First Year Learning Initiative certified courses promote student success by fostering student effort and socialization to college-level academics. Maintaining the powerful pedagogy and design practices characteristic of FYLI courses is an ongoing process. Personnel, learning objectives, department priorities and student characteristics can all change over time, thus we ask FYLI courses to engage in recertifying their courses over time. Recertification is meant to serve two main purposes, first, to ensure that courses continue to meet the goals and criteria associated with FYLI, and second, to encourage continued innovation in how FYLI courses are taught.

The FYLI recertification process was designed by the FYLI Co-directors and FYLI Faculty Associate in consultation with a steering group of FYLI coordinators. Our goal was to set up a process that would:

- **Meaningfully re-engage** coordinators and departments with FYLI
- **Enhance coordination** of multi-section courses
- Provide opportunities to present tangible **evidence of FYLI’s impacts**
- Provide opportunities for faculty to **share and get credit** for innovative practices
- Provide opportunities for **small groups of faculty to share** practices and obtain support
- Document how **Peer TAs** are contributing to the course and the positive impacts of being a Peer TA
- Provide a **clear path to recertification**, including explicit guidelines but also offering different options tailored to the unique needs of each discipline and department

**Timeline:**

We propose that courses complete recertification **every two academic years**. Courses that earned certification in 2013 or earlier are strongly encouraged to start the process in Spring or Fall 2015. Although formal recertification would be done every two years, it is expected that coordinators would engage in assessment, dissemination and similar activities on an ongoing basis, and that these activities would count toward the next formal recertification.
Recertification Process Overview

Each coordinator is responsible for creating and executing a recertification plan tailored to his or her own specific course. The recertification plan should provide evidence of engagement in three areas: 1) deepening practice, 2) demonstrating impact, and 3) dissemination. Coordinators should create and execute the plan over 2 semesters and submit a report on outcomes at the end of this 2-semester period.

Online forms will be available for the plan and for the subsequent report-out, to streamline the process and help reduce the burden of planning and structuring reports.

Deepening Practice

This part of the plan focuses on substantive engagement with colleagues on the FYLI principles and practices, getting feedback for the purpose of strengthening one’s own pedagogy and course design while contributing to the strengthening of others’ practices.

Example ways to address deepening practice:

- Participate in a semester-long series of learning community-style discussions with colleagues. In the year-end report, describe outcomes of these discussions, e.g., revisions to the course Syllabus of Practice or revisions to the coordination plan. FYLI leadership will set up learning communities in collaboration with Faculty Development, starting in Spring 2015.
- Complete in-class observations. A pilot test of the FYLI in-class observation protocol will be conducted in Spring 2015.
- Participate in an online discussion forum, also styled on a learning community, focusing on strengthening practice and helping others strengthen theirs.

Demonstrating Impact

This part of the plan focuses on documenting how the course continues to follow FYLI principles, both those laid out in the original certification and new practices that have evolved since certification.
Example ways to address **demonstrating impact:**

- Collect data using the FYLI end-of-semester survey instrument, then describe patterns of responses and any changes to practice you plan to make in response to those patterns. FYLI can assist you in gathering and analyzing survey data, if desired.
- Conduct a review of coordination practices, for example, by meeting with all section instructors and going over individual section syllabi to assess coordination; describe the current plan, explain how new instructors are brought into the course each semester, and describe any changes to practice that will be made based on the review.
- Describe any other relevant assessment data, such as trends in course completion rates or assessments of the quality of student work.

**Dissemination**

This part of the plan focuses on making connections with a wider network of colleagues to communicate the impacts of FYLI and plans for the future.

Example ways to address **dissemination:**

- Attend and present at a FYLI Showcase event. Plans for the first such event will be announced in Spring 2015.
- Make a presentation to department colleagues (e.g., at the yearly department retreat), presenting evidence of impacts and gathering feedback from colleagues on the success of the project. In your report, include your presentation materials and comment on how the presentation was received.
- Communicate your experiences in an appropriate disciplinary forum such as a conference, scholarship of teaching and learning journal, or other outlet.

**Other Required Components**

Coordinators are asked to turn in the following as documentation of how the course continues to work as part of FYLI:

- Updated Syllabus of Practice. Please see the FYLI web site for examples of other course’s Syllabus of Practice documents. Your SOP can be formatted any way you wish, but should function as a “faculty handbook” or guide for instructors teaching the course.
- Brief narrative on how Peer TAs contribute to the course (e.g., typical assigned duties, training/supervision practices, evidence of positive impacts Peer TAs have on the course).
• Brief statement of support from the department chair. This does not have to be extensive, but should affirm that the current chair is aware of and endorses the course’s continued FYLI certification.