

**ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT REVIEW**  
**First-Year Experience: Report**  
**2021-22**

With the new FYE director in her second year at COCC, much of the department’s focus was on new initiatives: implementing the new Early Assist program and leading Guided Pathways work focused on new student onboarding. Bobcat Orientation operations and content remained consistent in anticipation of the return to in-person programs following the COVID-19 pandemic. Likewise, FYE postponed the work of updating the department assessment plan to the 2022-23 year, anticipating a significant change that incorporates Early Assist and placement assessment as key functions of the department.

Until a new plan and outcomes are developed, this report addresses the department outcomes which are possible to measure as of June 2022. These outcomes are #2 and #5 in the list below.

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**

*How did you measure your success toward the 1-3 outcomes and mission fulfillment? What tools did you use? How frequently did you gather relevant data? Provide any data references that you used.*

The two FYE outcomes we can currently measure are designed to be met through Bobcat Orientation (BCO). BCO attendance data (as a percentage of new students) and BCO survey data are most relevant to demonstrate the work of FYE in these areas. Early Assist pilot data is also relevant to these outcomes, and is included here.

- BCO attendance data is gathered by staff – through check-in lists for in-person programs, and Zoom reports for programs delivered remotely.
- We use BCO survey data to measure outcomes regarding students’ abilities to measure their time and personal resources and utilize college resources. Survey data from Summer 2021 (June), Fall 2021 (September), Winter 2022 (January), and Spring 2022 (March) programs are included in this report.
  - BCO surveys are administered using the Qualtrics online survey tool. FYE sends email/text invitations to students shortly after each BCO program, offering one or more \$25 gift cards as incentives, and selecting winners in a random drawing.
- We measure the success of Early Assist using system usage data and institutional student success data.

**Section 7: Data**

Bobcat Orientation: Attendance data

	BCO Attendance	# students entering*	% of entering students who attended BCO	Prior year attendance	% change (negative change in parenthesis)
Summer 2021	37	167	22%	42 (20%)	2%
Fall 2021	525	1,221	43%	599 (47%)	(4%)
Winter 2022	83	373	22%	154 (34%)	(12%)
Spring 2022	40	310	13%	53 (17%)	(4%)

\*new, transfer, or returning after absence students whose initial registration was prior to/on the last date of BCO

## Bobcat Orientation: Survey data

### Summer 2021 (Zoom only)

- 41% response rate (15 of 37 attendees)
- Overall, students indicated feeling more connected (increase of 20.2%) and more prepared to succeed (increase of 9.8%) after attending Bobcat Orientation.
- Students also indicated being more confident about using Blackboard (25% increase), managing their time (4% increase), connecting with their academic advisor (7% increase), and connecting with other new students (16% increase).
- Compared to responses on the pre-orientation survey, some students reported being *less* confident about maintaining eligibility for financial aid (2.4% decrease) and using Zoom after attending Bobcat Orientation (5.6% decrease). The decreases may be due to differences in respondents to the pre-survey (50) and post-survey (15), and/or students learning that financial aid and Zoom are more complex than they had previously thought.
- 93% (13/14 respondents) would recommend Bobcat Orientation to other new students.

### Fall 2021 (Zoom only)

- 30% response rate (156 of 525 attendees)
- Overall, students indicated feeling more connected (20% increase) and more prepared to succeed (13% increase) after attending Bobcat Orientation.
- Students also indicated being more confident about using Blackboard (28% increase), managing their time (8% increase), maintaining eligibility for financial aid (6% increase), connecting with their academic advisor (7% increase), connecting with other new students (8% increase), and using Zoom (3% increase).
- 90% of respondents indicated that they would recommend or strongly recommend Bobcat Orientation to other new students.

### Winter 2022 (in-person + Zoom)

- This program was our first in-person Bobcat Orientation since Winter 2020 (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic)
- 28% response rate (23 of 83 attendees)
- Most survey respondents indicated that Bobcat Orientation helped them feel more connected (79%) and more prepared for success (88%)
- 90% of survey respondents indicated that they would recommend or strongly recommend Bobcat Orientation to other new students
- 67% of survey respondents indicated they are connected to at least one faculty or staff member they'd feel comfortable reaching out to if they had a COCC-related question (increase of 13% from pre-survey); half of the 67% indicated their faculty/staff connection was made through Bobcat Orientation, while the other half knew the faculty/staff person before BCO.
- Compared to responses on the pre-orientation survey, students indicated feeling more connected (11% increase) and more prepared to succeed (9% increase) after attending Bobcat Orientation. They also indicated feeling more confident about using Canvas (13% increase), maintaining eligibility for Financial Aid (2% increase), and connecting with other students (4% increase).
- Students reported being less confident about managing time in college (2% decrease), connecting with their academic advisor (9% decrease), and using Zoom (7% decrease). The decreases may be due to differences in respondents to the pre-survey (127) and post-survey (23), because Bobcat Orientation content doesn't focus very much on logistics of academic advising, and students who attended the in-person program were also asked the question about Zoom. Moving forward, the advising question can be removed from our survey, and the Zoom question can be included only for students who attend Bobcat Orientation on Zoom.

### Spring 2022 (in-person + Zoom)

- 20% response rate (8 of 40 attendees)
- Most survey respondents indicated that Bobcat Orientation helped them feel more connected (93%) and more prepared for success (83%)
- 88% of survey respondents indicated that they would recommend or strongly recommend Bobcat Orientation to other new students
- 100% of survey respondents indicated they are connected to at least one faculty or staff member they'd feel comfortable reaching out to if they had a COCC-related question (increase of 31% from pre-survey); 71% indicated their faculty/staff connection was made through Bobcat Orientation, while 29% knew the faculty/staff person before BCO.
- Compared to responses on the pre-orientation survey, students indicated feeling more connected (25% increase) and more prepared to succeed (3% increase) after attending Bobcat Orientation. They also indicated feeling more confident on every measure, including using Canvas (26% increase), managing time (4% increase), connecting with other students (20% increase), and using Zoom (17% increase)

### Early Assist: Pilot Program Data

As a student success initiative, Early Assist is designed to identify and intervene with students whose actions or inactions indicate that they are not successfully managing time and/or personal resources, and/or utilizing college support resources (outcomes of the current FYE assessment plan). In Spring 2022, its first pilot term, the Early Assist program showed promising results.

#### Instructors

- 18, teaching 52 course sections

#### Students

- 807 enrolled in Early Assist-supported courses
- 97 referrals submitted for 79 students (some received multiple referrals)
- 1 in 10 students received a referral
- 57% of referred students were age 19 and younger

#### Interventions

- 100% of referrals resulted in email outreach
- 42% of referrals resulted in individual conversations (phone, Zoom, in-person)
- 10 campus departments prepared to provide outreach

#### Results

- 24% of referred students finished course successfully
- 35% earned a D/F
- 40% dropped, withdrew, or switched to audit
- Of students who had individual conversations, 30% finished course successfully, vs. 20% of those who did not

#### Retention

- 46% of referred students retained to Fall term
- 43% of comparison group (who did not receive Early Assist referrals) retained to Fall term

#### Student feedback

- Students described Early Assist outreach as: effective, compassionate, relevant, timely
- 83% of survey respondents (5 of 6) "strongly agreed" that Early Assist is a valuable source of support for COCC students
- One student emailed their professor, *"Thank you again for referring me to Early Assist; they were able to touch base with me and give me some options to solve some of the issues I've been having...it was a huge help."*

## Section 8: Summary and Analysis

### Summary and Analysis

These data suggest that FYE is making a positive impact on students through Bobcat Orientation, and the Early Assist pilot data are promising. With regard to Bobcat Orientation, students feel more connected to COCC and better able to use college resources as a result of attending. Early Assist seems to be providing important support for students experiencing academic and personal challenges; additional data will strengthen our ability to draw insights, particularly in terms of historical comparisons. Both programs, however, have room to grow.

### Key takeaways, areas for improvement, and goals

- Bobcat Orientation survey results are encouraging. The faculty and staff who facilitate BCO are authentically invested in students, and the information we present is streamlined and well-organized.
- The percentage of entering students attending BCO is modest – and declining. This means that the scope of FYE’s impact through Bobcat Orientation is limited. The synchronous, standalone model of BCO delivery may be a limiting factor. Partnering more closely with Admissions/Registrar and Academic Advising through CAP Services may be one way to engage students in preparing for success in their first year. Developing more asynchronous resources may be another.
- Early Assist is the result of more than a year of collaborative planning and preparation by faculty and staff across more than a dozen college departments. The program has a strong foundation and initial results are encouraging. Expanding the positive impact, however, will require additional resources, particularly in terms of staffing. FYE operates on a modest budget, and additional resources could have an outsized impact on student success and belonging – which can also translate to increased retention.
- Looking at Early Assist data can help inform decisions about Bobcat Orientation. The majority of students who received a referral in Spring 2022 were age 19 or younger, and conversations with these students indicated that they needed skills and information we can deliver through Bobcat Orientation. FYE can utilize these programs in tandem to strengthen one another and increase student success.
- The contract with our current Early Assist platform will end in Summer 2024; continuing with the same provider or shifting to a new platform will require new funds, since the current contract was funded by the now-concluded Title III grant. One key goal for the upcoming year is to determine the future of Early Assist beyond Summer 2024, as well as the platform and funding for the program’s continuation.
- The current assessment plan does not accurately reflect the scope and focus of FYE’s work. Priorities for the upcoming year include revising not only the assessment plan but also the department mission in order to align our outcomes, efforts, assessment, and future priorities.