



First Year Experience Case for Change

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Case for Change – Data Highlights

RETENTION

York's 1st year retention rate in 2011:

- 76.7% (domestic) - **23.3% left**
- 72.9% (international) - **27.1% left**

York is **13th out of 19** Ontario institutions:

- U of T ranked 4th
- Ryerson ranked 12th

Queen's University	94.50%
Western » Main Campus	92.80%
University of Guelph	92.10%
Toronto » All Campuses	91.20%
University of Waterloo	90.80%
OCAD University	89.10%
McMaster University	88.70%
Wilfrid Laurier University	88.00%
Brock University	87.90%
Carleton University	87.30%
University of Ottawa	86.40%
Ryerson University	85.80%
York University	85.70%
University of Windsor	84.60%
Trent University	84.10%
Lakehead University	83.90%
Laurentian University	82.70%
Nipissing University	80.30%
UOIT	77.20%

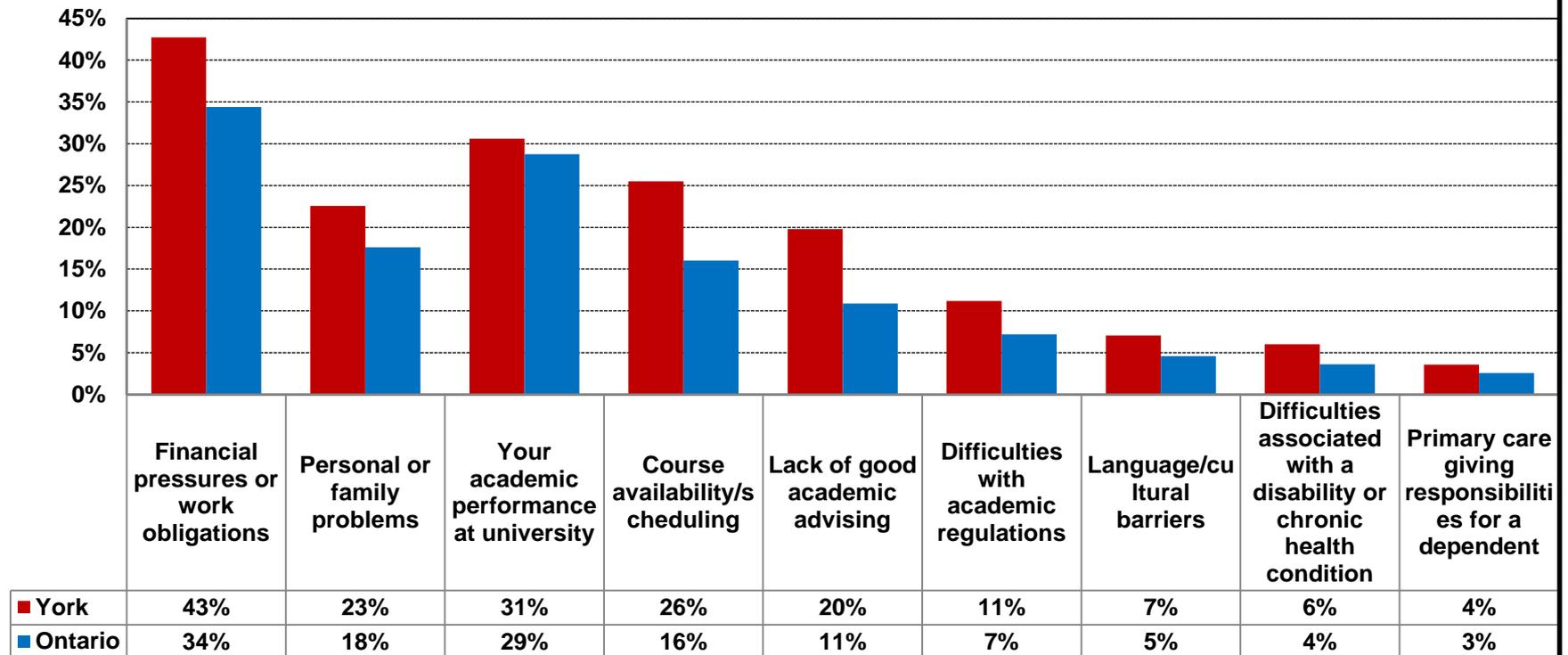
83% of all courses wherein more than 100 students dropped out, failed, or achieved a grade of D or less were 1000-level courses

16 of the 32 courses where 50% or more of the final grades were a D+ or less were first year offerings

Case for Change – Data Highlights

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (NSSE;2011)

Which one of the following factors poses, or has posed, the biggest obstacle to your academic progress?



What constitutes a *high-risk experience* @ York U?

- Student experiences a **confusion**, overwhelming ‘blizzard’ of uncoordinated information prior to arriving on campus.
- Student does not attend **orientation** activities or feels **isolated/lost** even after attending orientation events.
- Student does not get into program of choice, accepts a ‘**switch**’ offer.
- Specific academic expectations within a course are not communicated effectively to the student, or understood.
- **Early feedback** regarding performance relative to course expectations is not provided to student, or understood.
- **Course content** is not linked to real-world issues and interests of students; student does not understand what their potential is as someone spending time and energy in the course.
- Student is enrolled in one or more **high-risk courses** (courses with over 30% DWF).
- Student is **confused** about how to access **advising** and support resources/services, or help is not readily available.

What attributes describe a *high-risk student* @ York U?

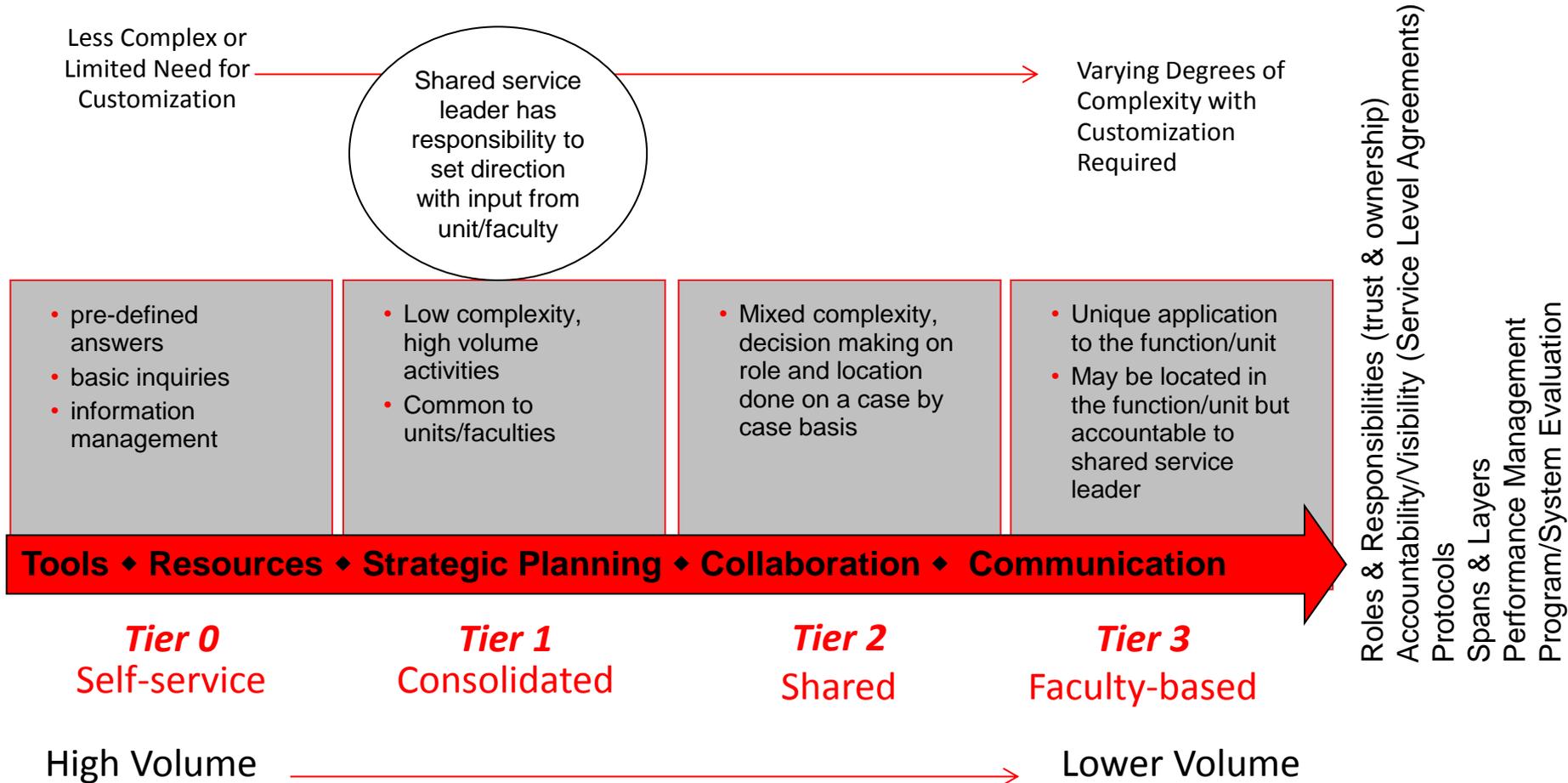
- Student does not hold **realistic expectations** about what university will demand of them (academically, financially).
- Student does not hold **necessary skills** for university academics.
- Student feels that studies at York **do not relate** clearly to personal interests, life aspirations, career goals.
- Student feels **isolated** from or pulled away from university communities.
- Student is unwilling to speak up or does not know how to access **required assistance**.
- Student does not understand ethical and social **expectations** of university life.

First-Year Experience

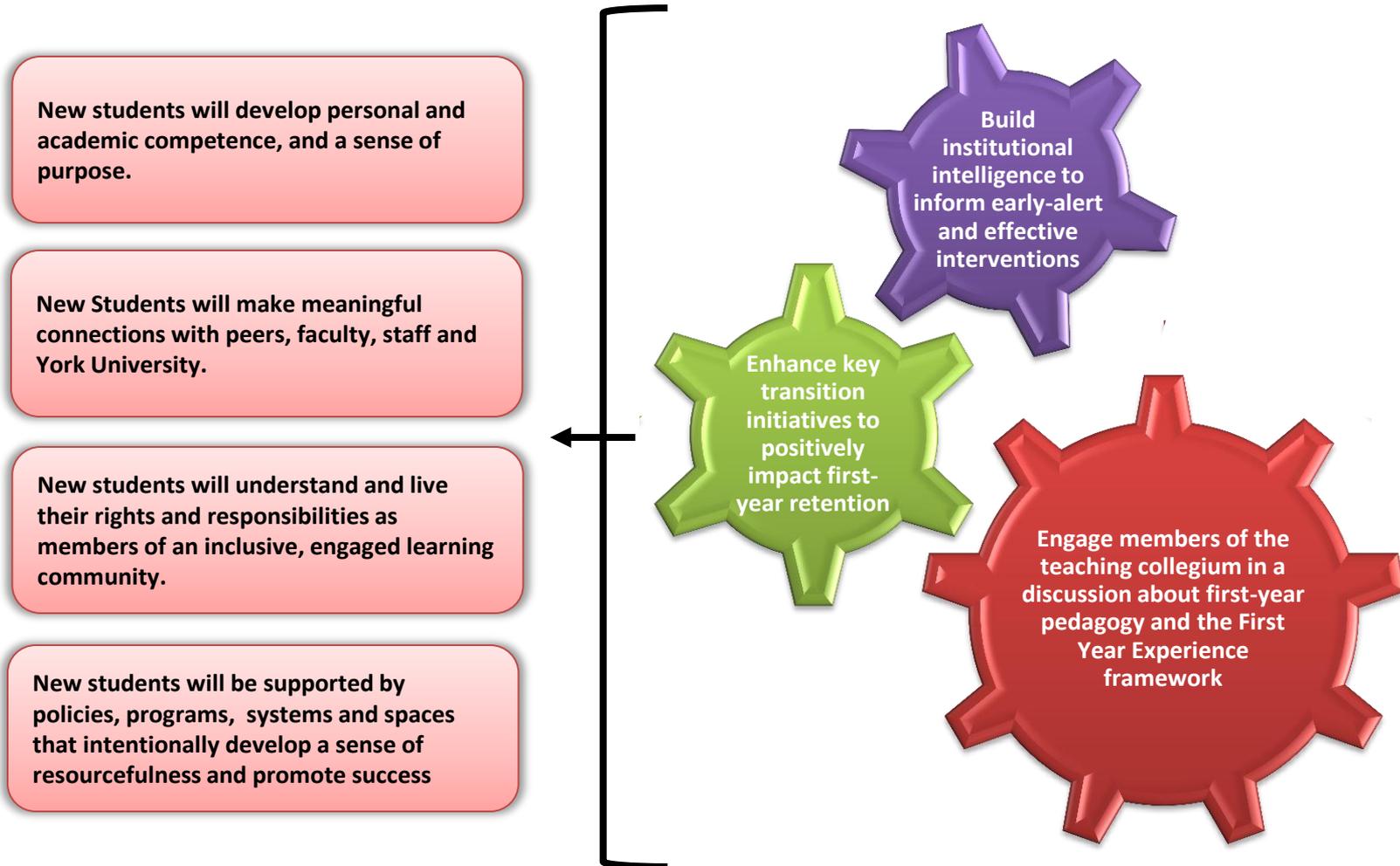
Our Vision for 2018

- York is well-recognized for delivering a **comprehensive, coordinated, high-quality experience to new students**.
- The University's **First Year Experience Framework** **fosters engagement, academic success, and personal development** through a combination of **well-coordinated and accessible academic and co-curricular programming**.
- It is **theoretically-informed**, and **evidence-based**.
- York is committed to fostering new student success by focusing purposefully on five areas of need or 'senses of success' (Lizzio, 2006): (i) sense of **capability**; (ii) sense of **connectedness**; (iii) sense of **purpose**; (iv) sense of **resourcefulness**; and, (v) sense of **academic culture**.
- The York FYE Framework is predicated on a **shared-service model**.
- York's innovative, integrated approach to the first-year **enhances the institution's reputation** and the related retention benefits **bolster our enrolment outcomes**.

Shared Service Model: increasing effectiveness, efficiency, quality & accountability



Framework & Recommendations



First-Year Experience Framework - Strategic Goals & Objectives

New students will develop personal and academic competence, and a sense of purpose.

- Ensure that students are clear about what will be expected of them academically.
- Reinforce that students share accountability for their own learning and development.
- Invest in accessible learning resources that are theoretically-informed and evidence-based.
- Build teaching resources for full- and part-time faculty, and Teaching Assistants.
- Provide career and academic advising that promotes reflection and builds a sense of purpose.
- Offer programs that foster practical competence and physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.

New Students will make meaningful connections with peers, faculty, staff and York University.

- Deliver effective, well-coordinated orientation programming for new students.
- Build resources to equip parents and supporters to be effective champions for students throughout the first year.
- Expand the recruitment, training and deployment of peer leaders.
- Encourage awareness and involvement in co-curricular experiences.
- Facilitate opportunities for faculty, Academic Advisors, other staff and peers to connect with new students in and outside the classroom.

New students will understand and live their rights and responsibilities as members of an inclusive, engaged learning community.

- Facilitate opportunities for students to positively engage with York's mission and values.
- Educate students about their rights, responsibilities and York's behavioral expectations.
- Foster opportunities for students to have a meaningful voice in policy development, implementation and enforcement.
- Hold all members of the York learning community accountable for their choices and behaviours.
- Provide opportunities for students to understand and honour differences.

New students will be supported by policies, programs, systems and spaces that intentionally develop a sense of resourcefulness and promote success.

- Implement an early-alert system to identify students who indicate adjustment/transition difficulties.
- Ensure York's scheduling and enrolment systems support student success.
- Develop a theoretically-informed and evidence-based intervention and recovery framework.
- Build awareness of, and facilitate effective referrals to, campus resources.
- Provide physical and virtual spaces that embolden self-directed learning and promote a sense of place.

Testing the first year experience framework and theoretical underpinnings with York University's risk factors ...

First Year Experience Framework	Lizzio's Five Senses	Risk Factors: a student is more at risk if he or she ...
New students will develop personal and academic competence, and a sense of purpose.	Capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not hold realistic expectations about what university will demand of them (academically, financially). does not hold the necessary skills for university academics.
	Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> feels that studies at York do not relate clearly to personal interests, life aspirations, career goals.
New students will make meaningful connections with peers, faculty, staff, and York University.	Connectedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> feels isolated from or pulled away from the university's communities.
New students will be supported by policies, programs, systems and spaces that intentionally develop a sense of resourcefulness and promote success.	Resourcefulness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is unwilling to access, or is unaware of how to access, required assistance.
New students will understand and live their rights and responsibilities as members of an inclusive, engaged learning community.	Academic Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not understand ethical and social expectations of university life.

Recommendations

Build institutional intelligence to inform early-alert and effective interventions:

- a) Identify and source a technical 'backbone' to collect information across the student lifecycle that will facilitate heightened SEM intelligence, identify students at-risk, facilitate early-alerts, and foster student engagement.
- b) Inventory and broadly communicate what data is available at the institutional, Faculty and programmatic level.
- c) To inform current and future 'recovery' programs, repeat the 'Leavers Study' annually for all students who voluntarily depart after their first year of study at York University; develop an "Involuntary Withdrawal" survey to serve the same purpose.
- d) Conduct a thorough evaluation of SPARK, the Library's virtual learning commons to assess impact and to identify opportunities to further leverage it as an intervention tool.
- e) Foster capacity for assessment and evaluation of First-Year Experience initiatives through professional development and the use of evaluative criteria.
- f) Study program switches and undeclared majors to inform admission practices and interventions.
- g) Critically examine York's current approach to resourcing and delivering writing support, particularly for learners who self-identify as 'ESL'.
- h) Create a First-Year Experience Advisory Group comprised of faculty, staff and students to guide the implementation and assessment of the FYE framework.

Enhance key transition initiatives to positively impact first-year retention:

- a) Expand YU Start to include all direct entry/101 FW14 admits.
- b) Sponsor coordinated (academic & social) orientation weeks (Fall and Winter terms) for all 101 and 105 FW admits; ensure programming is built on the Lizzio Model and includes early exposure to career services.
- c) Expand the 'PASS' (Peer Assisted Student Success) program across the Colleges to increase support for learners in high-attrition courses.
- d) Advance key PRASE Academic Advising Working Group recommendations, including: (i) the development and launch of a 'live', on-line academic calendar; (ii) the development and delivery of a competency based training program for staff who do academic advising; and, (iii) the investigation and pursuit of technical solutions to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, quality and accountability of academic advising at York.
- e) Inventory academic literacy and learning skill supports; develop roadmaps and communication strategies to promote self-responsibility and facilitate effective referrals.
- f) Explore different models of enrolment that increase retention – through course accessibility and improved student satisfaction – and the alignment of supplementary policies and procedures.

Engage members of the teaching collegium in a discussion about first-year pedagogy and the First Year Experience framework.

- a) Host a "Summit" on the First-Year Experience to promote discussion and debate about the first-year experience amongst members of the teaching collegium.
- b) Create a 'FYE Innovation Fund' to advance teaching and learning in the first year of study.
- c) Advance the development of SPARK's faculty support module.
- d) Engage first-year Course Directors from across the campus (full- and part-time) to pilot embedding the First-Year Experience Framework in their curriculum and measure outcomes.