*It is possible that some students who withdrew from the course still completed the survey.

Table 2 indicates the self-reported gender of participants from the 2011 survey.

Female	194
Male	69
No response	84
TOTAL	347

Table 3 lists the self-reported primary majors of the participants from the 2010 and 2011 surveys.

Major	Year	
	2010	2011
Art	8	
Art History		1
Biology	15	16
Business Administration	27	25
Business and Information Technology	4	3
Chemistry	1	
Communication Arts	14	11
Computer Science	4	6
Criminology		10
Early Childhood Education	20	
Economics	2	1
Education		37
Elementary Education	43	
Environmental Science	5	7
English	9	12
Fashion Design and Retailing	12	18
Food and Nutrition	9	7
Food Science	1	1
Geography	2	
History	22	10
Mathematics	8	6
Modern Languages	4	1
Political Science	6	1
Pre-engineering		1
Psychology	29	23
Sociology	7	2
Undeclared	64	60
No response	30	88
TOTAL	346	347

## STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

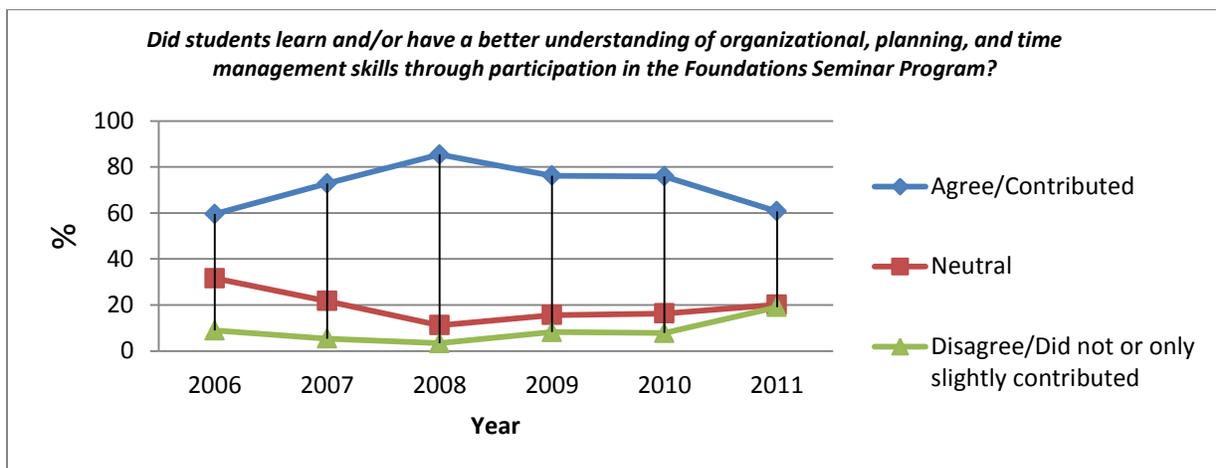
**GOAL 1: *Promote pedagogies best suited to the development of active learners.***

### **Organizational Planning and Time Management**

Did students learn and/or have a better understanding of organizational, planning, and time management skills through participation in the Foundations Seminar Program?

#### **Findings:**

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed that they successfully learned and/or had a better understanding of organizational, planning, and time management skills by result of participation in the Foundations Seminar Program. The data indicated that the most positive responses came from the 2008 survey where there are noticeable increases; which has steadily declined thereafter.

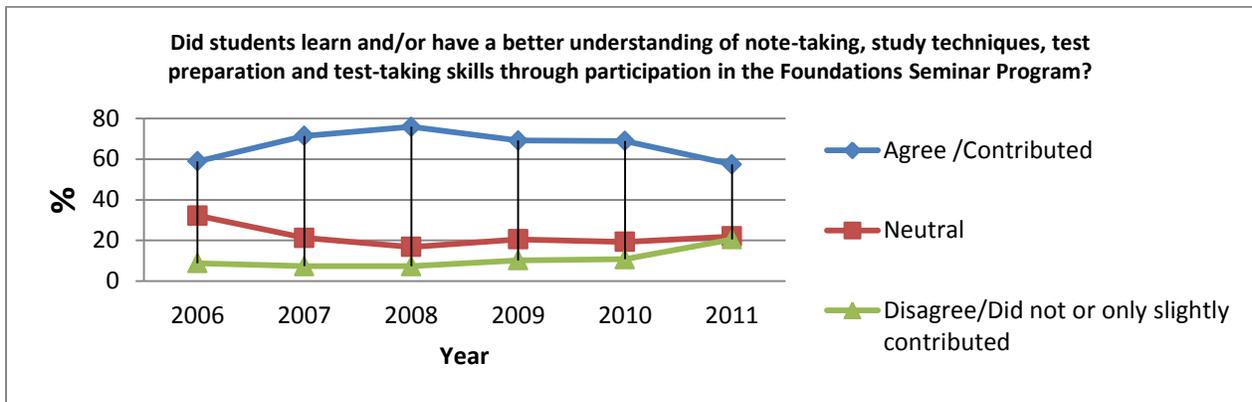


### **Note-taking, study techniques, test preparation and test-taking**

Did students learn and/or have a better understanding of note-taking, study techniques, test preparation and test-taking skills through participation in the Foundations Seminar Program?

#### **Findings:**

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed they successfully learned and/or have a better understanding of note-taking, study techniques, test preparation and test-taking skills by result of participation in the Foundations Seminar Program. The data indicated that the most positive responses came from the 2008 survey where there are noticeable increases; which has steadily declined thereafter.

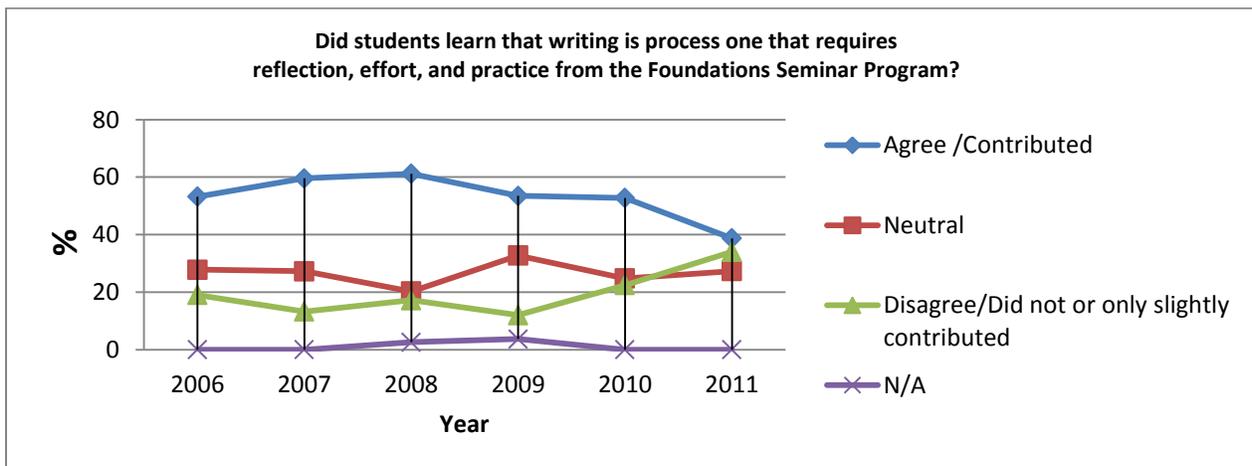


### **Writing as a Process**

Did students learn and/or have a better understanding that writing is process one that requires reflection, effort, and practice through participation in the Foundations Seminar Program?

#### **Findings:**

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed they did learn that writing is process one that requires reflection, effort, and practice by result of participation in the Foundations Seminar Program. The data indicated that the most positive responses came from the 2007 and 2008 survey; which has steadily declined thereafter.

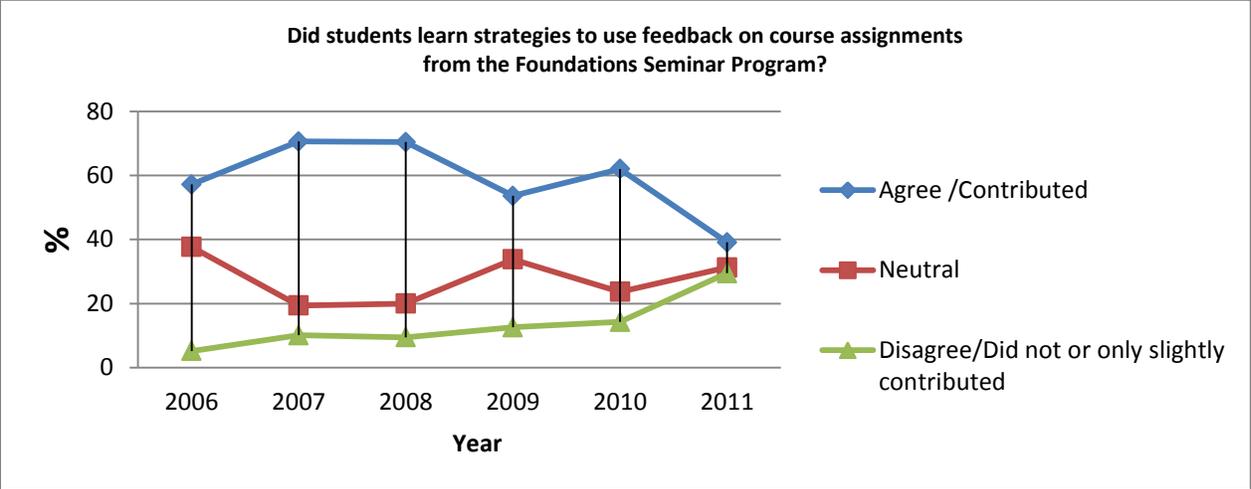


### **Responding to Feedback on Assignments**

Did students learn and/or have a better understanding of strategies to use feedback on course assignments through participation in the Foundations Seminar Program?

#### **Findings:**

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed they did learn that strategies to constructively use feedback on course assignments from the Foundations Seminar Program. The data indicated that the most positive responses came from the 2007 and 2008 survey; which has steadily declined thereafter with the exception of a small increase in positivity in the 2010 survey.

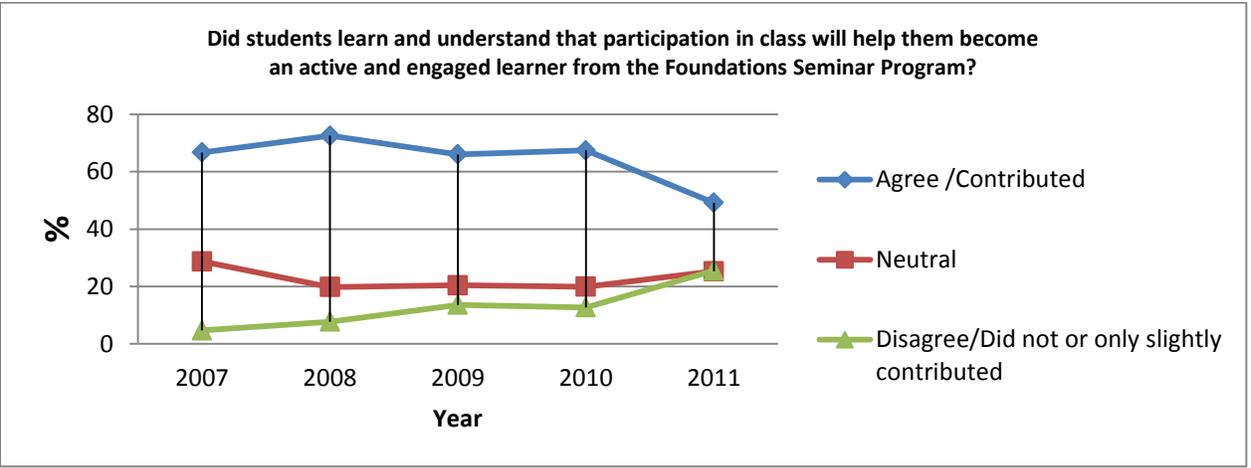


**Participating in Class Discussions and Group Activities**

1. Did students learn and understand that participation in class will help them become an active and engaged learner from the Foundations Seminar Program?
2. Do students prefer group discussions or activities to lectures?

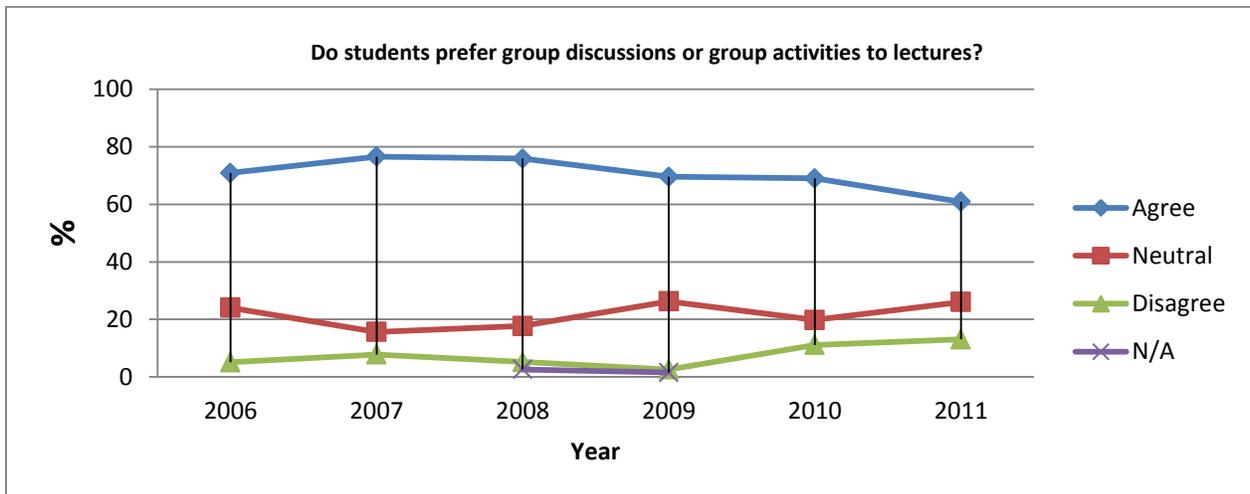
Outcome 1 Findings:

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed they did learn that participation in class will help them become an active and engaged learner from the Foundations Seminar Program. The data indicated that the most positive responses came from the 2008 survey; which has steadily declined thereafter.



Outcome 2 Findings:

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed they prefer group discussions or activities to lecture. The data indicated that the most positive responses came from the 2007 and 2008 survey; which has steadily declined thereafter with some fluctuation.



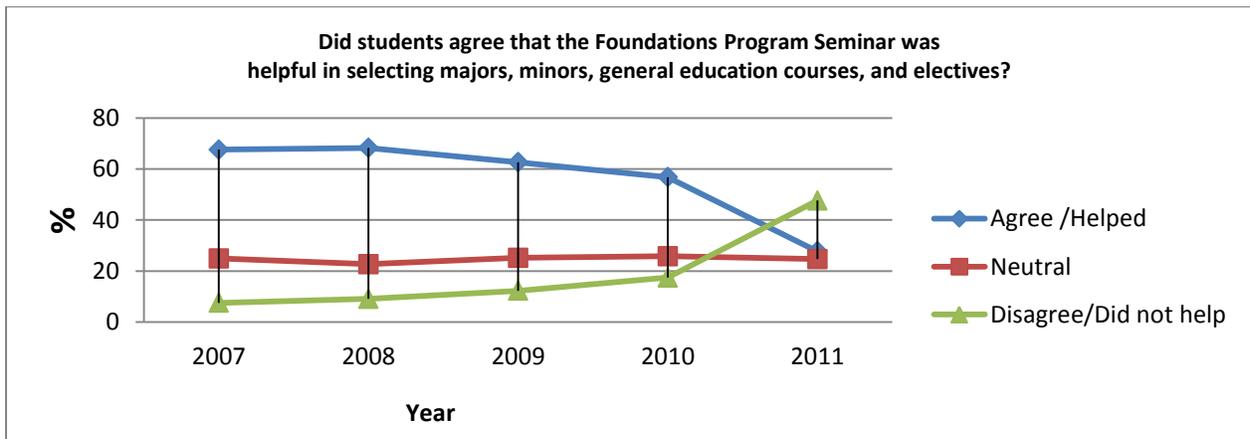
**GOAL 2: Promote the development of faculty, staff and administrators in the delivery of effective and developmentally sound information and resources relating to the overall success of first-year students.**

**Identifying the purpose of general education, a major, a minor, and electives**

Did students agree that the Foundations Program Seminar was helpful in selecting majors, minors, general education classes, and electives?

Findings:

Overall, the majority of participating students from 2007 to 2010 agreed that the Foundations Seminar Program helped them gain a better understanding of the importance of making informed decisions when selecting majors, minors, and general education classes. The data indicated that the most positive responses came from the 2008 survey; which has relatively sharply declined thereafter.



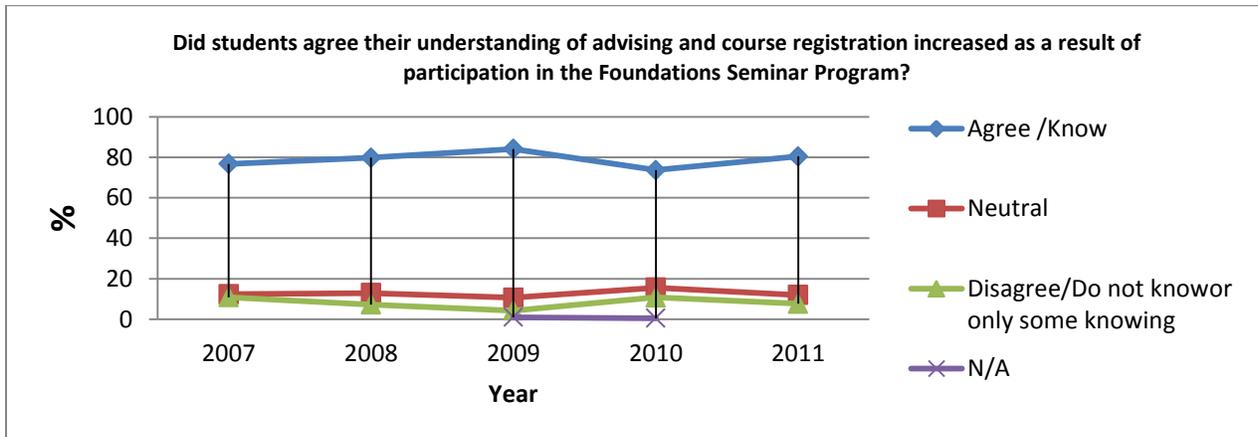
Note: In 2011, survey items inquiring if the Foundations Program Seminar actually helped the students choose their *specific* major, minor, General Education courses, or electives, were added to the survey and the results were primarily negative. It should be recognized that some students entering the Foundations Program Seminar already declared a major; potentially skewing the findings.

### **Registering for Class**

Did students agree their understanding of advising and course registration increased as a result of participation in the Foundations Seminar Program?

#### **Findings:**

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed that they had a better understanding of advising and course registration from the Foundations Seminar Program. The data indicated the most positive responses came from the 2009 survey; which has steadily fluctuated thereafter.



The focus group data seemed to indicate that since students were able to register for classes, then this demonstrated that the facilitator provided correct information and clear instructions:

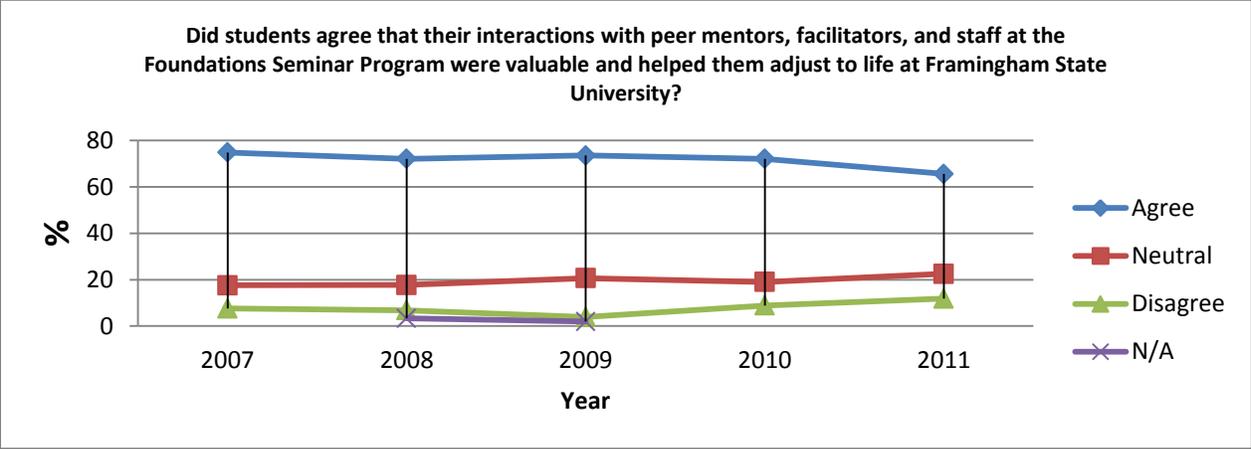
“I’d say [that Foundations seminar attributed to my academic success] because, like, that’s, like, where we learned how to, like, register and do all that stuff so it was less stressful as opposed to if they kind of, like, just threw us out into the wild. I would have had no clue what to do.  
(First-year, Undeclared)

### **Peer Mentors and Facilitators**

Did students agree their interactions with Peer Mentors, facilitators, and staff of the Foundations Seminar Program was valuable and helped them adjust to life at Framingham State University?

#### **Findings:**

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed that they personally benefited from their interactions with mentors, staff, and facilitators at the Foundations Seminar Program easing the adjustment to life at Framingham State University. The data indicated the most positive responses came from the 2009 survey; which has steadily declined thereafter.



**Knowledge of campus resources, policies, and procedures**

Did students agree that the Foundations Seminar Program exposed them to important resources and locations on campus?

**Findings:**

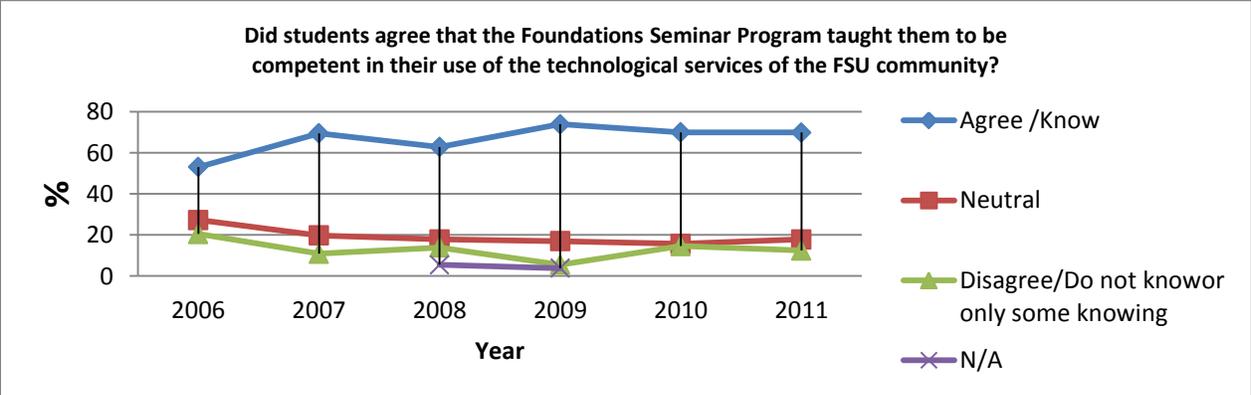
- 42.43% of students knew about the resources/locations on campus before the Foundations Seminar Program.
- 33.9% of students learned about the resources/locations from the Foundations Seminar Program.
- 32.0% of students either do not remember where they learned about the resources/location, or simply did not know about them at all.

**Knowledge of the technological services of the FSU community**

Did students agree that the Foundations Seminar Program taught them to be competent in their use of the technological services of the FSU community?

**Findings:**

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed that they learned them to be competent in their use of the technological services of the FSU community through the Foundations Seminar. The data indicated a steady incline in positive responses since 2006 and the most positive responses came from the 2009 survey; which has fluctuated steadily thereafter.



**GOAL 3: Promote development of academic skills that will allow first-year students to be successful learners inside and out of the classroom.**

Although some focus group data demonstrated that a student’s first-year experiences did not contribute to their academic success, it is not clear if this is attributed to First-year Foundation Programs.

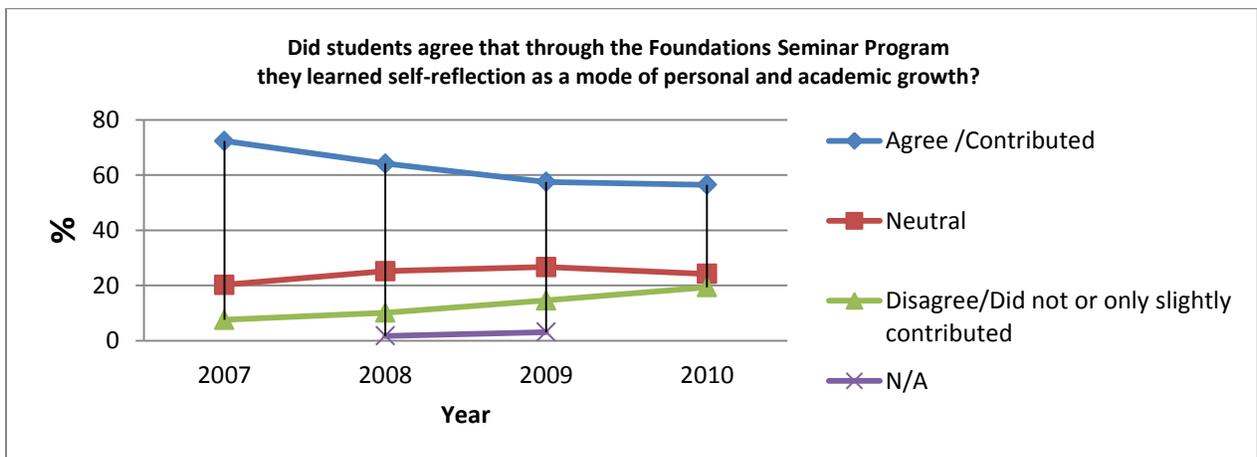
Moderator: “Do you attribute any of your academic success to your first-year experiences?”  
Participant: “I don’t think so.”  
(Senior, Psychology)

**Define and practice self-reflection as a mode of personal and academic growth**

Did students agree that through the Foundations Seminar Program they learned self-reflection as a mode of personal and academic growth?

**Findings:**

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed that through the Foundations Seminar Program they learned self-reflection as a mode of personal and academic growth. The data indicated that the most positive responses came from the 2007 survey; which has steadily declined thereafter.

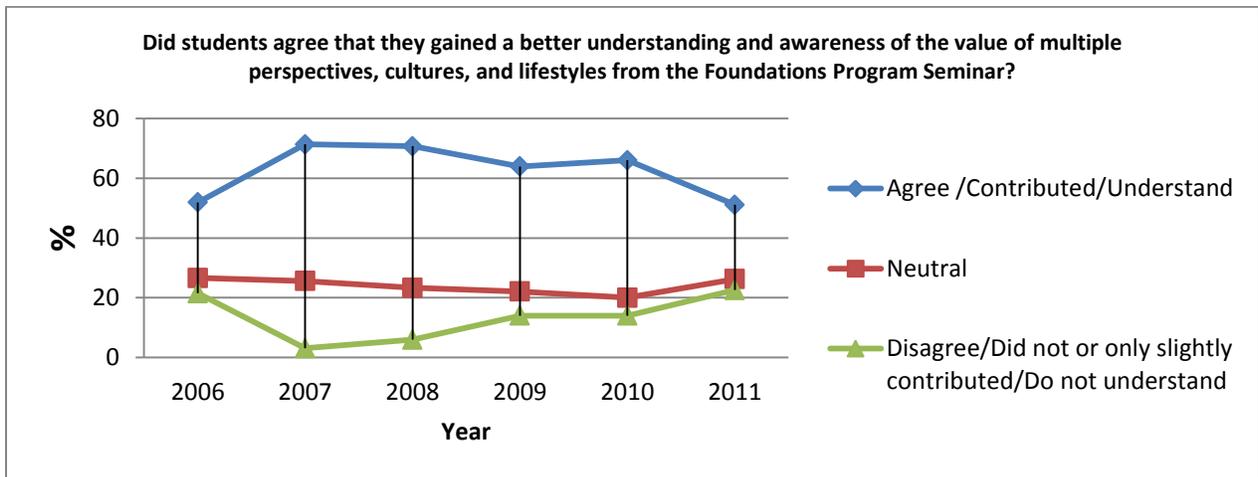


**Demonstrate an understanding of and express an awareness of the value of multiple perspectives, cultures, and lifestyles**

Did students agree that they gained a better understanding and awareness of the value of multiple perspectives, cultures, and lifestyles from the Foundations Program Seminar?

**Findings:**

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed that through the Foundations Seminar Program they gained a better understanding and awareness of the value of multiple perspectives, cultures, and lifestyles. The data indicated that the most positive responses came from the 2007 survey; which has declined thereafter.

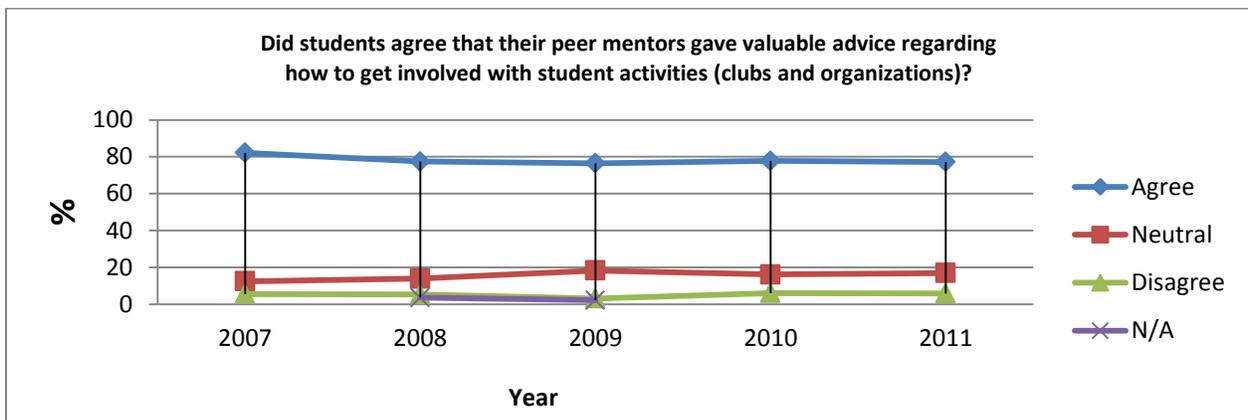


**GOAL 4: Encourage student involvement in activities leading to meaningful social connections.**

Did students agree that their peer mentors gave valuable advice regarding how to get involved with student activities (clubs and organizations)?

Findings:

Overall, students who participated in the Foundations Seminar program feel as though they received valuable advice on how to become involved in student activities on-campus from their peer mentor. These data indicated that across a five year period attitudes have remained relatively unchanged and, largely, positive.



Some focus group data demonstrated that students enrolled in seminar were engaged with their classmates and Peer Mentors.

“Yeah, [seminar] was definitely a lot of fun. Like especially with the Peer Mentor ... And she was just awesome. She was wicked nice and she did like things outside of class for us. [She] had study sessions for our class it was, like, a lot of fun.”  
(First-year, Psychology)

“Here and there they told us about things but they didn’t really like focus on them. They focused more on our class and how we can come together as freshmen and enjoy our time here.”  
(First-year, Environmental Science)

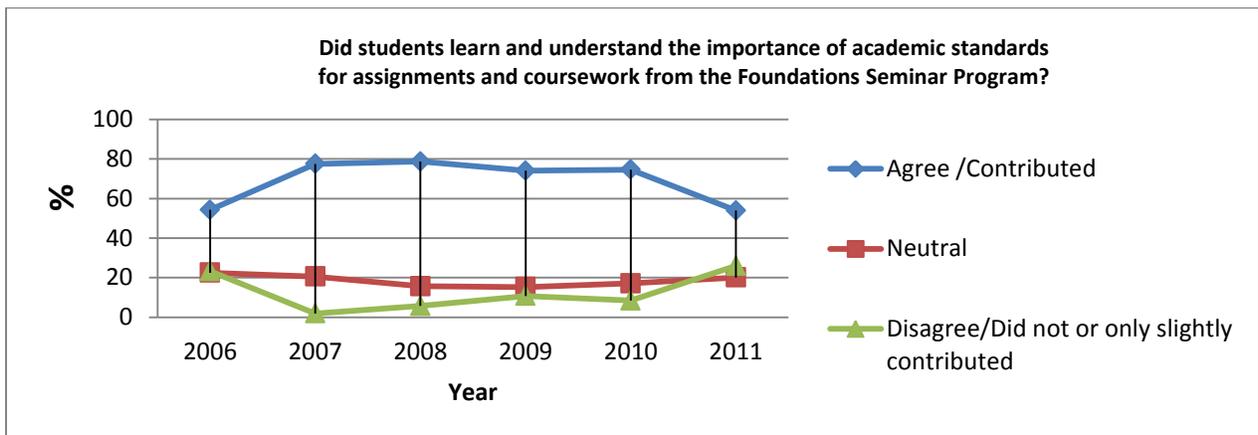
**GOAL 5: Help first-year students adjust to the academic and social expectations and responsibilities of life at Framingham State College.**

**Demonstrate academic standards for assignments and coursework**

Did students learn and understand the importance of academic standards for assignments and coursework from the Foundations Seminar Program?

**Findings:**

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed they did learn and understand the importance of academic standards for assignments and coursework from the Foundations Seminar Program. The data indicated that the most positive responses came from the 2007 and 2008 survey; which has declined thereafter.

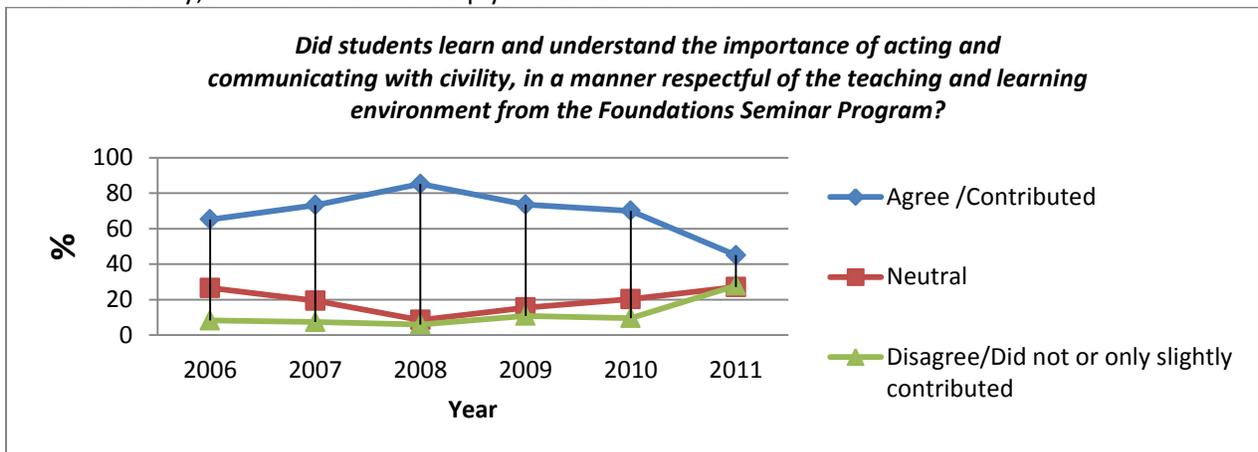


**Act and communicate with civility, in a manner respectful of the teaching and learning environment**

Did students learn and understand the importance of acting and communicating with civility, in a manner respectful of the teaching and learning environment from the Foundations Seminar Program?

**Findings:**

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed they did learn and understand the importance of acting and communicating with civility, in a manner respectful of the teaching and learning environment from the Foundations Seminar Program. The data indicated that the most positive responses came from the 2008 survey; which has rather sharply declined thereafter.



Focus group data suggested that in addition to learning procedural information (e.g., how to register for courses), social and academic topics such as safe-sex practices and conflict resolution were important.

Moderator: "So if they made [seminar] more uniform, what topics do you think would be good for them to cover? I know you mentioned safe-sex and stuff."

Participant: "Right. Definitely registration because we were all, like, freaking out."

(Sophomore, Secondary Education, Mathematics coordinate, transfer)

"I don't know, like, other freshmen; like, learning how to live with someone, was definitely – especially if they're, like – I mean there are some people that commute and I had a class with a lot of commuters so I guess that wouldn't be an appropriate topic for me, but I guess if they could split it in a different way where people that live [on-campus, then] they talk about living [situations] or just juggling spare time or just management skills."

(Sophomore, Secondary Education, Mathematics coordinate, transfer)

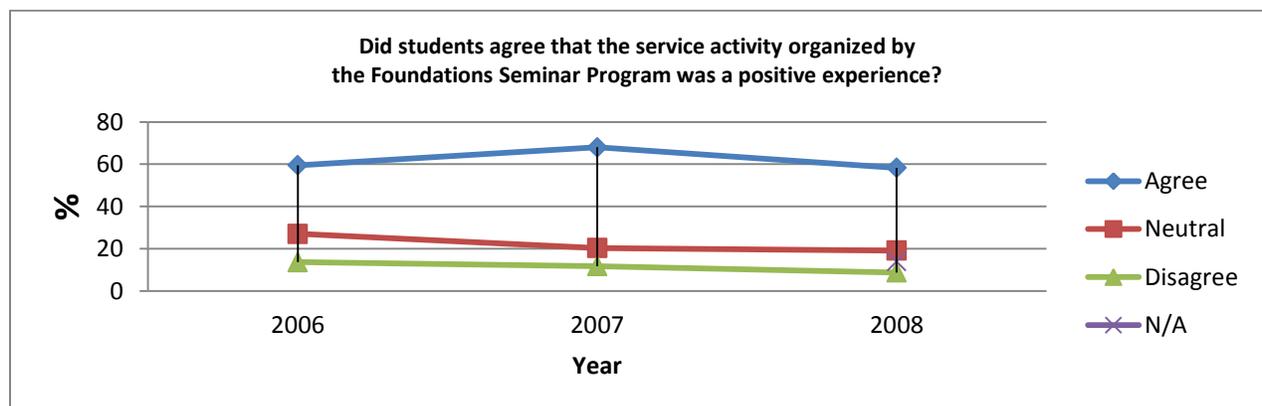
### **GOAL 6: Provide opportunities for community involvement.**

#### **Provide opportunities for community involvement**

Did students agree that the service activity organized by the Foundations Seminar Program was a positive experience?

#### **Findings:**

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed that they had a positive experience participating in the service activity through the Foundations Seminar. The data indicated the most positive responses came from the 2007 survey; which had declined slightly in 2008.



There is some evidence that the First-year Foundations Program is structured in a way that forces students to become involved. Sometimes, so much so that students want to be Peer Mentors.

"I'm totally, like, all for the Foundations Program ... If it'd fit into my schedule next semester, I was going to be a peer mentor ... because even though I didn't necessarily love all the stuff that I had to do for it, like, it forced you to get out and do things with, like, the projects and you had to, like, prove that you went to certain events and stuff. So it made you get out and do things."  
(First-year, Undeclared)

The focus group data for this goal demonstrated that students who did not have the opportunity to participate in the First-year Foundations Program expressed regret. In hindsight, these students believed that being a part of the Program would have facilitated opportunities to become involved much sooner.

“I do wish I was involved [in the Seminar] because I think it would have allowed me to get more involved faster.”

(Senior, Business)

“Looking back on it, I definitely think [seminar could have helped]. I remember at the time I was glad I didn't have to go to class [inaudible] so I was like happy I wasn't in it. But looking back on it, I think it probably would have presented more opportunities. Like, I would have learned about getting involved and learned about the different things on campus that you could get involved in that maybe you don't care so much about as a freshman but, like, later, you kind of wish you did.”

(Senior, Psychology)

“...at the time, you know my first year, I was, like, ‘Yes, some of my friends have to go and I don't have to go’ and it was awesome. But, I mean, looking back on it, you know I deal with the incoming freshmen now and stuff and I still communicate with a couple of them that are now sophomores and they said it was probably one of the most helpful programs. So if I had the chance to redo it, I probably would have followed through with the Foundations course.”

(Senior, Food and Nutrition)

In reference to their drawing: “... I wasn't able to, you know, get involved as much as I'd like to. [Field hockey] was a big time commitment. I loved it – don't get me wrong, you know. But, I wish I had time to get more involved with different things.”

(Senior, Food and Nutrition)

### **Seminar Schedule**

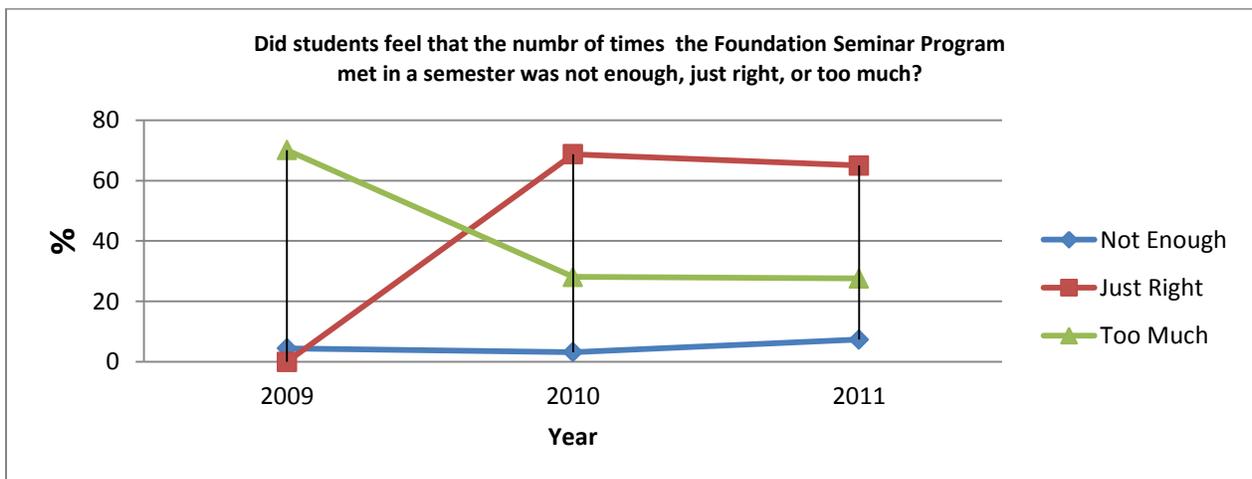
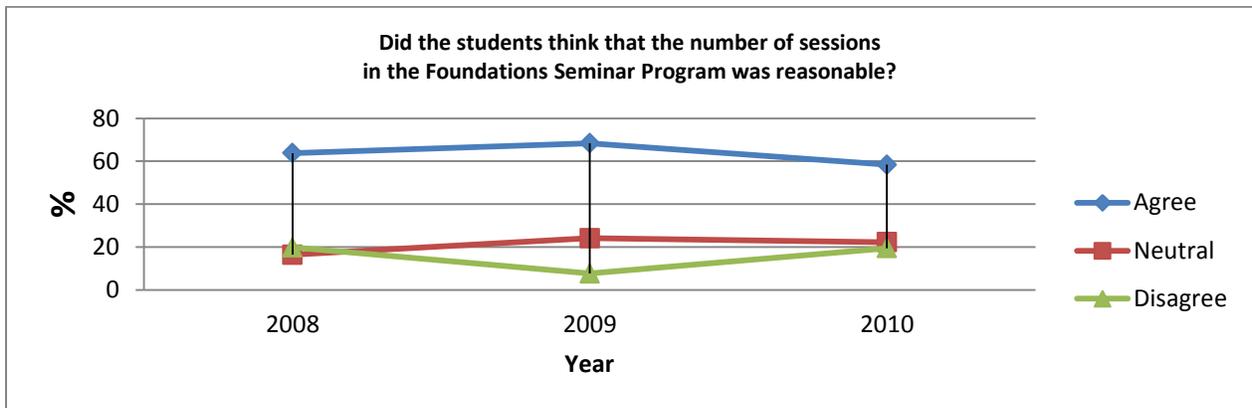
Did students approve of the time of day that the seminar was held and the number of sessions?

#### **Findings:**

Overall, students thought that the time slot and the number of sessions in the Foundations Seminar Program were appropriate.

From the 2007 student survey, 51.2% of respondents agreed that the time slot that the seminar was held was appropriate. 16.3% were neutral, and 32.6% disagreed.

In subsequent years, students reported mixed feelings regarding whether or not the Seminars met enough times in the semester. The data indicated that, since 2009, there has been an increase in positive responses which suggests that student's attitudes have changed regarding program expectations.

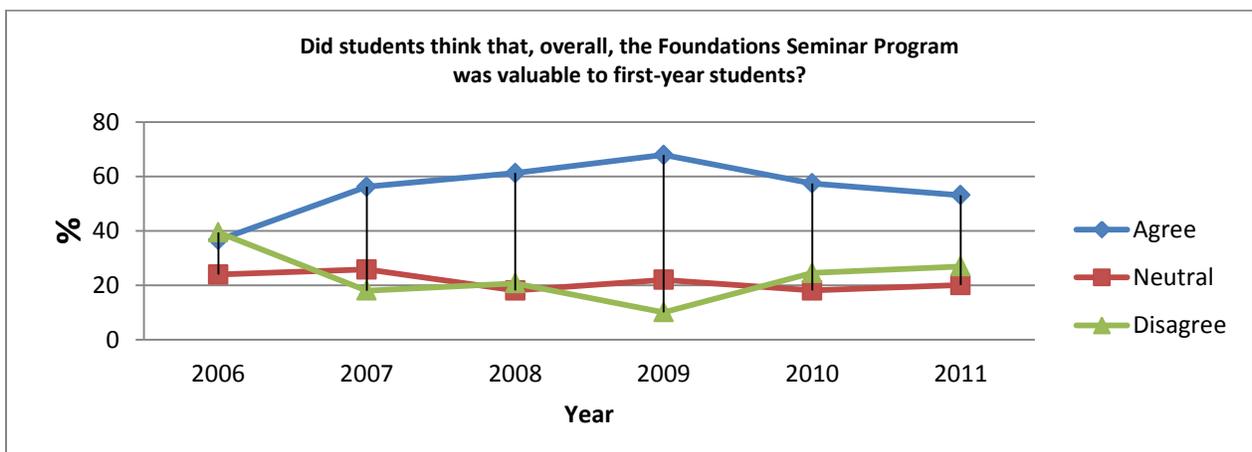


**Overall, what did students think?**

Did students think that, overall, the Foundations Seminar Program was valuable to first-year students?

**Findings:**

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed that the Foundations Seminar Program was valuable to first-year students. The data indicated the most positive responses came from the 2009 survey; which has steadily declined thereafter.



The focus groups conducted yielded some interesting feedback regarding the First-year Foundations Program. Students have noticed inconsistencies between courses and the topics covered in seminars. While some seminars seem to stay on topic with the issues that are appropriate to the goals set by the Foundations Programs, others seem to be so closely tied to the Foundations course that important topics are not discussed.

“I loved my seminar... Some things didn’t quite apply to me like the drugs and alcohol thing. Like I didn’t do any of that but I still sat through it anyway. I was enthusiastic about everything.”  
(First-year, Environmental Science)

“Okay, well, I hate to be the person that hates on things but everyone I have ever talked to that has done it and from my own personal experience, we all hated [seminar]. We thought it was the biggest waste of our time, ever. There were parts of it that I did like. Because we – I think the thing was that it wasn’t uniform; which kind of like made me slightly angry in the sense that my friends had, like, a different seminar class because it was linked with a different class. So they had a different professor or person that taught it. So they learned some things. I had another friend in another one, they talked about a different thing, and I talked about a different thing. So it was very like unclear as to what the goal was.

I know that they were, like, trying to help the freshmen transition but as for, like – ... my person who ran [seminar] was an English professor, and really, everything we did was English based. We had to write annotated bibliographies; and I’m, like, ‘how is this pertaining to my freshman experience?’ So that kind of, like, didn’t make sense to me.

And then my other friend actually had a class that made sense to me. Like, they learned about safe-sex and learned about this and learned about all that. Like, stuff that actually applied to college life. So, like, [she] and then another one [person] had different things. I think that they are going to change it; which I mean, like, that’s their thing, but I think registration was probably the biggest help that anybody, that all the freshmen want help with. So if they want to focus, it would be like registration, and like all that sort of stuff, it’s really the things we need to learn.

...the actual seminar thing – like, it kind of wasted our time because we’re, like, ‘why am I doing extra work when I already have, like, a [full-work load]?’ But it’s, like, why am I writing an annotated bibliography for no reason? Like, you know what I mean? So that part kind of sucks.”  
(Sophomore, Secondary Education, Mathematics coordinate, transfer student)

“What I heard [about the Foundations program] from a lot of people is, like, I just feel like it’s irrelevant. It’s kind of a waste of time. They have people go on scavenger hunts and stuff. That has nothing to do with real-life. I feel, like, the four years I have had here with the constant struggles with dealing with different offices like every student does, it gives you the experience for real-life but doing a treasure hunt isn’t going to help me with any career I want to do. And I feel, like, doing that just kind of keeps them at the high school pace and not thinking like all right I’m responsible for this. And, like, if they are going to do foundations courses for freshmen, teach them stuff that they need to know for the next four years; like, about registering and how to pick courses and how to make sure that you’re on track rather than the freshmen know nothing about it. I have had to help many freshmen since I have started here [to] register because they don’t know how to pick classes and sometimes they just listen to advisors who give them the wrong classes to take.”  
(Senior, Sociology)

## DISCUSSION

The analysis of data collected from the 2006-2011 student surveys indicate that students were, generally, satisfied with the First-year Foundations Program. However, in most cases, there are spikes in favorability that occur, usually, between the year 2008 and 2009 – with a steady to sharp decline towards 2011. In some cases this may be attributed to the variance in the language of the survey questions, which could be one potential cause for the sloping trends. One important emerging trend to note is that students are noticing inconsistencies between seminars.

### **Goal 1: Promote pedagogies best suited to the development of active learners.**

In general, students agree that the First-year Foundations Program fulfills this goal. However, all related diagrams indicated a decline in satisfaction over the last few years. The Goal 1 subgroups experiencing the most severe declines are the seminar's effect on learning writing as a process, how to constructively respond to feedback on assignments, and understanding the importance of class participation and group activities.

### **Goal 2: Promote the development of faculty, staff and administrators in the delivery of effective and developmentally sound information and resources relating to the overall success of first-year students.**

For the most part, students agree that the First-year Foundations Program fulfills this goal. Goal 2 subcategories (class registration, knowledge of the technological services on campus, and student's attitudes toward peer mentors and facilitators) suggest very positive attitudes toward the impact of the seminar. However, there are subcategory trend characteristics that warrant further investigation. For example, the decline in positive responses concerning whether or not the seminar has helped students choose majors, minors, general education classes, or electives should be further analyzed and examined.

One observation is that the survey items addressing this goal changed the language in the 2011 questionnaire. Specifically, the questions that once asked if the Seminar helped students understand *the importance of the decision making process* in selecting majors, minors, general education classes, and electives have changed. In 2011, the new questionnaire item asked whether or not the seminar *helped them select* majors, minors, general education courses, and electives. This may be the cause of the negative results from 2011 in that Goal 2 subcategory as perhaps the students needed the guidance but did not actually make the specific decisions at the Seminar. Also, some students had already selected a major and minor upon enrollment; which could also skew this data.

### **Goal 3: Promote development of academic skills that will allow first-year students to be successful learners inside and out of the classroom.**

Overall, students who participated in the Foundations Seminar Program agree that Goal 3 was successfully achieved. Students indicated that they gained an understanding of the value of multiple perspectives, cultures, and lifestyle and learned the value of self-reflection for personal and academic growth. Consistent with many of the other trends though, the data seem to indicate declining positive response rates towards the year 2011.

### **Goal 4: Encourage student involvement in activities leading to meaningful social connections.**

Students who participated in the Foundations Seminar program largely attribute their knowledge of student activities to their peer mentors. These data have remained relatively consistent throughout the past six years, hovering at around 80% in agreement. It would appear that Peer Mentors are an important resource for student involvement on campus.

**Goal 5: Help first-year students adjust to the academic and social expectations and responsibilities of life at Framingham State College.**

The data confirmed that, for the most part, Goal 5 objectives [Demonstrate academic standards for assignments and coursework and expectations regarding how to act and communicate with civility, in a manner respectful of the teaching and learning environment] are being successfully delivered to the students who participate in the First-year Foundations Program. Consistent with many of the other trends in this study, there has been decline in positive responses between the years 2008, where levels of satisfaction peaks towards 2011; where a decline can then be observed.

**Goal 6: Provide opportunities for community involvement.**

Most students agree that the service activity organized by the First-year Foundations Program was a positive experience.

## UNDECLARED MAJORS

### INTRODUCTION

It has been acknowledged that students who enroll Framingham State University as undeclared majors may have different experiences than declared students. As a result, focus groups with students who had declared majors and those who did not were separated. This section provides a preliminary analysis of the responses from students who were undeclared at the time of data collection.

Some of the focus group data from undeclared majors demonstrate that there seems to be an underlying assumption that being an undeclared major may create a negative perception:

Moderator: "How do you feel being undeclared at the moment?"

Participant: "I feel like I don't know what I want to be. That's why I kind of want to pick it but I don't want to pick it right away and then, like I said after high school, like drop it in the week. I feel like it is not bad being undeclared I just feel that you like a lot of things basically. And I like everything from business and everything else. So you know that it is okay to be undeclared for any upcoming freshmen and things like that. So it is kind of like cool because it is kind of adventurous and you can do whatever you want and be more like I kind of like this and I kind of like that then you put it together."

(First-year, Undeclared)

Other students felt more comfortable about being an undeclared major when they realized that there were others in their same situation and in fact provided an opportunity to create friendships:

"[What I remember most about orientation is] ... how many people were, like, still undecided because I felt I was the only person facing this. And also how much people I actually got to meet them and, like, "Oh yeah, we have no major too; and made friends with them."

(First-year, Undeclared)

One student alluded to the seemingly random assignment of classes as a result of being undeclared and their overall dissatisfaction with their first-year experience. It is important to note that this participant did not enroll in Seminar.

In reference to their drawing about the first-year: "... I didn't like any of my classes because I came in undeclared so they just like gave me a bunch of random classes ... And I was always thinking [of] when I could go home and I didn't really have any friends."

(Senior, Business)

**GOAL 1: *Promote pedagogies best suited to the development of active learners.***

### **Organizational Planning and Time Management**

Did students learn and/or have a better understanding of organizational, planning, and time management skills through participation in the Foundations Seminar Program (2011; Undeclared majors only)?

Findings:

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed that they successfully learned and/or had a better understanding of organizational, planning, and time management skills by result of participation in the Foundations Seminar Program.

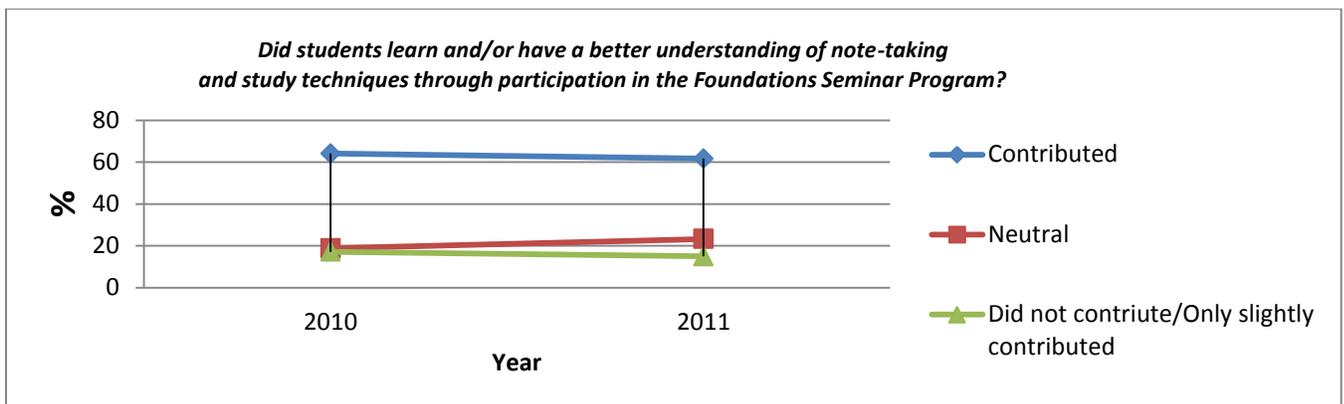
	<u>Agree/Contribute</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree/Did not or Only slightly contributed</u>
2011	64.4%	22.0%	13.6%

**Note-taking, study techniques, test preparation and test-taking**

Did students learn and/or have a better understanding of note-taking and study techniques through participation in the Foundations Seminar Program?

Findings:

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed they successfully learned and/or have a better understanding of note-taking, study techniques and test preparation by result of participation in the Foundations Seminar Program.

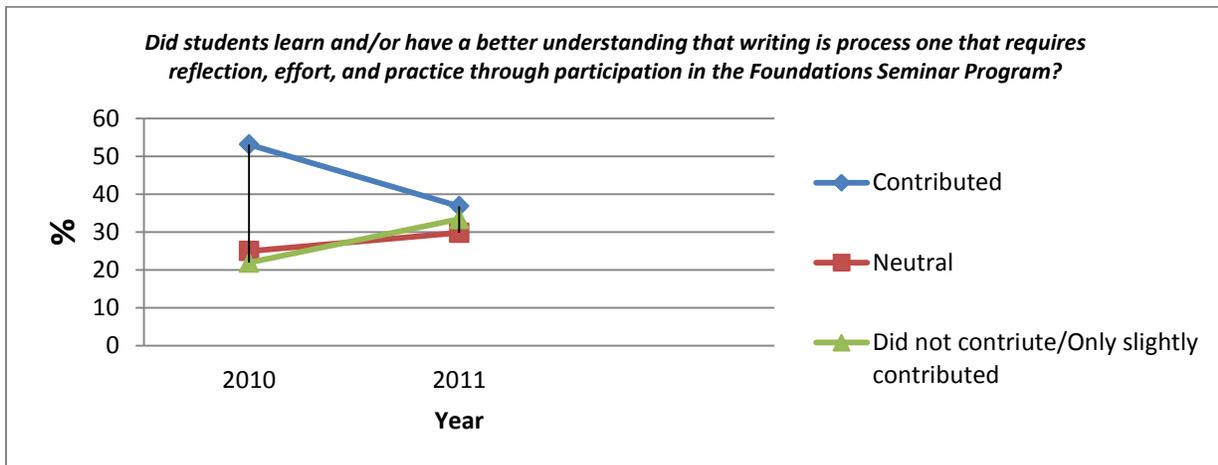


**Writing as a Process**

Did students learn and/or have a better understanding that writing is process one that requires reflection, effort, and practice through participation in the Foundations Seminar Program (2010 -2011; Undeclared majors only)?

Findings:

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed they did learn that writing is process one that requires reflection, effort, and practice by result of participation in the Foundations Seminar Program. However, the data indicated a decline in positive responses between the year 2010 and 2011.

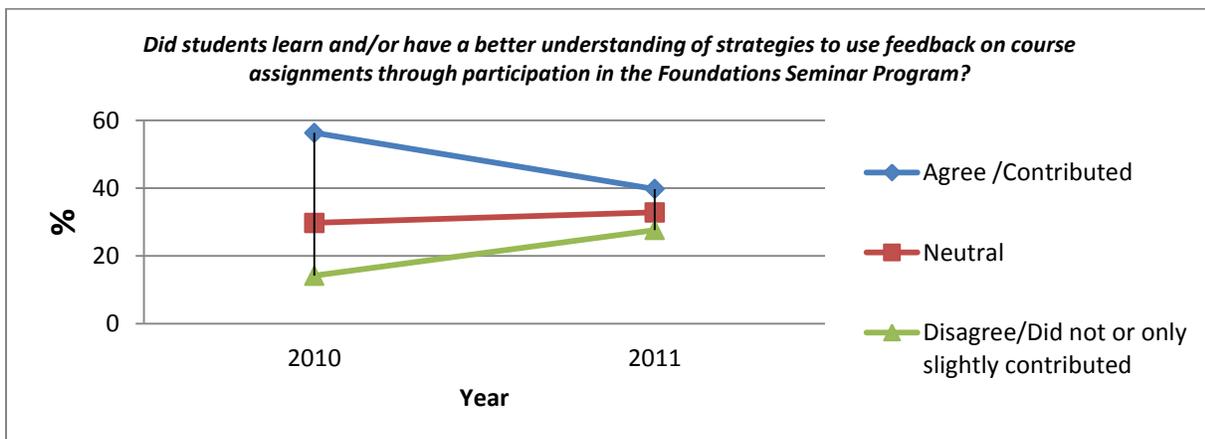


### **Responding to Feedback on Assignments**

Did students learn and/or have a better understanding of strategies to use feedback on course assignments through participation in the Foundations Seminar Program (2010 -2011; Undeclared majors only)?

#### **Findings:**

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed they did learn that strategies to constructively use feedback on course assignments from the Foundations Seminar Program. The data indicate a decline since 2010.

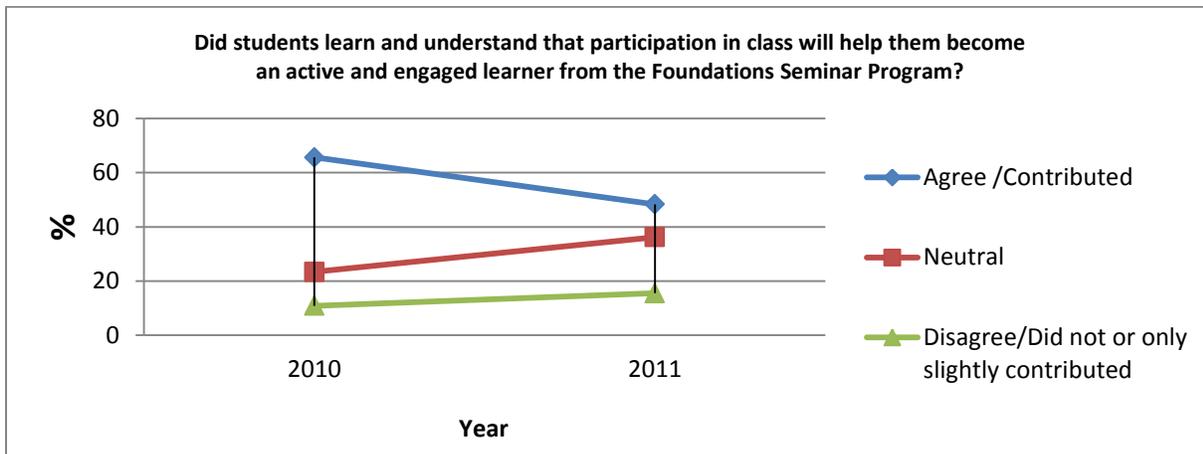


### **Participating in Class Discussions and Group Activities**

Did students learn and understand that participation in class will help them become an active and engaged learner from the Foundations Seminar Program (2010 -2011; Undeclared majors only)?

#### **Findings:**

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed they did learn that participation in class will help them become an active and engaged learner from the Foundations Seminar Program. The data indicated that the most positive responses came from the 2010 survey.



**GOAL 2: Promote the development of faculty, staff and administrators in the delivery of effective and developmentally sound information and resources relating to the overall success of first-year students.**

**Registering for Class**

Did students agree their understanding of advising and course registration increased as a result of participation in the Foundations Seminar Program (2011; Undeclared majors only)?

	<u>Agree/Contribute</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree/Did not or Only slightly contributed</u>
2011	82.45%	13.3%	4.2%

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed that they had a better understanding of advising and course registration from the Foundations Seminar Program.

**Identifying the purpose of general education, a major, a minor, and electives**

Did students agree that the Foundations Program Seminar was helpful in selecting majors, minors, general education classes, and electives (2010; Undeclared majors only)?

**Findings:**

Overall, most students believed that that the Foundations Seminar Program was helpful in demonstrating the importance of the decision making process, however, not in the actual selection process.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
2010	48.78%	35.93%	15.33%

Did students agree that Foundations Seminar Program helped them select majors, minors, and electives (2011; Undeclared majors only)?

Findings:

Overall, students disagreed that the Foundations Seminar Program helped them select a major, minor, or electives.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
2011	10.3%	31.43%	58.27%

**Knowledge of campus resources, policies, and procedures**

Did students agree that the Foundations Seminar Program exposed them to important resources and locations on campus (2011; Undeclared majors only)?

Findings:

Overall, most students learned about important resources and locations on campus through participation in the Foundations Seminar Program.

	<u>Knew about this before FSP</u>	<u>Learned about this from FSP</u>	<u>Don't remember where learned/ Did not know about this</u>
2011	29.85%	44.45%	25.65%

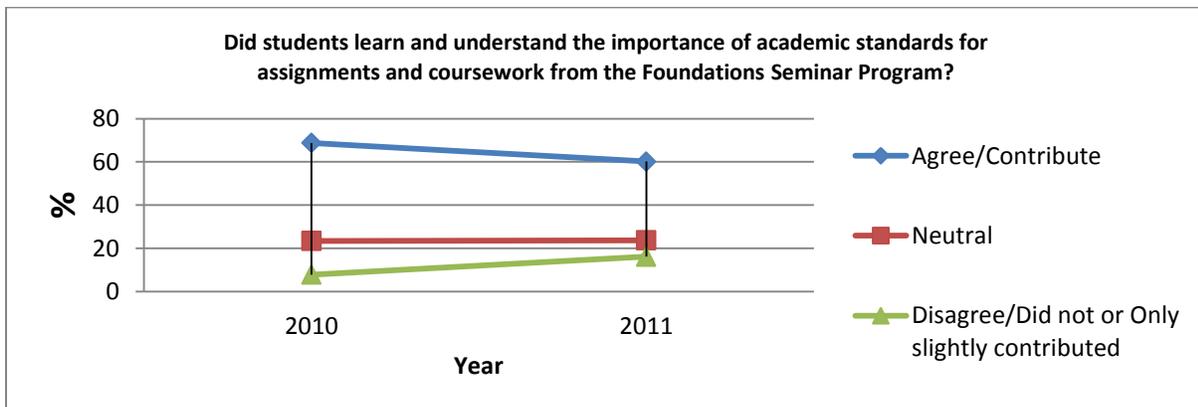
**GOAL 5: *Help first-year students adjust to the academic and social expectations and responsibilities of life at Framingham State College.***

**Demonstrate academic standards for assignments and coursework**

Did students learn and understand the importance of academic standards for assignments and coursework from the Foundations Seminar Program (2010 -2011; Undeclared majors only)?

Findings:

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed they did learn and understand the importance of academic standards for assignments and coursework from the Foundations Seminar Program.

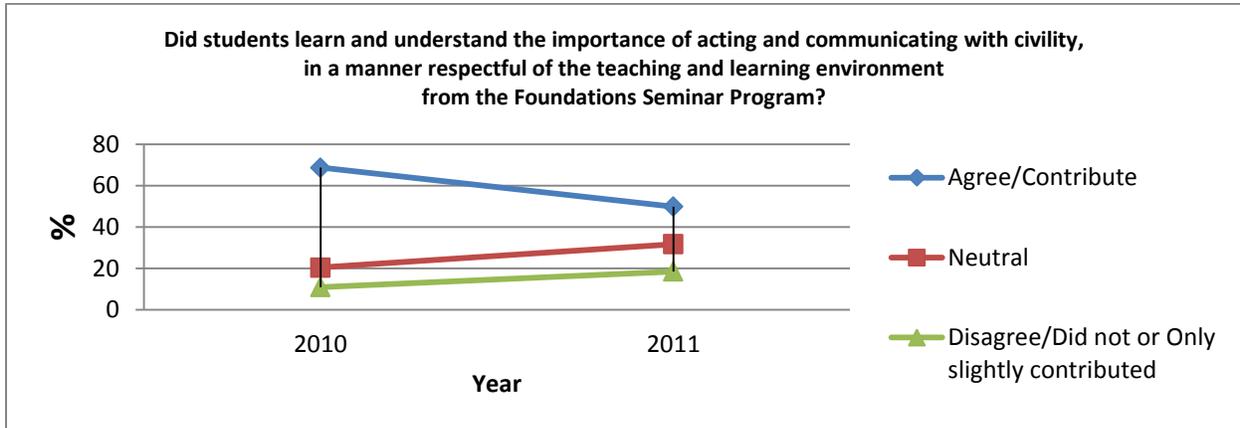


**Act and communicate with civility, in a manner respectful of the teaching and learning environment**

Did students learn and understand the importance of acting and communicating with civility, in a manner respectful of the teaching and learning environment from the Foundations Seminar Program (2010 -2011; Undeclared majors only)?

Findings:

Overall, the majority of participating students agreed they did learn and understand the importance of acting and communicating with civility, in a manner respectful of the teaching and learning environment from the Foundations Seminar Program.



## BLACK AND GOLD BEGINNINGS

This preliminary analysis is based solely on focus group data; which suggests that the goals of Black and Gold Beginnings are being met.

**GOAL 1: *First-year students will start the semester more engaged and provide much needed social interaction.***

**Objective 1: Students will start the semester more engaged.**

In reference to their drawing: “I was thinking that my goal was to be [a Black and Gold tour guide] later on – like senior year or something because now I will know more; and I will be able to help freshman who – that was, like, me – so I know how they are feeling – so I hope that I will be able to do that.”

(First-year, Elementary Education, Psychology coordinate)

“I think that when it comes to, like, the transition and Black and Gold Beginnings, I feel like a lot of the freshmen don’t feel very involved if they don’t go to every single Black and Gold event. I know a lot of the freshmen my year and a lot of the freshmen since I’ve been here, like, they kind of feel, like, if they don’t go on the wet feet retreat they feel, like, they don’t know everybody and got kind of separated. I feel like if I participated in all of the stuff like the wet feet retreat, and a cruise I think in Boston or something, it would have definitely affected me being here... I have applied to work at Black and Gold and I never got it; and I felt like it was because I didn’t have that connection with certain people that other people who did all the events had; because connections definitely get you somewhere at this place.”

(Senior, Sociology)

**Objective 2: Students will be socially interactive.**

“I’m so glad I did [the Boston Harbor Cruise]. And something else but I forgot was... I am so glad I did those. I am so glad they had those. I vowed to myself that if anyone else asked if I was happy I did [Black and Gold Beginnings] I would tell them that I was very happy because I met my other best friend at the Paw Sox game.”

(Sophomore, Secondary Education, Mathematics coordinate, transfer)

“I met, like, a really broad like, amount of people which was really nice. And I thank it all to the Black and Gold things. So that was, like, great.”

(Sophomore, Secondary Education, Mathematics coordinate, transfer)

“...it would have been a lot harder to meet people if we were thrown in with everyone at once like the sophomores and the juniors and the upperclassmen. Cause we wouldn’t really know, like, who to talk to because everyone would already have their friends who were upper classmen.”

(First-year, Psychology)

“You get to meet other people like you who don’t know what they are doing yet.”

(First-year, Environmental Science)

**GOAL 2: Students would have an opportunity to establish campus connections with faculty and staff and gain valuable knowledge of resources prior to classes starting.**

**Objective 1: Students will have an opportunity to establish campus connections with faculty and staff**

“And I could ask [faculty members] questions and I have gotten, like, really close with the department because of that. Like, how I actually met one of my professors [at Black and Gold] so when I had him in class I was, like, “Hey, I know you” and, like, it was really good. I’ve gone to a math conference with them and we have, like, a really nice relationship; which is something that I, like, really wanted. I wanted a close, like, “Oh, hey, I can go to you with my questions.””  
(Sophomore, Secondary Education, Mathematics coordinate, transfer)

“[Black and Gold Beginnings] is the key reason why I am so comfortable and running around everywhere and doing everything. [It] just made me feel at home.”  
(First-year, Environmental Science)

“Black and Gold Beginnings was one of the main reasons I absolutely adore this school ... I think it’s perfect for acclimating students here instead of just throwing them into the mix, like, ‘Here, fend for yourself.’”  
(First-year, Environmental Science)

**Objective 2: Gain valuable knowledge of resources prior to classes starting.**

Mod: “Did [Black and Gold Beginnings] provide you with any resources that you thought were really helpful?”

Participant: “Well, I know that some of the, like, Black and Gold leaders that I knew, like, if I had a problem then I can go and ask them. And I think there were a few things where I was, like, ‘Where is that?’ and I, like, Facebooked them and like they helped me out and I’m friends with some of them now so, like, I don’t know if I would necessarily say resources? But, like, they helped me out.”

(First-year, Undeclared)

“...what I did during Black and Gold Beginnings when I was here and everyone wasn’t, my friends and I went around with our schedules and we found all of our classes.”

(First-year, Undeclared)

## Black and Gold on Academics

Mod: "Did [Black and Gold Beginnings] help you academically?"

Participant: "I'm probably going to say no to that one."

(First-year, Undeclared)

"For me, it was definitely Black and Gold Beginnings and Peer Mentor ... Orientation really didn't do too much. It's like a day where you are kind of just like 'Oh, here are your classes.'"

(First-year, Environmental Science)

"I would say Black and Gold Beginnings would be the most beneficial to me."

(First-year, Psychology)

"I wish I would have done the Black and Gold Beginnings."

(Senior, Business)

Moderator: "Why didn't you attend Black and Gold Beginnings?"

Participant: "I didn't really feel it was necessary for me to do it and I already had friends coming into [Framingham State University] and so I felt like I didn't really have to meet friends and I always meet friends in classes anyways so I ... wasn't interested."

Moderator: "How was your first semester at Framingham State University?"

Participant: "Stressful."

Moderator: "... any reasons why? Professors? Classes?"

Participant: "... just getting used to the whole scheduling thing. First of all, like, knowing the way around the campus. Whether to decide if I should go home like on my few hours of break or just stay here because I don't live here and like just the classes, some of them were hard. Some professors were, like, hard because the way their teaching style was. Like, I had a bio lecture and it was a nice, big, huge lecture hall and she would just talk and talk and talk and talk and I just felt lost because I like smaller classrooms."

...

Moderator: "How has your spring semester been going?"

Participant: "I think it is better than the first one because now I am more into it and I know how to, like, manage stuff more. But it's still stressful, it's still a lot."

...

Moderator: "Do you attribute any of your success to orientation, Black & Gold Beginnings, and/or the Foundations program?"

Participant: "To be honest, not really. ...they did give us some study tips, but not really. I just feel, like, in order to do well in classes you have to do like studying, do your homework on your own, but if you do need help they say tell us to go to CASA or something like that for help so they do help there, but I never went there so that didn't really pertain to me."

(First-year, Elementary Education, Psychology coordinate)