

COMMON READING PROGRAM

GOALS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

- Model academic behaviors (developing an intellectual community)
- Set expectations for student success (high expectations – reading and discourse are expected)
- Foster involvement (“educationally purposeful” in class and out of class learning experiences)
- Promote meaningful learning (relevant and important topics)

CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMON READING EXPERIENCES

- Involve an assigned reading of one or more books or reading selections
- Are academically oriented
- Promote reading, critical thinking, and discussion skills
- Bring students, faculty, and staff together around a common intellectual activity
- Focus on a theme generated from the selected work
- Incorporate a range of activities around the selected work
- Have shared program leadership among academic and student affairs or multiple offices and individuals across a campus

CRITERIA FOR COMMON READING SELECTIONS

- Readability and potential for engaging students
- International focus
- Literary quality
- Relevance to first-year students, current society, or local community
- Appeal to a wide range of students
- Possibilities for additional programming, especially inclusion in first-year courses or other areas of the curriculum
- Multidisciplinary
- Richness of content/themes
- Cost (must be available in paperback)
- Length (100 – 400 pages)
- Accurate and respectful portrayals of diverse cultures
- Potential to spark passionate discussion
- Not likely to have been read in high school
- Opportunities for multimedia approaches and creative assignments
- Feasibility of travel to country on which reading is focused

EVENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE COMMON READING EXPERIENCE

- Author’s visits
- Book signings

- Discussion sessions with faculty
- Lecture series
- Art exhibits or theatrical performances
- Library exhibits or resources
- Film series
- Essay Contests
- Service or volunteer opportunities
- Special events (e.g., ceremonies, field trips)

Laufgraben, Jodi Levine. *Common Reading Programs: Going Beyond the Book . First-Year Experience Monograph Series No. 44. P.12,23-24,26-27,35,37-43,47.*

SCHEDULE FOR COMMON READING SELECTION

Summer Reading Project Calendar:

- **October and November**
 - Committee membership is established
 - Discussion of book nomination criteria discussed
- **December, January, and February**
 - Committee meets to discuss books nominated by the campus community and to review lists of books other campuses are reading
 - Committee compiles short list of five to eight books for further review
 - Committee members read books on short list (winter break)
 - Committee meets to discuss books they have read
 - Committee selects book
- **March, April, and May**
 - Book selection announced
 - Committee plans for related events (e.g., Author visit, discussion sessions, essay contest)
 - Faculty discussion leaders recruited
 - Copies of books ordered for faculty discussion leaders
 - Resource material prepared and ordered
- **June, July, August**
 - Students informed about Freshman Summer Reading Project during new student orientation
 - Book available to students at campus bookstore
 - Training sessions for faculty discussion leaders