



## COCC & Student Success First Year Experience (FYE) Task Force

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### Task Force Charge

The charge for this task force is to recommend a program design and implementation plan for a First Year Experience (FYE) for COCC. Designing an FYE program includes identifying and gaining consensus on foundational activities that construct a comprehensive FYE program; activities should be those that create a seamless student experience in support of increasing student academic success, persistence and completion within the student's first year. Designing an implementation plan includes a description of how and when each FYE activity will be put into action, with emphasis on a campus-wide collective impact concept to ensure an effective and measurable approach to implementation. Details of the implementation plan will include a description of FYE program components, policy or practice impacts, a phased-in timeline approach and identifying needed resources (staff, budget, technology and others).

### Task Force Membership

- Michael Fisher, Instructional Dean (Co-Chair)
- Shawna Elsberry, Director of Student Retention (Co-Chair)
- Jenny Cruikshank, Health and Human Performance faculty
- Sara Henson, Human Development faculty
- Jake Agatucci, Humanities/Writing faculty
- Tina Hovekamp, Library
- Barbara Klett, Instructional Technology
- Vickery Viles, CAP Center
- John Chavez, CAP Center
- Tracy Dula, Career Services Coordinator
- Karen Roth, Multicultural Activities
- Breana Sylwester, Financial Aid
- Seana Barry, Admissions & Records

While ideally, the task force will make significant progress towards an implementation *plan* by the middle to end of spring 2014, work can continue into fall term as need be. The hope is that each task force can provide a report to the campus on the task force's intended direction, as well as an opportunity for feedback, prior to many faculty and staff leaving for summer term. However, it is important to note that work can continue into fall 2014 as needed, with a final implementation plan due by end of fall 2014.

### Background

In winter and spring 2013, the College led a campus wide process to identify and prioritize two to five student success initiatives aimed at making significant improvement in COCC credit student success benchmarks. Based on feedback from the campus, the campus identified three strategies: early enrollment deadlines and early interventions; first-year experience programs; and automatically awarding certificates and degrees to students as they earn them.

First Year Experience (FYE) programs are comprised of a connected set of student-centered activities intentionally designed to promote a holistic student development process as students transition through their first year of coursework. Foundational FYE student-centered activities include mandatory advising, pre-term orientation and freshman seminar courses (e.g., HD classes). Other supporting activities found in many best-practice FYE programs include pre-enrollment transition programming (placement testing, advising, financial literacy, math and writing remediation), career planning and readiness, academic planning and early alert coordination around high-risk behaviors and performance.

The [National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Student s in Transition](#) provides significant resources and research on FYE programs.

Considerations:

- **Connection to strategic planning:** Prior to beginning in-depth discussions, the task force should review the College’s strategic plan and determine how its work connects with the plan’s objectives.
- **Collaboration with Success from the Start project:** As a student success initiative, the Student Services Division developed “Success from the Start”, a program to realign enrollment-related activities into a coordinated, comprehensive experience for incoming students. In many FYE programs, streamlining the enrollment process is often the first activity developed. Both groups need to stay informed of the progress of each as the communication and timing of activities need to blend.
- **The “M” word: Mandatory:** Respected student success experts and organizations strongly recommend moving student success activities to mandatory requirements; a minimum, these organizations recommend doing so for specific at-risk student populations, but recommend all students to the degree possible. The FYE task force needs to consider if and which services should be mandatory when discussing policies and processes regarding FYE activities.
- **Bobcat Orientation: High faculty involvement at all stages:** High quality campus wide student orientations are faculty-driven. Faculty incentive must be incorporated into the current structure, albeit with Bobcat Orientation or other FYE activities.
- **Review the current HD 100 College Success course curriculum:** The FTE Task Force may wish to consider a redesign of our current HD 100 College Success. Such a redesign would enable an FYE program to have a ‘freshman seminar’ component for all students and/or develop population-specific FYE courses over time (e.g., CTE programs, Veteran students, etc.). A key consideration will be how to manage significant volume increases, including instructional impacts such as teaching loads, availability of instructors, embedding the material into existing courses, etc.
- **Evaluate academic advising for first-year students:** COCC’s faculty-led advising process has been core to student entry processes for several decades. Approximately eight years ago, however, the College created the CAP Center and as a result, provides a hybrid model to advising in which both faculty and professional advisors advise students. As the College has grown, it is time to evaluate this model to determine its ability to best serve students.

- **Phased- in approach:** Starting an FYE initiative is not an overnight process. The task force will need to address how to phase in the various activities associated with both foundational and supporting activities, as well as how to eventually tailor services to specific populations.
- **Assessment:** The task force should consider how and when the College will determine effectiveness of FYE activities and include assessment information in the final recommendation.

#### **Additional Information and Examples**

- The [National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Student s in Transition](#)
- [Greenville Technical College](#)
- [LaGuardia Community College](#)
- [Davidson County Community College](#)