

BGNEWS

Letters to the Editor

August 24, 2007

No, BGeX can't help with retention all by itself

Brian Kutzley's Aug. 21 column, "BGeX is useful, but freshmen need more to keep them here," is right on target.

While BGeXperience may be the most prominent program involving incoming students, it is hardly the only one. Retention is a concern for all University programs, but it is misleading to suggest that it is a primary function or goal of BGeX, even though it's to the entire University community.

The BGeX Introduction weekend is designed to ease the transition to college for incoming freshmen, but also to begin the sometimes difficult process of developing their capacity to think critically about values. Through its first-year "V" courses, BGeX makes critical thinking about values in a wide range of subjects available to incoming students.

I readily concur with Kutzley's assessment that BGeX cannot achieve the development of individual and social responsibility in our students alone. It might also be added that this cannot be accomplished through coursework alone, either. He is on target in stressing the importance for students to develop an independent sense of responsibility for their education and life. Getting involved is one way to explore who you are, what you truly value and believe in, and to put your professed values into action.

Brian's appeal is exactly what I, as the director of BGeX, advocates. Student leadership is a critically important dimension through which the vision of BGeX will be realized. (Brian is, I'm proud to say, a BGeX peer facilitator, whose column represents his independent leadership.)

Bravo, Brian! I hope your appeal to students is taken to heart since BGeX is less about retention than it is about challenging students to become responsible, critically thinking and engaged adults. Unlike football, there are no sidelines in the game of life. College life, too, is not a sport for spectators.

George Agich
Director, BGeXperience