

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT REVIEW: FYE PLAN 2019

First-Year Experience Mission Statement

The First-Year Experience collaborates with campus partners to provide students with the resources and knowledge early on that increase their academic success and persistence.

Section 1: Mission Fulfillment

Student Success: The First-Year Experience program contributes to student success by connecting students to a community of resources and information that empower students to actively engage in their education

Section 2: Department Purpose

The First-Year Experience is a comprehensive program that collaborates across the institution to provide new students (in particular, first time and transfer students with less than 13 credits who are pursuing a certificate or degree) with the information, events and connections they need to be successful. The First-Year Experience, as a department, was formed as a result of a \$2.25 million Title III Strengthening Institutions Program grant from the U.S. Department of Education awarded to the College in fall of 2016. Some program offerings have been available to students prior to the grant, while others were implemented in the years following the award. Since 2016, the First-Year Experience program has been working to develop a student experience that is fluid, inclusive and welcoming. In collaboration with many departments such as Admissions & Records, Financial Aid, CAP Services, as well as Student Life, First-Year Experience program components include:

- **Bobcat Welcome:** an introductory video new students can access anywhere that welcomes them to the COCC community and provides high-level information pertinent to student success
- **Placement:** includes in person skills-based assessment and directed self-placement (to be available in fully online format in winter 2020)
- **Bobcat Advising and Registration:** typically offered as an on-campus group advising session, students select their educational goal, register for courses and receive further guidance on academic success
- **Bobcat Orientation:** a half-day on-campus event that prepares students for their first three weeks, covering topics such as student technology, student services/resources, logistical information and instructor expectations
- **College Success:** an full term course in which students sharpen the skills and knowledge needed to perform effectively in college

The First-Year Experience has direct oversight of the Welcome and Orientation offerings. The other offerings listed above are implemented collaboratively.

Section 3: Strengths and Accomplishments

Change Management and Growth

Adaptability is a prominent strength of the First-Year Experience program/team. Since 2016, the program has grown to include:

- video content
- redesigned multi-measure placement assessment
- a more energetic advising and registration experience for students, adding resources and giveaways
- earlier admissions application deadlines
- outreach plan for late registering students
- expanded Orientation schedule for greater student access
- acquisition of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool

First-Year Experience team members as well as FYE collaborators have been extremely dedicated to developing this program and have maintained flexibility throughout the process. Instituting change in higher education is not an overnight endeavor. The commitment and adaptability of faculty and staff have contributed significantly to the successes of the program.

Student and Employee Engagement

Implementing a comprehensive First-Year Experience program necessitates collaboration, ranging from brainstorming discussions to work groups. This collaboration has not only created a deeper investment amongst employees, but also brought a more inclusive and intentional approach to planning. As an example, CAP Services, Placement, Admissions & Records and Student Life came together to envision Bobcat Advising and Registration. Each team gained a better understanding of departmental processes as well as challenges, helping to strengthen departmental relationships. Correspondingly, students that attended Bobcat Advising and Registration benefited from a more fluid experience and increased access to resources such as Student Life and the bookstore

Another example is the growth of Bobcat Orientation, offering it on different days and times, including twice on the Bend campus for fall 2019. Though in some ways this schedule is more work for faculty and staff, we had the buy-in to expand schedule offerings for students. Approximately 77% of students reported feeling satisfied or very satisfied with their Bobcat Orientation experience via the fall 2019 evaluation. Additionally, 89% of students reported finding their session facilitator(s) to be engaging. Anecdotal feedback from staff and faculty indicate the schedule change allowed for more direct contact with students. During a meeting, one faculty member shared, "I truly enjoy facilitating Bobcat Orientation. It reminds me why I love teaching."

Section 4: Department Challenges

Balancing Priorities

The majority of challenges for the First-Year Experience program center round the balancing priorities of access versus success. As an open-door institution, we want to remove barriers to entry for students while also ensuring they are academically successful. Though not in direct opposition of each other, the balancing of resources and practices between the two can be challenging.

A major goal within the Title III grant is to support COCC students who have historically been at high risk of not completing their educational goals. Student reasons for not completing their goals vary widely including online access, transportation, class schedules, and/or funding. It is therefore difficult to build resources and practices that meet student's diverse needs. Bobcat Orientation and Bobcat Advising and Registration are examples of balancing access and success. By increasing access to these events including multiple days and branch campuses, success-oriented efforts such as student services and resources may not be available as staffing is limited.

Currently a qualifying College Success is not a required activity within the First-Year Experience program. Though this supports maintaining an accessible experience for students, past data analysis indicates a very high success rate for students who take this course. Therefore, not requiring it may diminish an opportunity for student success.

Stabilization

The Title III grant has provided many opportunities for growth and change. Within each activity of the FYE program, stability is needed to ensure effective assessment and sustainability.

Section 5: Department Outcomes

As a result of participating in COCC's First-Year Experience program, students will actively engage in their education by demonstrating progress in the following areas:

1. Establishing an academic plan aligned with personal, career and/or transfer goals.
2. Managing their time and personal resources.
3. Applying introductory skills in communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving.
4. Describing the programs and services to build greater understanding of diversity and inclusion.
5. Utilizing appropriate college resources to build a network of support.

Section 6a: Measurement Tool and Timeline

The target population is Certificate or Degree-Seeking students who complete all FYE activities within their first academic year. As this is a new program, anticipated assessment is planned to begin spring 2020.

Data supporting outcome 1 will be determined using the number of plans established through COCC's new DegreeWorks Planner (DWP). The College estimates DWP will be 80 – 90% implemented by fall 2020. Baseline data and target metrics will be established at that time.

How outcomes 2 – 5 will be measured needs further discussion with COCC's Institutional Effectiveness Department, but may include results from the 2017 and 2020 CCSSE survey.

Students who complete all program activities will:

- Have higher first-term retention rates equal to or greater than those who did not complete all FYE activities.
- Have higher first-year retention rates equal to or greater than those who did not complete all FYE activities.

- Have higher course completion rates equal to or greater than those who did not complete all FYE activities.
- Have higher GPA rates equal to or greater than those who did not complete all FYE activities.