

RISE to the IUPUI Challenge: High Impact Practices Focused on Students' Success

Sarah S. Baker, Mary L. Fisher, and Kathy E. Johnson

Abstract

Civic engagement and student success have become a hallmark of Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). In 2008 a new program supporting increased student engagement and deeper learning was implemented, the “RISE (Research, International Study, Service Learning, and Experiential Learning) to the IUPUI Challenge” initiative advocating student engagement in authentic experiences. Following the history and theoretical rationale of this initiative, data will document adoption of RISE along with challenges and future implications.

Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) has a long tradition and commitment to supporting students' experiential learning outside of the classroom. IUPUI recently was ranked third among national universities in the “up-and comers” category in the *U.S. News & World Report's* 2012 edition of best colleges. This recognition highlighted the focus on civic engagement and student success which have become a hallmark of IUPUI (Bringle, Hatcher, and Holland 2007). This article provides an overview of the implementation of the “RISE (Research, International Study, Service Learning, and Experiential Learning) to the IUPUI Challenge” initiative—an initiative aimed at institutionalizing co-curricular learning experiences aligned with high impact practices (Kuh 2008) that help foster student learning and success. We begin with a description of how the plan was formulated and piloted between 2006 and 2008 and provide the theoretical basis for launching this initiative. Then, recent data are presented on how the plan is being implemented across different programs and schools, followed by a consideration of challenges and lessons learned that will help to guide refinements in future years.

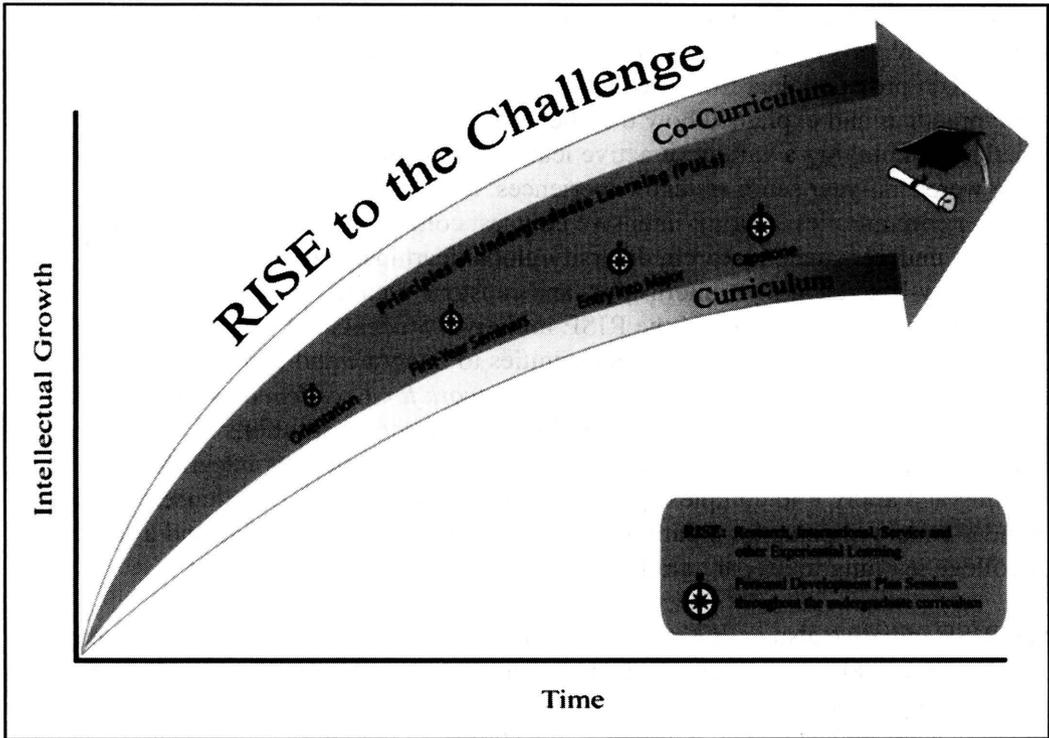
History and Theoretical Rationale

In 2006, a small team of individuals who had been involved with infusing experiential learning into the curriculum was charged with the task of expanding the scope of these efforts across undergraduate programs. The task force was one of seventy teams comprised of faculty, staff, and students that were convened by the Chief Academic

Officer to engage in the development of elements of the IUPUI Academic Plan (2008; http://academicaffairs.iupui.edu/_Assets/docs/academic_plan_final.pdf). The planning team generated ideas that were circulated through a report that articulated strategies for expanding students' engagement in experiential learning. The report advocated that these experiences should offer students special opportunities to engage in authentic experiences associated with undergraduate research, global learning, service learning, and other forms of work-related experiential learning such as internships and practica. These experiences would augment classroom teaching and learning and become part of IUPUI students' academic record through notation on the official transcript. Following nearly two years of reflection and research, the "RISE to the IUPUI Challenge" initiative (hereafter, RISE initiative) was presented to the campus community in 2008, along with specific plans for implementation. To assist with the integration of the initiative into academic culture, town halls were convened to solicit additional input from faculty and staff, a website and laminated "RISE to the IUPUI Challenge" bookmarks were developed, and content related to RISE was incorporated into Orientation and other summer programs, as well as first-year seminar curricula. Reflective writing assignments related to RISE experiences also were embedded within the electronic Personal Development Plan, a portfolio tool that combines intrusive advising practices with supports for students' academic planning.

RISE provides a means to integrate real-world, out-of-classroom experiences with formal classroom experiences through the intentional use of selected pedagogies. The initiative helped to codify what had already become a hallmark of IUPUI as a dynamic, urban institution. It explicitly conveyed how the IUPUI undergraduate educational experience was distinctive by capitalizing on its institutional strengths, its urban setting, and its mission as a civically-engaged urban research university amidst a health and life science campus. Building upon the foundation of IUPUI's "Principles of Undergraduate Learning" (PULs), RISE became part of IUPUI's culture of engaging students in deeper learning and high-impact practices that contribute to their intellectual and professional development. RISE was built on the foundation that, when provided the necessary guidance and mentorship, students can relate enrichment experiences to classroom learning in structured and educationally meaningful ways, thus integrating learning in a more holistic fashion. RISE is intended to be distributed across the undergraduate curriculum, beginning with the students' orientation to IUPUI and ending with a culminating capstone course embedded within the major, as depicted in Figure 1. We believe that the synergistic impact of combining a solid framework of course-specific PULs with co-curricular experiential learning helps to brand the IUPUI undergraduate degree and to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to become productive global citizens.

Figure 1. The “RISE to the Challenge” initiative is framed by the IUPUI “Principles of Undergraduate Learning” and integrates the curriculum and the co-curriculum over time. The electronic Personal Development Plan is a portfolio tool that contains reflective writing assignments aligned with each RISE experience.



Pascarella and Terenzini reflected on more than twenty years of student engagement research and concluded, “one of the most inescapable and unequivocal conclusions we can make is that the impact of college is largely determined by the individual’s quality of effort and level of involvement in both academic and non-academic activities” (Pascarella and Terenzini 1991, 610). RISE provides intentional practices across the curriculum in support of student success and helps students to make connections that support the integration and application of acquired knowledge. These connections might be among students and faculty mentors, students and community partners, or students and global partners. In general, it is through these connections, which are supported through educationally purposeful activities, that student learning and successes are enhanced. Although the keys to student success are complex, research has provided strong evidence that engagement is correlated positively with students’ academic success and persistence rates (Astin 1993; Pike, Schroeder, and Berry 1997). It also is clear that institutional policies and practices help to influence levels of

student engagement on campuses (Pike and Kuh 2005). What one finds in RISE is the blending of student engagement and institutional policies and practices that supports students' engagement on campus and ultimately impacts their success.

IUPUI is evolving to meet educational challenges and to prepare students for high levels of integrative learning and demonstrated accomplishments across a full range of experiences dubbed 'high impact practices' by Kuh (2008) and then endorsed in subsequent reports of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U 2011). Kuh provided data from the National Survey of Student Engagement related to these practices and explained how they benefit students. Effective educational practices, employing a variety of active learning pedagogies, were identified. Among these were first-year seminars and experiences, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, service learning, community-based learning, internships, and capstone courses and projects. Such practices are the cornerstone of the RISE initiative. Students are called to become "intentional learners," by seeking opportunities to integrate and apply their learning in the real world. In support of this, *A New Framework for Excellence* was published by the LEAP National Leadership Council (2007) calling for institutions to become more intentional about effective educational practices that help students integrate their learning and apply it to complex questions. These Principles of Excellence provide the foundation and impetus for a paradigm shift from teaching to learning and a reshaping of college learning to prepare graduates for twenty-first century realities.

The RISE initiative also is grounded in theories concerning the enhancement of deep learning. Barr and Tagg (1995) maintained that a paradigm shift was taking hold in American higher education, and they articulated a new framework for educating undergraduate students. They highlighted the shift from the long-standing belief that college exists to provide instruction, to the concept that its role is to produce learning. For many years the primary learning environment for students has been the fairly passive lecture-discussion format in which faculty talk and students listen (Guskin 1994). This practice is contrary to best educational practices which engage students in their learning and allow for more powerful and deep learning. The focus on powerful learning environments and a wide variety of learning experiences nestled in an interactive framework allows students to become active learners, supports integration, and encourages engagement of learners in experiential pedagogies (Chickering and Gamson 1987). RISE embodies this vision for learning by encouraging students to augment their classroom experiences with effective pedagogies that promote deep learning.

Launching the Initiative and Preliminary Data on Completion

In fall 2008, the "RISE to the IUPUI Challenge" proposal was presented to the IUPUI community with the anticipation that development of a course approval process for RISE-specific courses and full implementation with advising support and the

registrar's provision of transcript designations would take a year. The proposal articulated the importance of the RISE initiative and its goals of engaging students more deeply in their learning in order to contribute to their intellectual and professional development.

RISE challenges all IUPUI undergraduates to complete at least two of four possible experiences as components of the baccalaureate degree: 1) credit-bearing undergraduate research experiences that augment students' understanding of research, scholarship, and creative activities; 2) study abroad curricular experiences that enhance students' learning and understanding of the world; 3) service learning courses that enhance students' commitment to civic engagement; and 4) credit-bearing experiential learning experiences such as internships, practica, clinical, or fieldwork experiences. Furthermore, RISE experiences incorporate an experiential learning framework including the dimensions of knowledge, activity, reflection, assessment, and a record of formal documentation on the transcript.

A RISE steering committee was appointed by the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and charged with developing a RISE Course Approval Process. Each school's undergraduate curriculum committee was charged with reviewing course proposals that articulated how the designated RISE criteria were met and then conferring approval as appropriate. Once a course(s) is approved for RISE designation (a course can qualify for only one of the four RISE categories), the designated school representative informs the registrar of the decision. The course then is listed in the campus bulletin with the appropriate RISE indication. The IUPUI course catalog codes RISE courses so that students can locate them readily and determine which of the four categories of experiential learning (R, I, S, or E) the course satisfies. In 2009, the vast majority of courses carrying a RISE designation were courses that had been in existence for some time (e.g., internship courses, clinical placements, laboratory, and capstone classes). Since then, the Chief Academic Officer has encouraged new RISE course development by providing RISE course development grants to fund faculty summer salary support each year. Proposals for these funds are reviewed early in the spring semester and have resulted in approximately six new RISE-designated courses each year.

In the inaugural fall semester of 2009, 839 courses were designated as RISE experiences across the fourteen IUPUI schools offering the highest numbers of undergraduate courses, as depicted in Table 1. The majority (478) included experiential (E) courses, led by the Schools of Nursing (126) and Education (95). Next most prevalent were research (R) courses (246) and the Schools of Science (92) and Liberal Arts (63) led the campus in these offerings. Though IUPUI is recognized nationally for its leadership in the realm of service learning, service learning courses carrying an "S" designation (109) were less prevalent than either R or E courses. This was likely attributable to the fact that the majority of service learning experiences at IUPUI reflect options within standing courses, rather than strict requirements for all students (alternative assignments may be offered for students who are unable to engage in community service). Because only courses including a more stringent participation

standard for all students can carry the “S” designation, this coding actually underestimates the degree to which service learning opportunities are represented across undergraduate courses. The numbers of international (I) experiences also are not reflected accurately with our academic year monitoring because many of the study abroad courses are offered only in summer sessions.

Since the formal launch of the RISE initiative, course offerings have continued to be high with some fluctuations across schools. In general, there tends to be more offerings in the spring semester than the fall semester. Summer offerings have been minimal, though great potential exists for expanding summer opportunities for studying abroad and engaging in undergraduate research experiences. Just as seen in the inaugural year, the majority of courses were coded as E (experiential), again followed by R (research). Of the 4,608 RISE courses to date, the School of Nursing has provided the greatest number (724) followed by the Schools of Liberal Arts (707) and Science (704).

Table 1. Numbers of Courses Listed with R (Research), I (International), S (Service Learning), or E (Experiential Learning) Designations

School	FALL 2009				FALL 2010				FALL 2011				SPRING 2010				SPRING 2011				T O T A L					
	R	I	S	E	R	I	S	E	R	I	S	E	R	I	S	E	R	I	S	E						
Art & Design				27	27	14		22	36	14		21	35			35	35	16	2	45	63	196				
Business			30	2	32		15	18	33		15	17	32			14	14			16	16	127				
Engineering	15		11	12	38	15		26	41	6		25	31	15		27	42	5		30	35	187				
Science	92		1	27	120	104		2	26	132	124		2	26	152	121		32	153	119	1	27	147	704		
Technology	4		15	22	41	4		4	34	42	5	1	9	35	50	8		1	53	62	10	1	58	69	264	
Education	8		5	95	108	8		2	106	116	11	5	5	100	121	10		2	125	137	9	5	117	131	613	
Informatics	39			19	58	43		3	25	71	45		2	15	62	43		1	19	63	46	3	13	62	316	
Journalism	1	1	17	2	21	3		15	4	22	2		14	3	19	4		15	3	22	4	14	3	21	105	
Liberal Arts	63	3	1	63	130	56	12	8	58	134	57	8	10	64	139	53	3	6	99	161	48	3	5	87	143	707
Medicine				26	26			2	27	29			3	31	34				33	33			33	33	155	
Nursing			18	126	144			14	127	141			14	120	134	6		14	133	153	8		15	129	152	724
Phys Ed & Tourism	3	2	6	19	30	3	2	15	15	35	4	1	9	14	28	2	2	12	34	50	3	3	9	35	50	193

	FALL 2009				FALL 2010				FALL 2011				SPRING 2010			SPRING 2011			SP '11 T O T A L	T O T A L						
Pub & Env Affairs	21		4	35	60	18	17	7	42	17	17	4	38	13	5	27	45	13	2	19	34	219				
Social Work			1	3	4		1	3	4		8	3	11		1	14	15	2	1	16	19	53				
Univ College					1			12	13	1		11	12	1		9	10	1		9	10	45				
Grand Total	246	6	109	478	839	269	14	98	510	891	285	16	108	489	898	276	5	57	657	995	282	10	56	637	985	4608

Note: With different types of courses offered in semesters, listings are presented in sequence of fall, spring, and summer.

The number of students who have taken at least one RISE course is impressive, given the relatively brief period since the initiative was launched. During the period from fall 2009 to summer 2011, 19,682 students have enrolled in at least one RISE course, the largest number of students (3,479) from the School of Nursing, as depicted in Table 2. Since the launching of this initiative, 1,010 students have earned the RISE designation upon graduation, as signified by the completion of two RISE experiences, as shown in Table 3. The most frequent combination of course experiences involves research and experiential courses (43 percent of 1,010 students), followed by a combination of service learning and experiential courses (37 percent of 1,010 student). A total of twenty-nine students graduating between 2009 and 2011 have completed all four RISE experiences.

Table 2. Number of Students Earning at Least One RISE Designation

Students' Enrolled Plan of Study	Fall		Fall Total	Spring		Sp. Total	Summer		Su. Total	Grand Total
	2009	2010		2010	2011		2010	2011		
Herron School of Art and Design	136	198	334	208	352	560	46	40	86	980
Kelley School of Business	245	303	548	47	45	92	32	37	69	709
Public & Environmental Affairs	147	106	253	131	80	211	15	6	21	485
Purdue School of Engineering	66	76	142	105	93	198	6	8	14	354

	Fall		Fall Total	Spring		Sp. Total	Summer		Su. Total	Grand Total
Purdue School of Science	226	234	460	286	384	670	41	57	98	1,228
Purdue School of Technology	168	144	312	235	233	468	40	55	95	875
School of Health & Rehab Sciences		2	2		2	2				4
School of Continuing Studies	59	89	148	116	88	204	11	17	28	380
School of Dentistry		1	1		1	1				2
School of Education	501	556	1,057	538	600	1,138	33	23	56	2,251
School of Informatics	212	245	457	234	218	452	58	26	84	993
School of Journalism	121	126	247	127	116	243	2	1	3	493
School of Liberal Arts	362	374	736	423	409	832	64	65	129	1,697
School of Medicine	214	249	463	247	237	484	1	5	6	953
School of Nursing	763	730	1,493	764	708	1,472	260	254	514	3,479
School of Phys Ed & Tourism Mgt	370	449	819	459	450	909	16	72	88	1,816
School of Social Work	62	68	130	79	97	176		12	12	318
University College	488	727	1,215	580	634	1,214	113	123	236	2,665
Grand Total	4,140	4,677	8,817	4,579	4,747	9,326	738	801	1,539	19,682

Table 3. Students Who Have Completed at Least Two of the Four RISE Experiences upon Graduation

School	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Grand Total
Herron School of Art		6		30	36
Kelley School of Business		3	5	19	27
Purdue School of Engineering	1	5	8	22	36
Purdue School of Science	1	12	21	48	82
Purdue School of Technology	5	24	23	25	77
School of Continuing Studies	1	5	6	9	21

School	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Grand Total
School of Education	1	5	1	10	17
School of Informatics	6	23	20	52	101
School of Journalism	2	11	10	13	36
School of Liberal Arts	6	34	38	62	140
School of Medicine				1	1
School of Nursing		78	123	116	317
School of Physical Education and Tourism	8	32	21	26	87
School of Public and Environmental Affairs	1	10	7	13	31
School of Social Work			1		1
Grand Total	32	248	284	446	1010

Future Plans

As the RISE initiative reaches the third year of implementation, time for reflection, evaluation and assessment are warranted. Assessment experts should assist in efforts to determine how best to evaluate educational impact at a variety of stages, including post graduation. Not only should the educational impact be assessed, but the totality of the initiative needs all component parts reviewed. Although the number of RISE course offerings options is steady, great potential exists to increase the number of RISE course offerings. It appears that a strategic plan could assist in looking at where RISE is now and how RISE course offerings could increase. This strategic plan could include communications, marketing, and professional development components along with a timeframe to assist in the coordination and evaluation of efforts.

The plan should address the monitoring and quality of RISE offerings. Although IUPUI has clearly articulated baseline criteria for RISE designation, the potential exists for schools and departments to drift away from the initial foundation as faculty change and curricula evolve. Furthermore, a RISE designation (R, I, S, or E) from one school could be vastly different to that from another school. Part of the marketing plan could focus on ways to educate faculty to the benefit of high-impact practices and to engage them in the design of these experiences to further enhance student learning. Identification of additional resources for expansion of RISE could further support the professional development component along with allowing more individuals to contribute to the RISE culture. Scholarship related to RISE would be beneficial, most importantly to assist faculty in research and best practices related to high-impact practices and student learning outcomes. The professional development plan could assist in the creation of more RISE offerings, which could work in tandem with a

marketing plan to increase awareness of RISE among students and the range of positive outcomes associated with RISE.

Great opportunities exist to increase the integration of high impact, experiential offerings. These hands-on, applied-learning experiences are increasingly important, in part since they provide opportunities for students to participate in deep learning activities. These deeper learning activities associated with the ability to work with others and apply theory to practice will better prepare our students to meet the challenges within our complex global society and further enhance our many efforts at improving student retention and outcomes.

Conclusion

IUPUI is known to be a dynamic urban institution with a long tradition and commitment to supporting students' experiential learning outside the classroom. The "RISE to the IUPUI Challenge" initiative embodies IUPUI's commitment to student learning by engaging students with high-impact practices known to promote deeper learning. The initiative further mobilizes institutional strengths to "brand" this unique aspect of an IUPUI undergraduate degree. The experiential pedagogies articulated in RISE will better prepare students to meet the challenges within our global world and to become productive citizens.

References

Association of American Colleges and Universities. 2007. *College Learning for the New Global Century*. Washington, DC: Author.

Association of American Colleges and Universities. 2011. *The LEAP Vision for Learning: Outcomes, Practices, Impact, and Employers' Views*. Washington, DC: Author.

Astin, Alexander W. 1993. *What Matters in College? Four Critical Years Revisited*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Barr, Robert B., and John Tagg. 1995. "From Teaching to Learning—A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education." *Change Magazine* 27 (6): 12–25.

Bringle, Robert G., Julie A. Hatcher, and Barbara Holland. 2007. "Conceptualizing Civic Engagement: Orchestrating Change at a Metropolitan University." *Metropolitan Universities: An International Forum*, 18 (3): 57–74.

Chickering, Arthur W., and Zelda F. Gamson. 1987. "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education." *AAHE Bulletin* 39, 3–7.

Guskin, Alan E. 1994. "Reducing Costs and Enhancing Student Learning Part II: Restructuring the Role of Faculty." *Change* 26 (5): 16–25.

Kuh, George D. 2008. *High-impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Pascarella, Earnest, and Patrick Terenzini. 1991. *How College Affects Students: Findings and Insights from Twenty Years of Research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Pike, Gary R., and George D. Kuh. 2005. "A Typology of Student Engagement for American Colleges and Universities." *Research in Higher Education* 46 (2): 185–209.

Pike, Gary R., Charles C. Schroeder, and Thomas R. Berry. 1997. "Enhancing the Educational Impact of Residence Halls: The Relationship between Residential Learning Communities and First-Year College Experiences and Persistence." *Journal of College Student Development* 38: 609–621.

Author Information

Sarah S. Baker is serving as Associate Dean of University College at IUPUI. She is an associate professor in the Department of Radiology and Imaging Sciences in the IU School of Medicine.

Mary L. Fisher is serving as Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs/Associate Dean the Faculties. She is a professor of nursing administration in the School of Nursing.

Kathy E. Johnson is serving as Dean of University College and Associate Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education at IUPUI. She is a professor in the Department of Psychology.

Sarah S. Baker
University College
Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis
Taylor Hall
815 W. Michigan St., UC 3140D
Indianapolis, IN 46202
E-mail: ssbaker2@iupui.edu
Telephone: 317-274-5070
Fax: 317-278-2216

Mary L. Fisher
Office of Academic Affairs
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
Administration Building
355 Lansing St., AO 126
Indianapolis, IN 46202
E-mail: mlfisher@iupui.edu
Telephone: 317-278-1846
Fax: 317-278-0695

Kathy E. Johnson
University College
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
Taylor Hall
815 W. Michigan St., UC 3163
Indianapolis, IN 46202
E-mail: kjohnso@iupui.edu
Telephone: 317-278-0033
Fax: 317-278-2216