



# The Undergraduate Education Office and First-Year Offerings

*Custom Research Brief*

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## I. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY (CONT.)

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<b>A Guide to the Institutions Profiled in this Brief</b>				
<b>Institution</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Campus Setting</b>	<b>Carnegie Classification</b>	<b>Approximate Total Enrollment (Fall 2009)</b>
<b>University A</b>	Pacific West	City: Large	Research Universities (high research activity)	28,000
<b>University B</b>	Pacific West	City: Large	Research Universities (very high research activity)	19,000
<b>University C</b>	Mid-Atlantic	Suburb: Large	Research Universities (high research activity)	13,000
<b>University D</b>	South	Suburb: Large	Research Universities (very high research activity)	29,000
<b>University E</b>	Pacific West	City: Midsize	Research Universities (very high research activity)	22,000

*Source: National Center for Education Statistics*

## II. EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

### Key Observations:

- **Offices of undergraduate education across contact institutions typically oversee academic counseling, honors programs, select scholarships, and assist with the coordination of undergraduate curricula.** The offices are typically responsible for student success across the entire instittss-3(y p).( )33(po)1[.]JTJETBT1 0 0 1 126.02 654.82 Tm



# III. OFFICE STRUCTURES AND R

## **IV. COORDINATING LOWER DIVISION OFFERINGS**

### **Committee and Departmental Authority**

At most contact institutions, the authority for decisions regarding lower division offerings rests with the appropriate faculty or university committees rather than with the office of undergraduate education. The vice provost or dean for undergraduate education is typically responsible for determining whether or not and prerequisites for majors. This role allows for a broad perspective of undergraduate offerings and encourages collaboration among academic units.

### **Approving General Education Courses**

Although committees at several contact institutions are responsible for overseeing and approving general education curriculum, the development of individual courses is typically conducted at the departmental level. In most cases, general education approval consists of two steps:

- Instructors must seek approval from their department chair or dean before submitting a course for approval within the general education curriculum.
- Instructors must identify and explain to the general education committee

## IV. COORDINATING LOWER DIVISION OFFERINGS (CONT.)

### Select Institutional Profiles

As part of the University Studies general education program at **University A**, the Freshman Inquiry -year studies into themes which fulfill four goals: inquiry and critical thinking, communication, the diversity of human experience, and ethics and social responsibility. For the 2011-2012 academic year, students may choose from nine different themes:

FRINQ Themes for 2011-2012		
Design & Society	Globalization	Human/Nature
Life Unlimited?	Institution City	Race and Social Justice
Sustainability	Ways of Knowing	The Work of Art

All entering first-year students, with the exception of honors and Liberal Studies students, are required to enroll in a FRINQ course theme. Each course group, which consists of no more than 36 students, meets four times per week; two sessions are led by a member of the faculty team assigned to the theme, and two



## **IV. CuV**

## **IV. COORDINATING LOWER DIVISION OFFERINGS (CONT.)**

Although institutional efforts to create general education requirements that are easy to understand can benefit students and the faculty, contacts at **University E** report that oversimplification can create a known as Pathways, consisted of six different themes (e.g., Human Nature Pathway, Exploring Culture Pathway, Law, Science Culture Pathway). Students were expected to take specific courses outlined in

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