FIRST-YEAR INTEREST GROUPS

Learning communities for first-year (freshman & transfer) students

FIGs are centered around GEN ST 199, a two-credit seminar taught by an upperclass student called a FIG Leader. Students can pick from a variety of FIGs that may or may not include 2–3 other courses. Students find FIGs valuable in making friends and learning about campus resources.

In 2016, 155 FIGs were offered, enrolling 48% of the freshman class (3,104 students).

“It was a such a friendly way to start my college life.”
—2016 FIG Student

GEN ST 199 COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Mapping Your UW Experience
Identify potential majors, plan course sequences for them, attend a related campus activity, write and reflect.

Projecting Forward
Connect with a UW alumnus or other individual who is currently working or has worked in a career you want to learn more about.

CoRe: Seattle Communities and Research
Explore a Seattle neighborhood and use UW Library resources to research issues of population health that affect residents in the area. Topics may include: affordable housing, business and industry, development and changing demographics, homelessness and homeless encampments, minority/ethnic populations and their culture, public art, public parks and green spaces, transportation and urban planning.

Second-year re-enrollment rates
Non-FIGs: 90.9%
FIGs: 94.1%

Six-year graduation rates
Non-FIGs: 75%
FIGs: 81.5%

“Having to complete these projects gave me a more concrete sense of what I want to accomplish in the coming few years”
—2016 FIG Student

In its 30-year history, the FIG program has enrolled over 70,000 students.

FIG Leaders are upperclass students who have a passion for supporting the transition of first-year students.

FIG leaders have a wide variety of majors, representing nine different colleges/schools on campus, with the most popular majors being Biology, Business Administration, Communication, Informatics and Public Health.

“I loved being able to help students adapt to their first year at UW in the best way possible.”
—2017 FIG Leader

Students who enroll in a FIG return for their second year and graduate at higher rates than other students


While FIG enrollment significantly increased the re-enrollment and graduation percentages for all under-represented students, the highest gains were seen among Hispanic students with a nearly 6% increase in second year re-enrollment and a 8% increase in graduation rates.

“I enjoyed seeing familiar faces in my 400-person lectures.” —2016 FIG Student