

First-Year Experience: Connect. Engage. Succeed.
A Quality Enhancement Plan Initiative

**Volunteer State Community College
1480 Nashville Pike
Gallatin, Tennessee 37066**

Dates of Committee Visit: October 7-10, 2019

Dr. Jerry Faulkner, President

Prepared by: Jessica R. Lewis
Special Assistant for Strategic Initiatives
QEP Director
Phone: (615) 230-3530
Email: jessica.lewis@volstate.edu

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

LEADERSHIP TEAM

COMMITTEE MEMBER	COLLEGE POSITION
Jerry Faulkner	President
George Pimentel	Vice President of Academic Affairs
Emily Short	Vice President of Student Services
Colette Catania	Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, Planning and Assessment
Beth Carpenter	Vice President of Business and Finance
Karen Mitchell	Vice President of Resource Development & Executive Director of the College Foundation
Nicholas Bishop	Vice President of Economic and Community Development
Tami Wallace	Director of Public Relations

TOPIC SELECTION COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEMBER	COLLEGE POSITION
Patricia Anderson	Dean of Business and Technology (Former)
Lauren Aschoff	Student Representative
Renee Austin	Assistant Vice President of Business and Finance
Nancy Batson	Internal Audit Director
Carol Bazenet	Administrative Assistant, Student Services
Bob Berry	Faculty, Business & Technology
Sheela Brachey	Faculty, Mathematics
James Brown	Dean of Social Science and Education
Bob Carter	Faculty, Biology
Kimberly Chrisman	Faculty, Health Sciences
Billy Dye	Faculty, Biology
Tom Ekman	Dean of Mathematics and Science
Johnnie Griggs	Student Representative
Wanda Grimes	Faculty, English
Jennifer James	Chair of Communications
Pete Johnson	Adjunct Faculty, Social Science and Education
Talia Koronkiewicz	Assistant Vice President of Student Services (Former)
Hilary Marabeti	Assistant Vice President of Continuing Education
Scott McMillan	Faculty, Political Science

Rick Parrent	Administrator of Work-Based Learning
Greg Pryor	Faculty, History, Upper Cumberland
Doug Shaw	Chair of Biology
Carol Topping	Faculty, Social Science
Michael Torrence, Chair	Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs (Former)
Lynda Vincent	Library Services
Sheri Waltz	Faculty, Communications
Cynthia Wyatt	Faculty, English

TOPIC SELECTION REFINEMENT COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEMBER	COLLEGE POSITION
Patty Anderson	Dean of Business and Technology (Former)
Laura Black	Faculty, English
Kim Christmon	Faculty, Health Sciences
Billy Dye	Faculty, Biology
Peter Johnson	Faculty, History
Talia Koronkiewicz	Assistant Vice President of Student Services (Former)
Michael Torrence	Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs (Former)
Lynda Vincent	Library Services

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEMBER	COLLEGE POSITION
Len Assante	Faculty, Communication
Jennifer Brezina	Assistant Vice of Academic Affairs
Julie Brown	Library Services
Erin Bloom	Faculty, Biology
Jean Gorgie	Chair of Reading
Dasha Harris	Advisor (Former)
Jessica Lewis	Special Assistant for Strategic Initiatives
Crickett Pimentel	Assistant Director of Admissions
Tabitha Sherrell	Coordinator of Student Activities
Phillip Williams	Chair of Sociology

IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEMBER	COLLEGE POSITION
Kyle Barron	Assistant Vice President of Student Services
Erin Bloom	Faculty, Biology
Terry Bubb	Director of Advising and Testing
Sherrie Cannon	Coordinator of Student Services – Cookeville
Penny Duncan	Chair of Early Childhood Education
Jean Gorgie	Chair of Reading
Heather Harper	Manager of Student Engagement and Support
Jeff King	Manager of Diversity and Inclusion
Jessica Lewis, Chair	QEP Director
Krista Mazza Carter	Faculty, Psychology/FYEX Course Coordinator
Eric Melcher	Coordinator of Public Relations and Marketing
Ami Price	Faculty, English
Tabitha Sherrell	Coordinator of Student Activities
Cindy Thrasher	Faculty, Communication

TASK FORCE: CAMPUS CONNECT

MEMBER	COLLEGE POSITION
Kyle Barron	Assistant Vice President of Student Services
Erin Bloom	Faculty, Biology
Terry Bubb	Director of Advising and Testing
Pam Carey	Manager of Adult Learners and Veterans Affairs
Amanda Foster	Completion Advisor, Social Science and Education
Rhonda Gregory	Director of Distributed Education
Jessica Lewis, Chair	QEP Director
Crickett Pimentel	Assistant Director of Admissions

TASK FORCE: DISCOVERY DAYS

MEMBER	COLLEGE POSITION
Kyle Barron	Assistant Vice President of Student Services
Tom Ekman	Dean of Mathematics and Science
Jessica Lewis, Chair	QEP Director
Andrea Scruggs	Senior Administrative Associate, Distributed Education

Tabitha Sherrell	Coordinator of Student Activities
Tiffany Zwart	Coordinator of Student Support

TASK FORCE: FYEX COURSES

MEMBER	COLLEGE POSITION
Len Assante	Faculty, Communication
Maryam Farsian	Faculty, Biology
David Fuqua	Faculty, Economics
Jean Gorgie	Chair of Reading
Jessica Lewis	QEP Director
Krista Mazza Carter, Chair	Faculty, Psychology/FYEX Course Coordinator
Ami Price	Faculty, English
Cindy Thrasher	Faculty, Communication

ASSESSMENT TEAM

MEMBER	COLLEGE POSITION
Kyle Barron	Assistant Vice President of Student Services
Erin Bloom	Faculty, Biology
Colette Catania	Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, Planning and Assessment
Jessica Lewis	QEP Director
Krista Mazza Carter	Faculty, Psychology/FYEX Course Coordinator
Tabitha Sherrell	Coordinator of Student Activities

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

First-Year Experience – According to Koch and Gardner (2006), “the first-year experience is not a single program or initiative, but rather, an intentional combination of academic and co-curricular efforts within and across postsecondary institutions.” At Volunteer State Community College, the First-Year Experience consists of three distinct components working together to create the “intentional combination” of efforts aimed at student success by increasing retention and graduation rates. These components include Campus Connect, Discovery Days, and FYEX 1030 and FYEX 1040.

FYE – Common First-Year Experience acronym.

Campus Connect – New Student Orientation. Designed to connect students to the college community and provide an opportunity to meet with advisors and register for classes.

Discovery Days – New Student Convocation. Taking place the week before classes begin, this event provides students the chance to develop stronger connections with division staff, faculty, and peers, and gain a sense of belonging with the institution.

FYEX – Course pre-fix for the First-Year Experience courses embedded in the VSCC First-Year Experience. FYEX 1030 will be taken in the first semester and FYEX 1040 will be taken in the second semester.

Connection – Student satisfaction with interpersonal relationships and various social groups, and/or feelings of belonging and acceptance with organizations, programs, and faculty.

Sense of Belonging – Perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectedness, the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by, and important to the campus community or others on campus, including faculty and peers.

First-Time, Full-Time Student – Students enrolled in college for the first time as freshmen on a full-time basis.

High Impact Practices – High-Impact Practices (HIPs) facilitate learning in and outside of the classroom, require meaningful interactions with faculty and students, encourage collaboration with diverse others, and provide frequent and substantive feedback. First-Year Experience is considered a High Impact Practice.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTIONS	1
Executive Summary	1
Introduction to the College	3
CHAPTER 2: Comprehensive Institutional Process Identifying Key Issues	4
Process Used to Identify the QEP Topic	4
Evaluation of Data and Topic Development.....	7
Focus Groups and Final Recommendations	12
CHAPTER 3: Focusing on Student Learning and Success	17
Desired Student Learning Outcomes.....	17
Literature Review and Best Practices	18
CHAPTER 4: Actions to be Implemented	25
Strategies and Actions for the QEP	25
Timeline	32
CHAPTER 5: Institutional Resources	35
Organizational Structure	35
Roles and Responsibilities	35
Financial Resources	38
CHAPTER 6: Assessment	42
Assessment Cycle.....	46
Assessment Team	47
Assessment Timeline and Use of Assessment Data	48
References	51

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTIONS

Executive Summary

Volunteer State Community College's (VSCC) Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is designed to empower students to transition smoothly to college life, succeed academically, and become engaged members of the community and workforce. Focusing on establishing and developing student's connections to faculty, staff, and fellow students, and fostering a sense of belonging through the development and implementation of a First-Year Experience (FYE), VSCC's QEP seeks to advance the college's mission and strategic goals of student success through increased persistence and retention rates for first time freshman.

VSCC utilized its ongoing and comprehensive planning and evaluation process, as well as campus-wide input through a call for proposals, to narrow its focus to the development of the FYE. A thorough review of the current literature and FYE best practices revealed that opportunities for connection and belonging are key indicators for increased retention and persistence (Hausmann, Ye, Schofield, & Woods, 2009). This research led to the development of the three key components of VSCC's FYE: 1) Campus Connect: Smaller, student-focused orientation sessions with opportunities for students to engage with one another and learn about the resources and support available to them. 2) Discovery Days: New student convocation intended to promote a sense of belonging, familiarize students with the campus, and allow them to connect with division faculty, staff, and fellow students. 3) FYEX 1030 and FYEX 1040: Two 1.5-credit hour courses designed to prepare students for success both in and out of the classroom through a focus on academic success and career readiness strategies.

Through these components, VSCC's QEP will provide opportunities for connection, promote a sense of belonging, and foster a mindset of self-awareness and well-being.

Broad-based support for the program has been fostered through focus groups and the composition of the development and implementation committees and task forces. Through purposeful design, the membership of these committees and task forces were selected from various divisions and departments to provide a diverse representation in order to develop and implement a QEP that will impact the college as a whole and provide the support needed for a more intentional focus on student success.

VSCC's QEP intends to look at student success through the development of a sense of belonging and connection, fostering community through involvement in and exposure to campus culture, and specific learning outcomes for academic success and career readiness. To assess the achievement of student-learning outcomes and the overall student success goals, specific measures and means to collect data were developed. As the QEP pieces are piloted for full implementation, the assessment strategy will focus on gathering data and conducting analysis to guide the implementation process.

In support of VSCC's QEP, the college has developed a budget to ensure institutional capacity for the sustainability of the QEP. The college is prepared to dedicate resources towards personnel, faculty and staff development, marketing, assessment, and operating expenses. This commitment to student success is at the heart of VSCC's strategic goals and will help push forward the successful implementation of the FYE.

Introduction to the College

Volunteer State Community College, a public comprehensive two-year institution, provides educational opportunities to the citizens of eleven counties in northern middle Tennessee through course offerings held at the Main Campus (Gallatin), the Livingston Center, the Cookeville Higher Education Campus, Highland Crest (Springfield) and over 25 off-site locations throughout the service area. Flexible course offerings respond to emerging labor force and educational needs culminating in associate degrees in arts, sciences, fine arts, applied science, teaching, and certificates. Programs designed for transfer assist approximately 62% of the College's students. Students enrolled full-time represent 56% of the college population, with 79% younger than 25 years of age. Various student support programs exist to assist adult students, first-generation college students, underprepared students, dual-enrolled students, and part-time students in reaching their educational goals.

VSCC states its mission as “committed to providing quality innovative educational programs; strengthening community and workforce partnerships; promoting diversity, cultural awareness, and economic development; inspiring lifelong learning; and preparing students for successful careers, university transfer, and meaningful civic participation in a global society. This commitment to “lifelong learning” and preparing students for success in life after college by engaging them in their college career, serves as the cornerstone for the Quality Enhancement Plan.

CHAPTER 2: Comprehensive Institutional Process Identifying Key Issues

Process Used to Identify the QEP Topic

In anticipation of its 2019 reaffirmation process, the VSCC's Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Leadership Team tasked the college's existing Institutional Effectiveness Committee with beginning the topic selection process for the QEP. In February of 2017, the Institutional Effectiveness Committee conducted campus-wide brainstorming sessions. At each session (February 3rd and 17th), campus community members were provided with information about the purpose of the QEP and then asked to share ideas. Those contributing included students, faculty, staff, and administrators. These brainstorming sessions also served to orient the campus community to the purpose and processes involved in selecting, developing, and implementing a QEP.

In the fall of 2017, the Topic Selection Committee was formed by utilizing the existing standing committees of Instructional Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness. In accordance with SACSCOC Standard 7.2, the QEP Topic Selection Committee was tasked with identifying a topic for the college's quality enhancement plan that

- a. has been identified through the college's ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation process;
- b. has the broad-based support of institutional constituencies;
- c. focuses on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success;
- d. commits resources to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP; and
- e. includes a plan to assess achievement.

With this charge, the Topic Selection Committee developed a plan to gather data and identify a topic for Volunteer State Community College's Quality Enhancement Plan. This plan emphasized the college's planning process and depended heavily on the broad-based participation of College constituents. Committee members discussed potential topics and reviewed assessment information as a means to inform the topic selection process. The committee also worked on reviewing and providing input for the campus-wide call for QEP proposals, as well as the scoring rubric to be used when reviewing proposal submissions.

As a means of collecting additional information from the broader college community, the Topic Selection Committee garnered feedback during a panel discussion at the North Central P-16 Council meeting on October 20, 2017. The purpose of this Council is to bring together elementary, secondary, post-secondary, and local business leaders to look for ways in which they can align their work for the creation of a talent pipeline. The feedback received from this body pointed to potential QEP topics focused on soft skills and real-world experience and were considered by the Topic Selection Committee along with other recommendations from the campus community.

In November of 2017, the committee continued its efforts for topic selection by calling for QEP proposals from the campus community and received various proposals from faculty and staff, which included:

- Environmental Stewardship
- Taking the Lead — Career Selection and Development
- Educating the Whole Person
- Student Study Log

- Counseling and Wellness Center

The Topic Selection Committee reviewed each proposal and provided feedback to the submitters. After scoring the submissions using the adopted rubric, the Topic Selection Committee determined that the proposed topics were too narrow in scope and needed further development. To this end, the QEP Topic Selection Refinement Committee was formed and met on March 13, 2018 to review the proposals.

The QEP Topic Selection Refinement Subcommittee found themes of High Impact Practices (HIPs) in the submitted proposals. In addition to taking into account these themes, the committee discussed existing initiatives that were at the beginning stages and could benefit from becoming a focus for the QEP topic. These themes and initiatives included:

- First-Year Experience
- Service Learning
- International Education
- ePortfolio (method of documentation and could be integrated into a QEP)
- Capstone Courses (method of instruction and could be integrated into a QEP)
- Work Based Learning (method of instruction and could be integrated into a QEP)
- Honors Education
- Learning Communities
- Technology-Enhanced Learning
- Undergraduate Research

After extensive discussion, the Topic Selection Refinement Subcommittee developed the following recommendation to go to the Leadership Team for approval as the QEP Topic:

“A first-year experience will be developed to improve retention, persistence, and graduation rates and student engagement to further support retention initiatives. The

population to be served will be first-time students entering each fall semester and attending at the Gallatin campus with expansion to other campuses being explored. Components requiring further exploration and incorporation into the first-year experience are as follows.

1. Service learning with a focus on enhancing student learning. Student learning outcomes will evolve as service learning is further defined.
2. Career exploration and career preparation with a focus on developing the necessary tools to either obtain employment or transfer.
3. Learning literacy to focus on assisting students in defining themselves (who am I), where they are going (employment/transfer), goal setting (what do I want to do), and development of soft skills.
4. Wellness, including self-care and awareness.”

The Topic Selection Refinement Committee reached this recommendation after taking into consideration the five proposals submitted. The first-year experience incorporates concepts presented in the five proposals and will integrate some of the existing college initiatives that are in infancy. On March 19, 2018, the QEP topic was presented to the Leadership Team and approved. This recommendation served as a foundation for the QEP and was further refined. Adjustments were made by the committees that continued the work of developing and implementing the QEP.

Evaluation of Data and Topic Development

In May of 2018, the QEP Development Committee was formed to include a broad-based representation of campus constituents. The committee was charged with the development of the QEP, and met bi-weekly to review assessment information, further study best practices, and

develop a plan that would result in the formation of a First-Year Experience program. As the Development Committee explored the institutional and national data shown in the following tables, the topic presented by prior committees was further developed to determine what the First-Year Experience would look like at Volunteer State Community College.

The Development Committee’s early conversations centered on retention and persistence of First-Time Freshman at Volunteer State Community College. While Fall to Spring persistence rates at VSCC have remained above 70% (Table 1), the Fall to Fall persistence rates have continued to drop below 50% (Table 2). This data provided the Committee with an opportunity to research second-semester retention programming. While some colleges have started to incorporate this concept into student success work, as a whole, there is a gap in the current literature. Creating a focus on programming for the second semester was viewed as an important piece to be incorporated into the QEP.

Table 1: Fall to Spring Persistence Rates of First-Time Freshman Cohorts

	Spring Persistence	
	N	%
Fall 2012	1170	75.2%
Fall 2013	1134	72.6%
Fall 2014	1153	72.0%
Fall 2015	1711	71.3%
Fall 2016	1648	73.9%

Table 2: Fall to Fall Persistence Rates of First-Time Freshman Cohorts

	Cohort N	First Year	
		N	%
Fall 2012	1556	818	52.6%
Fall 2013	1563	769	49.2%
Fall 2014	1602	788	49.2%
Fall 2015	2400	1173	48.9%

Additionally, the Development Committee reviewed data from national surveys that further validated the Topic Selection Refinement Committee’s recommendation of First-Year Experience. The first data set reviewed was the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), with special attention placed on the benchmarks for Active and Collaborative Learning, as well as Support for Learners. Through this review, the Committee found there was a need to provide students with opportunities for connecting with other students, faculty, and the greater college community (Table 3). The CCSSE also highlighted insufficiencies in the areas of support and career counseling (Table 3). Many of these key findings were echoed in the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) (Table 4), as well as the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) (Table 5). With the data reflecting the need for increased opportunities to foster connection and belonging, the Committee felt it was important to place an emphasis on these concepts moving forward in the development of a First-Year Experience.

Table 3: CCSSE Benchmark Results

Active and Collaborative Learning Benchmark						
	2015		2016		2017	
	VSCC	Norm	VSCC	Norm	VSCC	Norm
Worked with other students on projects during class	2.33	2.55	2.38	2.56	2.41	2.59
Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	1.89	1.95	1.97	1.96	1.85	1.98
Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class	2.50	2.54	2.46	2.54	2.48	2.54
Support for Learners Benchmark						
	2015		2016		2017	
	VSCC	Norm	VSCC	Norm	VSCC	Norm
Providing the Support you need to help you succeed at this college	2.88	3.04	2.97	3.06	2.96	3.05
Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities	1.94	2.03	1.88	2.05	1.88	2.03

Providing the support you need to thrive socially	2.15	2.24	2.11	2.26	2.15	2.24
Career Counseling	1.37	1.45	1.35	1.46	0.39	0.56

Table 4: SENSE Benchmark Results

Engaged Learning Benchmark						
	2015		2016		2017	
	VSCC	Norm	VSCC	Norm	VSCC	Norm
Ask questions in class or contribute to class discussions	2.83	2.82	2.62	2.80	2.61	2.82
Work with other students on a project or assignment during class	2.45	2.49	2.23	2.47	2.20	2.48
Ask for help from an instructor regarding questions or problems related to a class	2.48	2.35	2.29	2.34	2.28	2.35

Table 5: SSI Benchmark Results

Academic Advising/Counseling						
	2015		2016		2017	
	VSCC	Norm	VSCC	Norm	VSCC	Norm
My academic advisor is approachable	5.25	5.52	5.33	5.52	5.43	5.59
My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual	4.93	5.22	5.12	5.22	5.14	5.29
This school does whatever it can to help me reach my educational goals	5.23	5.39	5.27	5.39	5.37	5.43
Student Centeredness						
	2015		2016		2017	
	VSCC	Norm	VSCC	Norm	VSCC	Norm
Most students feel a sense of belonging here	5.29	5.40	5.23	5.40	5.34	5.43
It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus	5.40	5.61	5.43	5.61	5.57	5.65
Administrators are approachable to students	5.37	5.47	5.28	5.47	5.48	5.52

*Norm refers to national data collected for comparison.

Once this data-informed foundation was laid, the Committee set to the task of exploring research and best practices related to the First-Year Experience. This provided the Committee with a list of potential components:

- Community Building (Belonging)
- Peer-mentoring/Success Coach
- Professional Development for Faculty/Staff
- Second Semester Course/Experience

- Summer Experience
- Self-Development Identity
- Autonomy
- Career Development
- Extended Orientation
- FYE Seminar Course
- Streamline curriculum
- Improve Active Learning
- Relationship Building
- Leadership Training and Roles
- Improved Integration of the Academic (Educational) Experience
- Proactive Advising
- Support Groups for Subgroups of Students
- Self-motivation

These components were then ranked by Committee members with Summer Experience, Community Building, Peer Mentoring, and Professional Development of Faculty and Staff getting the highest votes. The Committee continued exploring research and best practices in the following areas:

- 1st and 2nd Semester Courses
- Career Counseling/Exploration
- Peer Mentoring
- Relationship Building/Belongingness
- Self-Awareness
- Service Learning
- Summer Experiences
- Summer Orientation
- Wellness

Through this research and further discussions, the Development Committee made the decision to move forward with the following three components:

- A redesigned New Student Orientation with intentional opportunities for connection.
- New Student Convocation to take place the week before classes begin to foster engagement and a sense of belonging.
- Two First-Year experience courses, one for the fall and one for the spring. These courses would be designed to increase student success in the classroom and beyond.

A QEP update, including the components listed above, was given to the campus community during the faculty and staff convocation in August 2018.

Focus Groups and Final Recommendations

At the end of September and beginning of October 2018, the Development Committee hosted ten focus groups for faculty and staff to solicit feedback and participation. These focus groups highlighted the three components of the QEP and allowed for robust discussions of the strengths and weaknesses of the plan. The questions asked created an opportunity for the Development Committee to re-think some of the earlier suggestions and provided a chance to do further research. The Development Committee also felt that there was a need to gain additional feedback from the campus community to narrow down specifics. In collaboration with the office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, Planning and Assessment, the Committee developed a survey sent to the entire campus community. The results from this survey showed that there is not a one-size fits all approach to a first-year experience program. As can be seen in the literature review, this is a common finding. While many of the suggestions and recommendations from this survey lead to deeper conversations, it was clear that varied approaches would need to be taken to meet the needs of all students.

The final recommendation from the QEP Development Committee was presented to the SACSCOC Leadership Team in November of 2018 and read as follows:

“The First-Year Experience will consist of three components:

1. Orientation
2. Convocation

3. Two 1-credit hour courses

Description of components:

ORIENTATION:

- Full-day event
- Emphasis on small number of attendees (no more than 150 students).
- Two required sessions
- 2 pick-your-own sessions
- Days of orientation will be division specific with 6 sessions being for any major

This will begin engaging students with other students in their major and faculty within the selected major. Orientation will cover topics such as financial literacy, technology, college terminology, work/school balance, and a student panel on preparing for the first year in college, advising, registration prep, and student check-out.

CONVOCATION:

- Half-day
- Division specific sessions
- Select days of the week prior to beginning of classes

Continuation of engagement with interaction with Deans, Faculty and other students from the same division. Students will participate in campus tours, professor panel for Q&A, attend a technology workshop, and will also be encouraged to buy their books and check in with financial aid if needed. There will be a panel of faculty sharing information about what it will

take to succeed in the major and potential future employment opportunities. Peer mentors will assist with this event.

NOTE: Orientation will be required. Students who do not attend in person will be required to complete an online version prior to registering for classes. A computer lab or other location will need to be available during last minute activities to accommodate students who have not attended orientation.

TWO 1-CREDIT HOUR COURSES:

Students will attend one course in the fall and one course in the spring. The courses will be mandatory for all first-time freshman. The courses will be customized to meet the needs of students, and are in response to issues identified by faculty as barriers that have impacted VSCC students and prohibited success. In addition, the literature reviews have strong evidence that engagement through class participation leads to the retention of students.

Course One (College Success): Includes study strategies, goal setting, money management, physical/emotional well-being.

Course Two (Life and Career Success): Includes personal growth/professional growth, career readiness, resume, interviewing skills.”

The recommendation, along with the request to begin the formation of the Implementation Committee, was officially approved by the Leadership Team in February of 2019. The Implementation Committee was formed with representation from faculty, staff, and multiple campuses. As the Implementation Committee began to meet in February of 2019 to review the recommendation of the Development Committee, decisions were made to host 6

Campus Connect: New Student Orientation sessions with 300 students (50 students from each of the five academic divisions and 50 pre-nursing students). The decision to move from 150 students to 300 students came after staffing concerns were raised, with the majority of faculty unavailable in the summer due to 9-month contracts. Students attending these sessions would participate in full-day orientations and move around campus with their academic divisions to various workshops, campus tours, and advising and registration.

As the new format of Campus Connect began its pilot phase, it was recognized that the sessions and entirety of the day were longer than what was beneficial. Students were faced with information overload, and the full-day experience was draining on students, faculty, and staff. The QEP Director worked with various faculty, staff, and student stakeholders to adjust the plan and create an engaging program that would allow students to get the orientation information needed. Rather than a full-day orientation, the orientation presentation moved to one and a half hours and included topics such as the VSCC core values, expectations of college students, VSCC technology requirements, and registration navigation. Students were then advised and registered for courses and encouraged to attend a success fair that provided information about various support services available at Volunteer State Community College.

Once the pilot phase of Campus Connect was complete, and the college was able to review the overall experience, the QEP Director began to work with selected stakeholders to make adjustments that would lead to smaller orientation sessions, limited to 25-30 students and more flexible options to meet the needs of all students. Not only would this provide students with greater opportunities for connection, but it would also move from a focus on summer only orientation to allowing all students to receive the information needed for success

no matter the term of enrollment. Additionally, an online orientation is being developed to serve as an option for those students who are unable to attend a campus orientation session. The decision to move to smaller, more frequent orientations then allowed for the committee to create a plan for convocation that increased student engagement and would provide students the opportunity to meet with faculty and other students in the division. Additionally, the Implementation Committee decided to move from 1-credit hour courses, to 1.5-credit hour courses to allow for more robust course design and improve transferability. More information on the final format can be reviewed in Chapter 4: Actions to be Implemented.

CHAPTER 3: Focusing on Student Learning and Success

Desired Student Learning Outcomes

The purpose of VSCC's QEP, First-Year Experience, is to empower students to transition smoothly to college life, succeed academically, and become engaged members of the community and workforce. Through the development and implementation process, the QEP Committee Members established goals for each component of the QEP, as well as institutional goals that will be used to indirectly assess the overall impact of the First-Year Experience program. Each of the component goals is accompanied by specific student learning outcomes.

GOAL 1: Campus Connect - New Student Orientation

To connect students to the campus community and resources needed to foster student success.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Establish a connection with faculty, staff, and/or peers
- Establish a sense of belonging at VSCC

GOAL 2: Discovery Days - New Student Convocation

To engage students in their college experience and foster a sense of belonging.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Develop connections with division faculty, staff, and/or peers
- Develop a sense of belonging at VSCC

GOAL 3: FYEX 1030 and FYEX 1040 - First-Year Experience Courses

To provide students with the tools they need to be successful in the classroom and beyond.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Use collaborative learning activities and assignments to build teamwork skills
- Develop a sense of connection with faculty
- Develop a sense of connection with their classmates
- Report a sense of belonging in the class and at VSCC

GOAL 4: Institutional Goal

To improve retention rates of first-time students

GOAL 5: Institutional Goal

To increase graduation rates of first-time students

Literature Review and Best Practices

The Case for a First-Year Experience

A significant disconnect often appears during the first year of college; this disconnect may manifest itself in a student's academic life, from study habits, time management, and class preparation to the critical thinking needed in college level classes (Marina & McGuire, 2008). Institutions within the U.S. higher education system have attempted to reduce this possibility for disconnect through the creation of first-year experience programs that focus on increasing student-to-student interactions, student-to-faculty interactions, involvement and time on campus, linking the curricular and co-curricular, increasing academic expectations and levels of academic engagement, and assisting students who have insufficient academic preparation for college (Barefoot, 2000). Additionally, research shows that "students involved in some type of organized first-year intervention report higher levels of satisfaction and involvement in campus activities, achieve higher grades and are more likely to be retained and graduate" (Jamelske, 2009, p. 373-391). With this in mind, VSCC's focus on the development and implementation of a first-year experience program stems from a lack of coherency in existing programs and the need for structured opportunities to help students build a better foundation. Aligning with research, VSCC is working to build a program that will increase student-to-student and student-

to-faculty interactions, while at the same time increasing the levels of academic expectations and engagement.

New Student Orientation for All Students

Volunteer State Community College has had a New Student Orientation program heavily focused on first-time in college students entering in the fall. While these orientation sessions have been mandatory in nature, once the orientation sessions are over, the mandatory holds are lifted and students are no longer required to attend. The structure of orientation, coupled with the desire to provide more intentional opportunities for individual advising, is why orientation was chosen as a component of the First-Year Experience. Additionally, studies have shown that orientation helps in improving retention, degree completion, and academic performance (Cueso, 1997).

Recent trends in orientation programs are noted in the following areas: 1) Orientation programs have become more academic in nature and collaboration between faculty and student affairs personnel has increased (Strumpf & Wawrynski, 2000); 2) Technological advances have caused orientation leaders to examine delivery methods and find a balance which still provides human connections between students and their institutions (Mullendore & Banahan, 2005; Newman & Miller, 2002); 3) College populations have changed and the number of non-traditional students attending colleges and orientation sessions has increased, causing orientation leaders to provide flexible and efficient orientation programs (Mullendore & Banahan, 2005); 4) Family attendance and involvement in new student orientation has increased; and 5) Increasing diversity of students has provided opportunities for orientation professionals to examine program goals and objectives to ensure student needs are being met

(Mullendore & Banahan, 2005). These trends point to the need for VSCC to make a concerted effort to restructure the New Student Orientation programming to meet the needs of the changing student population and focus on retention efforts that put the students at the center of the plan.

A student's first exposure to an institution can be vitally important to their success. However, for many students, orientation can lead to a sense of information overload (Masterson, 2017). A model that has shown to be effective is that of student-led programming, where students design and lead orientations tailored to the specific student body of their institutions (Masterson, 2017). The literature also suggests that true orientation happens over multiple events as a way to "help get the information across to students [so that] they can remember [the information]" (Masterson, 2017). Volunteer State Community College plans to utilize these best practices through the design and implementation of a student-focused Orientation. The overall design of the QEP lends itself well to the idea of multiple points of information. The goal is not to make students experts, but to expose them to the information at various times throughout the first year to help establish the importance of the information.

As has been stated previously, the size of student groups within orientation has also been evaluated and will be restructured in order to provide students with interactive, student-to-student opportunities for connection. "The idea – that a stronger orientation can help lead to better student success and welfare – reinforces what many college administrators say: the freshman's initial experience on campus is among the most important parts of their college education" (Masterson, 2017).

Importance of Advising

One-on-one advising opportunities for students are essential interactions that occur during orientation and first-year experience programs. There is significant importance to developing advising relationships during the first-year and directly relates to CCSSE survey data, highlighted in Chapter 2: Comprehensive Institutional Process Identifying Key Issues, showing that VSCC students did not have a strong relationship with their academic advisor. Terry O'Banion (1994) suggests providing five major dimensions during the course of the student and academic advisor relationship: the exploration of life goals, vocational goals, program choice, course choice, and scheduling courses (O'Banion, 1994). Questions such as "Do I belong in this program?" and "What do I want my college career to look like?" should be considered by community college students throughout their time spent at Volunteer State Community College (O'Banion, 1994). Small numbers of advisees, continuing in-service programs for advisors, cooperation and coordination with academic divisions, and sufficient clerical help can improve existing academic models and strengthen relationships between faculty/staff and students (Donaldson, McKinney, Lee, & Pino, 2016). Understanding the importance of this process, VSCC is committed to providing students with greater opportunities to meet and connect with advisors.

Connection and a Sense of Belonging

According to Strayhorn (2012), sense of belonging can be defined as "students' perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectedness, and the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by, and important to the campus community or others on campus such as faculty, staff, and peers." Additionally,

Berger (1997) found that sense of community and interaction with members of the college community, such as faculty, staff, and peers, not only related to institutional commitment, but also to intention to persist.

Sense of belonging is often associated with positive and productive outcomes in areas such as education. For instance, a sense of belonging positively influences academic achievement, retention, and persistence (Hausmann, Schofield, & Woods, 2007; Rhee, 2008). Often, students' academic and social involvement influences their sense of belonging on campus and vice versa (Strayhorn, 2012). Through frequent, positive interactions with others on campus, students begin developing supportive relationships, which in turn impacts the college experience as a whole. These experiences enhance students' commitments, connections, and, consequently, retention.

Sense of belonging becomes of greater importance at various times and in various situations. For instance, the need for belonging "takes on increased significance in environments or situations that individuals experience as different, unfamiliar, or foreign, as well as in contexts where certain individuals are likely to feel marginalized, unsupported, or unwelcomed" (Strayhorn, 2012). Understanding the importance of this, VSCC is providing more targeted programming that will allow students to gain this connection and sense of belonging that are vital to retention.

First-Semester and Second-Semester Academic Experience

The culminating experience of the VSCC QEP is the first-semester and second-semester courses, which are designed to provide students with the academic support to succeed in the college environment and beyond. In a statistical analysis of the Virginia Community College

System, it was found that students participating in a college success course were more likely to persist than those not enrolled in such a course (Cho & Karp, 2013).

Having a focus on career exploration, development, and readiness are of critical importance as well. “How often and how are we creating opportunities for new students to engage in self-reflection and exploration around career-life issues? What can higher education professionals do to create and foster greater opportunities for students around career development and self-exploration? One suggestion is to recognize that intentional reflection focused on career-life planning, vocation, and exploration can potentially serve as a high-impact educational practice, especially for first-year students” (Stebbleton & Diamond, 2018).

Lepre (2007) provides results of a career development study, along with the results of other career development research that illustrates the effectiveness of targeting incoming first-year students. By including robust career elements in an FYE program, VSCC can “optimize the chances of reaching [undecided] students, given that research shows that a vast majority of new students are undecided. By early intervention, it is also thought that perhaps measures can be taken to keep additional students from becoming undecided and potentially being at risk for academic failure” (Lepre, 2007).

With regards to career readiness, employers and other stakeholders “are increasingly looking for graduates with proficiencies such as adaptability, communication skills, and the ability to solve complex problems. Therefore, it is important to understand whether undergraduates are ready for careers after graduation and have the qualities that employers are looking for” (Suvedi & Millenbah, 2016).

While a portion of incoming students will undoubtedly be highly focused and well-prepared, there is a larger segment that is underprepared and lacks focus. As Teague (2016) states, “some students enter college with clear career goals. However, these students still need support to make the college transition and successfully move toward their educational goals”. Focusing on the first-year students that need the most help should not be the sole goal. As Thorne (2016) states, “be unapologetic in challenging students and expecting them to rise to those challenges”.

Closing Remarks

As the literature demonstrates, student success in the first year is not predicated on a single program or initiative, but a combination of programming both inside and outside of the classroom. By placing a focus on providing students with opportunities to develop relationships throughout the campus community, VSCC has worked to create a First-Year Experience that will increase student connectedness and increase retention.

CHAPTER 4: Actions to be Implemented

Strategies and Actions for the QEP

Volunteer State Community College's QEP will include the implementation of three major components focusing on student success throughout the First-Year Experience. First-year students will make connections and develop a sense of belonging through participation in programs such as Campus Connect, Discovery Days, and the two First-Year Experience courses. This section contains descriptions of the various components, as well as an overall implementation timeline.

Campus Connect: New Student Orientation

Prior to the QEP, VSCC Campus Connect: New Student Orientation was hosted every summer with sessions of around 250-300 students. While students were given orientation information, there were no determined learning outcomes, and the format was constantly changed to meet the demands of faculty and staff. While advertised as mandatory, once orientations had been completed, all orientation holds were lifted, and any student could register for classes. This raised some concerns for the Implementation Committee and QEP leadership. Knowing that students whom complete orientation feel more connected to the campus, complete more credit hours, and earn higher GPAs (Glass & Garrett, 2005), the committee recognized the importance of changing the previous model.

During the summer of 2019, VSCC piloted new formats of Campus Connect to determine the best way in which to engage students, while at the same time meeting the learning objectives laid out by the committees. It was clear early on that the number of students did not provide for the opportunity to connect, nor did it allow for individual advising, which was one of

the goals outlined by the Development Committee. While there were strengths in the content provided, the limited number of orientations, and the timeframe in which they were available also prohibited many students from completing orientation. The open registration after the summer for students not attending “mandatory” orientation was also still present and caused concerns for committee members. Due to this, a restructured Campus Connect will take place in fall 2019 for students starting in spring 2020 and will be continued in summer 2020. These orientation sessions will seat approximately 25-30 students and last approximately two hours. Students will be provided with information needed for a successful start to the semester including what expectations are in place for college students, technology requirements, and VSCC’s student registration process. Students will also participate in campus tours, and have individual advising appointments. This restructured Campus Connect will be offered multiple times leading up to every semester and will be held at varying times of the day to accommodate a wider-range of the student population. Additionally, three weeks prior to the start of the semester, the capacity will increase to 50-100 students in order to meet the needs of last-minute student additions.

This flexibility will be mirrored in the design of Campus Connect sessions geared towards adult students whose needs are slightly different than students coming straight from high school. These sessions geared towards adult students will begin in the summer of 2020. The Adult Learners Campus Connect will take place in the evening, with weekend options currently being explored. The goal in providing adult learners with targeted orientations is to allow them to feel connected to their own experience and other adult learners who are attending VSCC for the first time.

In addition to this newly formatted Campus Connect, the QEP Director and other members of the campus community are working to launch Campus Connect Online, a fully online orientation program that will be available to students who are unable to make it to any of the on-campus Campus Connect sessions. Campus Connect Online will be available in the summer of 2020. This option will also be available the week before the semester begins for all students who have not had the opportunity to attend an on-campus session, as on-campus orientation sessions will not be offered at this time due to Discovery Days. Information within Campus Connect Online will be presented in text, audio, and video formats. The restructured format and addition of adult-focused and online sessions, highlights the importance of creating engaging content that students can interact with at orientation and beyond. With this in mind, the QEP Director is working with various departments across campus to design physical and virtual content that lends itself easily to student engagement and promotes the connection and sense of belonging the QEP is aiming to provide.

Campus Connect Training and Development

The current VSCC advising model utilizes both faculty and professional advisors. Since a major component of Campus Connect is providing students with the opportunity for one-on-one advising, it is important that those advising are well-trained in helping first-time students through the initial registration process. Currently, faculty advising for Campus Connect are not required to complete any formal training or professional development. In order to ensure that all advisors have the appropriate knowledge, required training will be created and implemented every spring semester in preparation for the fall and spring Campus Connect sessions.

Discovery Days: New Student Convocation

Discovery Days: New Student Convocation, will take place the week before classes begin in the fall and spring semesters. These days will be specific to the six academic divisions: Math and Science, Nursing, Health Sciences, Humanities, Business and Technology, and Social Science and Education. The purpose of this component is to allow students the opportunity to meet and interact with faculty from the student's chosen academic division, and to receive "just in time" information that will prepare students for a strong start to their first semester.

Students will be introduced to college administrators, learn about VSCC's mission and core values, hear from a panel of current students, and attend various breakout sessions. Topics covered in the breakout sessions include communicating with faculty, transfer and career readiness, health and safety on campus, life/school/work balance, and financial aid. Additionally, students will attend division-specific events through open houses where students will have the opportunity to meet with advisors.

Discovery Days will culminate in a closing ceremony and Pioneer Picnic. The closing ceremony serves as a final chance to bring everyone together before the start of the semester and send students off with any reminders needed. Once the Pioneer Picnic has ended, students will have the ability to pick up student IDs and parking passes, walk around campus with course schedules to determine where classrooms are located, attend student technology sessions, and buy books.

Process Mapping

As the Committees and QEP Director have continued to implement various strategies and components of the First-Year Experience, it has become clear there is a need to review processes. These will include communication sent to students prior to Campus Connect, Campus Connect Registration process, advising procedures, course registration processes, and the creation of new processes for Discovery Days and FYEX courses. This will allow for greater continuity, clearer communications, and more effective and efficient use of resources.

FYEX 1030 and FYEX 1040: First-Year Experience Courses

The decision to pursue the First-Year Experience Courses (FYEX130 & FYEX1040) was based on the understanding that “National research suggests that holistic first-year seminars have the most significant impact on student outcomes” (Cueso, 2010). Swing (2002) conducted a multi-institutional study of different types of first-year seminars, based on self-reported student outcomes from over 31,000 students attending 62 institutions. He found that college transition seminars which focused on academic and nonacademic (holistic) topics, “performed best overall across the ten learning outcomes investigated” (Swing, 2002). College transition seminars with a holistic focus were especially more effective than discipline-based seminars housed in academic departments that focused exclusively on introducing first-year students to an academic discipline or major field of study (Cuseo, 2010).

In spring of 2020 VSCC will pilot five sessions of FYEX 1030 in the first seven weeks of the semester. This course will include strategies for college success. Campus resources, college culture and traditions, mindset, personal responsibility, self-motivation, self-management, interdependence, self-awareness, and emotional intelligence will be emphasized. FYEX 1040

will also have five sessions to be piloted during the second seven weeks of the spring 2020 semester. This course will include strategies for career readiness and success. Career exploration, resume and cover letter writing, interview skills, and soft skills will be emphasized. For the purposes of piloting, these courses will be offered in one semester, but as the QEP is moved into full implementation, the majority of FYEX 1030 courses will be offered in the fall and a majority FYEX 1040 courses will be offered in the spring. It is also anticipated for there to be at least two sections of FYEX 1030 offered in the spring semester for first-time, full-time students who are starting classes that semester. Additionally, at least two sections of FYEX 1040 will be offered in fall in the second year of implementation for students who started freshman year the previous spring semester. As mentioned in the literature review, this decision was made to engage students in a full first-year experience with the goal of increasing retention.

The QEP Director and FYEX Course Coordinator will work with the Advising department to recruit students to participate in the pilot offering of the FYEX courses. Students with 3-credit hours of elective availability will be encouraged to register in both courses. As the QEP moves forward, the two 1.5-credit hour courses will become a college requirement for all first-time, full-time students. Organizationally, these courses are housed within the division of Social Science and Education.

FYEX 1030 and FYEX 1040 Instructor Training and Development

Faculty training for FYEX 1030 and FYEX 1040 will be provided to instructors in a multi-level plan. It is important to note that faculty must attend level 1 training and level 2 training for the course they are planning to teach in order to qualify for a specific FYEX course.

- **Level 1: On Course I Workshop:** All FYEX faculty will be required to attend the On Course I training to learn about the eight domains related to success of students. These domains include: personal responsibility, self-motivation, self-management, interdependence, self-awareness, life-long learning, emotional intelligence, and belief in oneself. In addition to learning about these domains, on course training teaches learning centered structures and strategies and empowerment strategies that will be used in FYEX classes.
- **Level 2: FYEX 1030 Content Training:** This training will prepare faculty to teach the 1030 content. The training will discuss class expectations, class topics and activities, assessment standardization training, etc. specific to the 1030 class. This will be VSCC Faculty led.
- **Level 2: FYEX 1040 Content Training:** This training will prepare faculty to teach the 1040 content. The training will discuss class expectations, class topics and activities, assessment standardization training, etc. specific to the 1040 class. This will be VSCC Faculty led.
- **Level 3: FYEX Semester Update Training:** This brief training which will focus on assessment findings from the previous semesters and will address the changes that have been made in the course to address the assessment findings. This will be VSCC faculty led. Based on the amount of content, this could be based in Desire2Learn, VSCC's course management system, or could be a face-to-face training and will occur throughout the QEP Implementation

Communication

In order to keep open lines of communication during the QEP implementation process, the QEP Director will be hosting information and brainstorming sessions each month during year one and two, and every other month in the remaining years. These information sessions will take place at each of the campuses with various stakeholders, including students. This is designed to continue the broad-based support of institutional constituents and gain feedback for improvement of the QEP.

Timeline

YEAR ONE: 2019-2020	
Summer 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot new format of Campus Connect • Build Assessment Plan • Build Professional Development Plan
Fall 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot Spring Campus Connect • Complete design of FYEX 1030 & FYEX 1040 • Training for FYEX Pilot Instructors • Follow Assessment Cycle*
Spring 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot Spring Discovery Days • Pilot FYEX 1030 & FYEX 1040 • Training for Campus Connect • Follow Assessment Cycle • Review of Resources
YEAR TWO: 2020-2021	
Summer 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus Connect • Pilot Campus Connect Online • Pilot Adult Learners Campus Connect • Training for FYEX 1030 Instructors • Follow Assessment Cycle
Fall 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot Fall Discovery Days • FYEX 1030 for new freshmen • Spring Campus Connect • Spring Campus Connect Online • Spring Adult Learners Campus Connect • Training for FYEX 1030 & FYEX 1040 Instructors • Follow Assessment Cycle
Spring 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring Discovery Days • FYEX 1040 for second semester freshmen

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FYEX 1030 for new freshmen • Training for Campus Connect • Follow Assessment Cycle • Review of Resources
YEAR THREE: 2021-2022	
Summer 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus Connect • Campus Connect Online • Adult Learners Campus Connect • Training for FYEX 1030 & FYEX 1040 Instructors • Follow Assessment Cycle
Fall 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall Discovery Days • FYEX 1030 for new freshmen • FYEX 1040 for second semester freshmen • Spring Campus Connect • Spring Campus Connect Online • Spring Adult Learners Campus Connect • Training for FYEX 1030 & FYEX 1040 Instructors • Follow Assessment Cycle
Spring 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring Discovery Days • FYEX 1040 for second semester freshmen • FYEX 1030 for new freshmen • Training for Campus Connect • Follow Assessment Cycle • Review of Resources
YEAR FOUR: 2022-2023	
Summer 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus Connect • Campus Connect Online • Adult Learners Campus Connect • Training for FYEX 1030 & FYEX 1040 Instructors • Follow Assessment Cycle
Fall 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall Discovery Days • FYEX 1030 for new freshmen • FYEX 1040 for second semester freshmen • Spring Campus Connect • Spring Campus Connect Online • Spring Adult Learners Campus Connect • Training for FYEX 1030 & FYEX 1040 Instructors • Follow Assessment Cycle
Spring 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring Discovery Days • FYEX 1040 for second semester freshmen • FYEX 1030 for new freshmen • Training for Campus Connect • Follow Assessment Cycle • Review of Resources

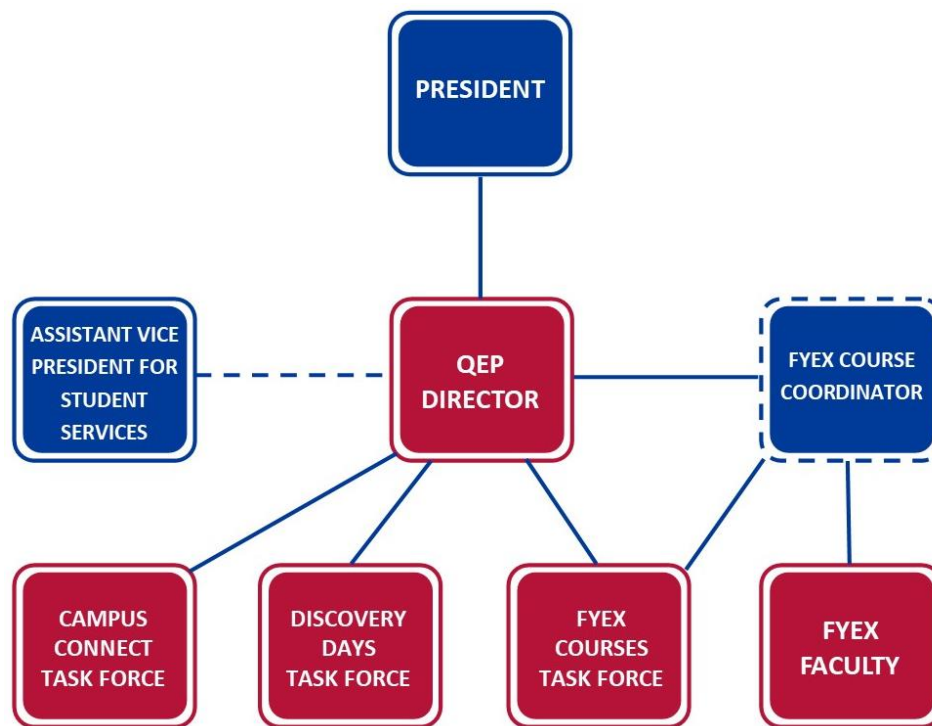
YEAR FIVE: 2023-2024	
Summer 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus Connect • Campus Connect Online • Adult Learners Campus Connect • Training for FYEX 1030 & FYEX 1040 Instructors • Follow Assessment Cycle
Fall 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall Discovery Days • FYEX 1030 for new freshmen • FYEX 1040 for second semester freshmen • Spring Campus Connect • Spring Online Campus Connect • Spring Adult Learners Campus Connects • Training for FYEX 1030 & FYEX 1040 Instructors • Follow Assessment Cycle
Spring 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring Discovery Days • FYEX 1040 for second semester freshmen • FYEX 1030 for new freshmen • Training for Campus Connect • Follow Assessment Cycle • Review of Resources • Prepare five year report

* Full timeline for assessment can be found in Chapter 6: Assessment

CHAPTER 5: Institutional Resources

Organizational Structure

The implementation of VSCC's First-Year Experience will require highly qualified leadership and oversight to ensure the success of the QEP. As the College moves from planning and development to implementation, the following figure depicts the relationships among various organizational components responsible for the implementation of the QEP.



Roles and Responsibilities

The following summary outlines the proposed roles of the positions and teams responsible for the various tasks associated with the implementation of the QEP.

College President

The College President supports the overall vision and progress of the First-Year Experience and directly oversees the QEP Director.

QEP Director

In order to ensure strong leadership, the QEP Development Committee created the oversight position of the QEP Director to serve as the primary point of contact for the QEP. Reporting directly to the President, the QEP Director will assume the primary role of managing, implementing, and monitoring the QEP by assuming the following duties:

- Providing leadership for the implementation of the QEP
- Ensuring that various areas communicate, meet deadlines, and have the necessary resources to implement the strategies of the QEP
- Monitoring the QEP budget
- Overseeing and meeting regularly with the Campus Connect Task Force and Discovery Days Task Force
- Collaborating with the FYEX Course Coordinator and FYEX Courses Task Force to ensure that the courses are maintained
- Teaching at least one section of FYEX per semester
- Reviewing progress on the implementation
- Identifying and discussing issues related to the implementation
- Reviewing and analyzing data with the Assessment Team*
- Collaborating with the various Task Forces to implement necessary changes to the QEP process based on evaluation/assessment data
- Conducting annual assessment of the QEP and presenting findings to the SACSCOC Leadership Team
- Updating the College constituents regularly regarding the QEP progress

*More information about the Assessment Team can be found in Chapter 6: Assessment

FYEX Course Coordinator

The FYEX Course Coordinator was selected from existing faculty to oversee the development and implementation of the FYEX curriculum and daily operations of the course.

This includes the development and oversight of faculty hiring and training. The FYEX Course Coordinator will also chair the FYEX Courses Task Force and work closely with the QEP Director to ensure that QEP goals and learning outcomes are being met. With the FYEX courses housed in Social Science and Education, the FYEX Course Coordinator will report directly to the Dean of that division.

Assistant Vice President for Student Services

The Assistant Vice President for Student Services will serve as the QEP liaison for Student Services. The AVP will serve on the Campus Connect Task Force, Discovery Days Task Force, and be a part of the QEP Assessment Team.

Campus Connect Task Force

The Campus Connect Task Force will assist the QEP Director in reviewing student success data pertinent to the QEP goals for Campus Connect, as well as reviewing and revising QEP implementation plans needed to maintain the success of Campus Connect and ensure sustainability. The Campus Connect Task Force has already been formed and will meet on a bi-weekly basis.

Discovery Days Task Force

The Discovery Days Task Force will assist the QEP Director in reviewing student success data pertinent to the QEP goals for Discovery Days, as well as reviewing and revising QEP implementation plans needed to maintain the success of Discovery Days and ensure sustainability. The Discovery Days Task Force has already been formed and will meet on a bi-weekly basis.

FYEX Courses Task Force

The FYEX Courses Task Force will assist the FYEX Course Coordinator and QEP Director in reviewing student success data pertinent to the QEP goals for FYEX 1030 and FYEX 1040, as well as reviewing and revising QEP implementation plans to maintain the success of FYEX 1030 and FYEX 1040 and ensure sustainability. The FYEX Courses Task Force has already been formed and will meet on a bi-weekly basis.

FYEX Faculty

FYEX Faculty will consist of full-time faculty, staff, and adjuncts. They will be responsible for course instruction and will be required to complete training and professional development.

Financial Resources

VSCC is committed to improving the success of first year students by providing opportunities for connection and fostering a sense of belonging. To support the implementation of the First-Year Experience, VSCC has allocated the necessary administrative, fiscal, and human resources. Budget hearings are completed every spring by the Leadership Team to determine fiscal allocations. The QEP Director will take part in the hearings to include QEP budget items, which will be reviewed every spring by members of the QEP Task Forces. As the QEP evolves, it is anticipated that the budget needs may vary from these projections and appropriate adjustments will be made as needed.

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
<u>Personnel</u>					
QEP Director	\$69,256	\$70,641	\$72,053	\$73,494	\$74,963
FYEX Course Coordinator: Release Time	\$20,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000
Administrative Assistant	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
Supplemental Faculty Advising	\$33,000	\$33,000	\$33,000	\$33,000	\$33,000

Course Faculty	\$10,000	\$186,000	\$186,000	\$186,000	\$186,000
Professional Development and Training					
Course Faculty Training	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Faculty Professional Development	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
QEP Leadership Development	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$4,500
Non-Course Components					
Campus Connect	\$58,700	\$15,500	\$15,500	\$15,500	\$15,500
Discovery Days	\$15,500	\$58,700	\$58,700	\$58,700	\$58,700
Additional Expenses					
Technology	\$62,000	\$23,500	\$23,500	\$23,500	\$23,500
Marketing and Promotions	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000

Projected Implementation Cost Detail

Personnel:

- **QEP Director** – The QEP Director comes from the currently funded position of Special Assistant for Strategic Initiatives within the Office of the President. Duties beyond the QEP were redirected to the Vice President of Economic and Community Development.
- **FYEX Course Coordinator** – The FYEX Course Coordinator was selected from existing faculty. The Psychology faculty member selected will receive course release time for 5 courses in year one, and three courses for the remainder of the implementation. Former course load will be covered by adjunct instructors.
- **Administrative Assistant** – Administrative support will be a come from a currently funded position within the Office of the President. Former responsibilities of this position were redirected to the Administrative Assistant for the Vice President of Economic and Community Development.

- **Supplemental Faculty Advising** – New funding was approved to support payment for 9-month faculty, adjuncts, and full-time staff to assist with advising during Campus Connect.
- **Course Faculty** – Some new funding will be used for course faculty. Other funding will come from the reduction of faculty teaching VSCC1000 – College Success, a course formerly required for students taking reading remediation. The initial \$10,000 in year one is for pilot instructors.

Professional Development and Training:

- **Course Faculty Training** – Through the utilization of the On Course textbook for the FYEX Courses, specialized training through the company will be brought to campus for faculty training.
- **Faculty Professional Development** – FYEX Course Coordinator will attend national conferences aimed at teaching students in the first year and the First-Year Experience.
- **QEP Leadership Development** – The QEP Director will attend the National Conference on First-Year Experience and Orientation. This will include conference fees and travel.

Non-Course Components

- **Campus Connect** – In the pilot phase, Campus Connect was the larger event which is why the budget is larger in the first year. Moving forward with the restructured Campus Connect, the reduced budget will cover the cost of materials provided to students including pens and snacks, as well as print materials.

- **Discovery Days** – The budget for Discovery Days will include materials for students including t-shirts, planners, and giveaways. Additionally, it will cover the cost of the Pioneer Picnic.

Additional Expenses

- **Technology** – To increase ability to track student engagement, this budget item will cover the cost of new Student ID machines and event tracking software.
- **Marketing and Promotions** – Marketing and promotion of the QEP to the college and community at large will utilize a variety of media, such as banners, printed materials, and other on-campus promotions. Additional incentives will be developed and circulated throughout the QEP implementation period.

CHAPTER 6: Assessment

A comprehensive evaluation plan will measure the impact of VSCC's QEP, First-Year Experience. This assessment plan will help guide decisions as the components are more fully implemented throughout the five year process. Measurable outcomes will provide evidence of the progress being made toward achieving the goals set out by the QEP. The QEP Director and the Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, Planning, and Assessment (IERPA), with assistance from faculty and staff, will provide leadership for the implementation and evaluation of the QEP assessment and changes made based on assessment results.

The evaluation plan will focus on both student success and on the effectiveness of the overall initiative. Therefore, assessments will be individually conducted on each of the three QEP components as well as at the institutional level. The plan is designed to be both comprehensive and flexible to allow for adjustments as data are used to determine what is working and what is not. The assessment results will be used to make continuous improvements to the strategies in each QEP component.

Student learning outcomes have been identified and will be assessed for each component of the QEP: Campus Connect, Discovery Days, and the FYEX courses. The following charts provide the assessment tool to be used, designation of formative or summative assessment, baseline data, time frames, and responsible parties. As the QEP progresses, columns will be added for results and actions taken in response to those results.

QEP Goal #1:				
Connect students to the campus community and resources needed to foster student success				
<i>Student Learning Outcome #1: Students attending Campus Connect will establish a connection with faculty, staff, and/or peers</i>				
Assessment	Formative/ Summative	Baseline	Timeframe	Responsible Party
Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992)	Summative	Completed at orientation sessions in summer 2019	Completed at the end of orientation	QEP Director, Faculty, and IERPA Staff
<i>Student Learning Outcome #2: Students attending Campus Connect will establish a sense of community and belonging at VSCC</i>				
Assessment	Formative/ Summative	Baseline	Timeframe	Responsible Party
University Belonging Questionnaire (Slaten, Elison, Deemer, Hughes, and Shemwell, 2018)	Summative	Completed at orientation sessions in Summer 2019	Completed at the end of orientation	QEP Director, Faculty, and IERPA Staff

QEP Goal #2:				
Engage students in their college experience and foster a sense of belonging				
<i>Student Learning Outcome #1: Students attending Discovery Days will develop connections with division faculty, staff, and/or peers</i>				
Assessment	Formative/ Summative	Baseline	Timeframe	Responsible Party
Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992)	Summative	Completed at orientation sessions in summer 2019	Completed at the end of convocation	QEP Director, Faculty, and IERPA Staff
<i>Student Learning Outcome #2: Students attending Discovery Days will develop a sense of community and belonging at VSCC</i>				
Assessment	Formative/ Summative	Baseline	Timeframe	Responsible Party
University Belonging Questionnaire (Slaten, Elison, Deemer, Hughes, and Shemwell, 2018)	Summative	Completed at orientation sessions in Summer 2019	Completed at the end of convocation	QEP Director, Faculty, and IERPA Staff

**QEP Goal #3:
Provide students with the tools they need to be successful in the classroom and beyond**

Student Learning Outcome #1: Students taking FYEX 1030 and FYEX 1040 will use collaborative learning activities to build teamwork skills

Assessment	Formative/ Summative	Baseline	Timeframe	Responsible Party
AACU Teamwork Rubric (Rhodes, 2010)	Formative	Baseline will be established Spring 2020	Students will complete this assessment a total of four times, twice in FYEX 1030 and twice in FYEX 1040	FYEX 1030 and 1040 instructors

Student Learning Outcome #2: Students taking FYEX 1030 and FYEX 1040 will develop a sense of connection with faculty

Assessment	Formative/ Summative	Baseline	Timeframe	Responsible Party
Perceived faculty support subscale on the Sense of Belonging Scale - Revised (Hoffman, Richmond, Morrow, & Salomone, 2002-2003)	Formative	Baseline will be established with the pilot students in FYEX 1030 in spring 2020	Assessment will be completed within the first 3 weeks of FYEX 1030	FYEX 1030 instructors
Perceived faculty support subscale on the Sense of Belonging Scale - Revised (Hoffman, Richmond, Morrow, & Salomone, 2002-2003)	Summative	Baseline will be established with the pilot students in FYEX 1030 in spring 2020	Assessment will be completed at the end of FYEX 1040	FYEX 1040 instructors
Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992)	Summative	Completed at orientation sessions in summer 2019	Completed at the end of FYEX 1030 and FYEX 1040	FYEX 1030 and 1040 instructors

Student Learning Outcome #3: Students taking FYEX 1030 and FYEX 1040 will develop a sense of connection with classmates

Assessment	Formative/ Summative	Baseline	Timeframe	Responsible Party
Perceived peer support subscale on the Sense of Belonging Scale -	Formative	Baseline will be established with the pilot	Assessment will be completed within the first 3	FYEX 1030 instructors

Revised (Hoffman, Richmond, Morrow, & Salomone, 2002-2003)		students in FYEX 1030 in spring 2020	weeks of FYEX 1030	
Perceived peer support subscale on the Sense of Belonging Scale - Revised (Hoffman, Richmond, Morrow, & Salomone, 2002-2003)	Summative	Baseline will be established with the pilot students in FYEX 1030 in spring 2020	Assessment will be completed at the end of FYEX 1040	FYEX 1040 instructors
Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992)	Summative	Completed at orientation sessions in summer 2019	Completed at the end of FYEX 1030 and FYEX 1040	FYEX 1030 and FYEX 1040 instructors
<i>Student Learning Outcome #4: Students taking FYEX 1030 and FYEX 1040 will report a sense of belonging in the class at VSCC</i>				
Assessment	Formative/ Summative	Baseline	Timeframe	Responsible Party
Total score on Sense of Belonging Scale - Revised (Hoffman, Richmond, Morrow, & Salomone, 2002-2003)	Formative	Baseline will be established with the pilot students in FYEX 1030 in spring 2020	Assessment will be completed within the first 3 weeks of FYEX 1030	FYEX 1030 instructors
Total score on Sense of Belonging Scale - Revised (Hoffman, Richmond, Morrow, & Salomone, 2002-2003)	Summative	Baseline will be established with the pilot students in FYEX 1030 in spring 2020	Assessment will be completed at the end of FYEX 1040	FYEX 1040 instructors
University Belonging Questionnaire (Slaten, Elison, Deemer, Hughes, and Shemwell, 2018)	Summative	Completed at orientation sessions in Summer 2019	Completed at the end of FYEX 1030 and FYEX 1040	FYEX 1030 and FYEX 1040 instructors

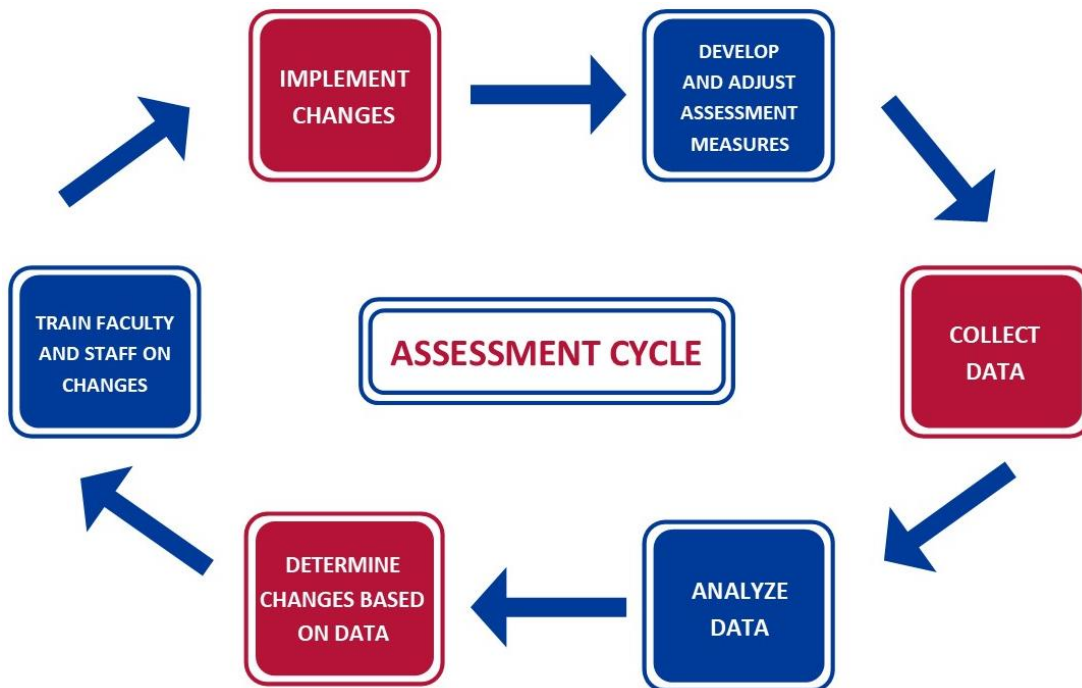
QEP Goal #4: Improve retention rates of first-time students				
Assessment	Formative/ Summative	Baseline	Timeframe	Responsible Party
Fall to Spring Retention Rate	Summative	Fall 2017: 71.6%	Calculated after the census	IERPA

			deadline each spring semester	
Fall to Fall Retention Rate	Summative	Fall 2017: 48.8%	Calculated after the census deadline each fall semester	IERPA

QEP Goal #5: Improve graduation rates of first-time students				
Assessment	Formative/ Summative	Baseline	Timeframe	Responsible Party
Four Semester Graduation Rate	Summative	Fall 2015: 9.0%	At the end of each semester	IERPA
Five Semester Graduation Rate	Summative	Fall 2015: 15.8%	At the end of each semester	IERPA
Six Semester Graduation Rate	Summative	Fall 2015: 21.4%	At the end of each semester	IERPA

Assessment Cycle

Below is a visual representation of the Assessment Cycle:



- **Develop Assessment Measures** – The assessment cycle for the VSCC QEP began with the development of the assessment measures.
- **Collect Data** – At the end of each component of the QEP, data will be collected through various measurements.
- **Analyze Data** – Data will then be analyzed by the Assessment Team.
- **Determine Changes Based on Data** – Each task force will be provided with an analysis of the data from specific components. The members will then work together to determine any changes that should be made.
- **Train Faculty and Staff on Changes** – If/when changes are made, the task force responsible for the changes will develop training for faculty and staff on the new process or procedure.
- **Implement Changes** – Once faculty and staff have been trained on any changes, the changes will be implemented.
- **Adjust Assessment Measures** – Based on changes made, the Assessment Team will work together to determine if adjustments to the assessment measures need to be made.

Assessment Team

The Assessment Team will consist of the Vice President of IERPA, QEP Director, FYEX Coordinator, Assistant Vice President of Student Services, along with one faculty and one staff who are serving on at least one of the task forces. This team will be responsible for collecting and analyzing the data. They will then work with each task force to determine the changes that

need to be made and, once any changes are implemented, will adjust assessment measures as needed.

Assessment Timeline and Use of Assessment Data

YEAR ONE: 2019-2020	
Summer 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build 5-year Assessment Plan • Collect Data from Campus Connect Fall Sessions
Fall 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze Data from Campus Connect Fall Sessions • Determine Changes for Campus Connect • Training and Implementation of any Changes Made • Collect Data from Campus Connect Spring Sessions • Collect Data from Discovery Days Spring Sessions
Spring 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze Data from Campus Connect Spring Sessions • Determine Changes for Campus Connect • Training and Implementation of any Changes Made • Collect Data for Pilot FYEX Courses
YEAR TWO: 2020-2021	
Summer 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze Data for Pilot FYEX Courses • Determine Changes for FYEX Courses • Training and Implementation of any Changes Made • Collect Data from Campus Connect Fall Sessions
Fall 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect Data from Discovery Days Fall Sessions • Analyze Data for Campus Connect Fall Sessions • Determine Changes for Campus Connect • Training and Implementation of any Changes Made • Collect Data from Campus Connect Spring Sessions • Collect Data from Discovery Days Spring Sessions • Collect Data from FYEX 1030
Spring 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze Data from Campus Connect Spring Sessions • Analyze Data from Discovery Days Spring Sessions • Analyze Data from FYEX 1040 • Determine Changes for Campus Connect, Discovery Days, and FYEX 1030 • Training and Implementation of any Changes Made • Collect Data from FYEX 1040
YEAR THREE: 2021-2022	
Summer 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze Data from FYEX 1040 • Determine Changes for FYEX 1040 • Training and Implementation of any Changes Made • Collect Data from Campus Connect Fall Sessions
Fall 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect Data from Discovery Days Fall Sessions • Analyze Data for Campus Connect Fall Sessions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine Changes for Campus Connect • Training and Implementation of any Changes Made • Collect Data from Campus Connect Spring Sessions • Collect Data from Discovery Days Spring Sessions • Collect Data from FYEX 1030
Spring 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze Data from Campus Connect Spring Sessions • Analyze Data from Discovery Days Spring Sessions • Analyze Data from FYEX 1040 • Determine Changes for Campus Connect, Discovery Days, and FYEX 1030 • Training and Implementation of any Changes Made • Collect Data from FYEX 1040
YEAR FOUR 2022-2023	
Summer 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze Data from FYEX 1040 • Determine Changes for FYEX 1040 • Training and Implementation of any Changes Made • Collect Data from Campus Connect Fall Sessions
Fall 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect Data from Discovery Days Fall Sessions • Analyze Data for Campus Connect Fall Sessions • Determine Changes for Campus Connect • Training and Implementation of any Changes Made • Collect Data from Campus Connect Spring Sessions • Collect Data from Discovery Days Spring Sessions • Collect Data from FYEX 1030
Spring 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze Data from Campus Connect Spring Sessions • Analyze Data from Discovery Days Spring Sessions • Analyze Data from FYEX 1040 • Determine Changes for Campus Connect, Discovery Days, and FYEX 1030 • Training and Implementation of any Changes Made • Collect Data from FYEX 1040
YEAR FIVE: 2023-2024	
Summer 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze Data from FYEX 1040 • Determine Changes for FYEX 1040 • Training and Implementation of any Changes Made • Collect Data from Campus Connect Fall Sessions
Fall 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect Data from Discovery Days Fall Sessions • Analyze Data for Campus Connect Fall Sessions • Determine Changes for Campus Connect • Training and Implementation of any Changes Made • Collect Data from Campus Connect Spring Sessions • Collect Data from Discovery Days Spring Sessions • Collect Data from FYEX 1030
Spring 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze Data from Campus Connect Spring Sessions • Analyze Data from Discovery Days Spring Sessions • Analyze Data from FYEX 1040

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine Changes for Campus Connect, Discovery Days, and FYEX 1030 • Training and Implementation of any Changes Made • Collect Data from FYEX 1040
--	---

Because no established baseline measures or peer benchmarks are available for many of these items, some target values might require further adjustments after the second year of the QEP implementation. To review and address expectations that appear either too high or too low will be a key responsibility of the Assessment Team. Any adjustments made will be conducted in synergy between the Assessment Team, the QEP Director, and the Task Forces.

The annual QEP Evaluation Report will contain data summaries and assessment details for the student learning outcomes and overall program outcomes, as appropriate. The data will be summarized and presented to various stakeholders for further discussion and input. The annual report will also provide progress and overall effectiveness of the QEP components, and will be disseminated to the campus community during the annual fall convocation. Part of the analyses will be a detailed review of all QEP goals and outcomes, including how each implementation component has been developing.

References

- Aron, A., Aron E. N., & Smollan, D. (1992). Inclusion of other in the self scale and the structure of interpersonal closeness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *63*, 596-612.
- Barefoot, B. O. (2000). The first-year experience: Are we making it any better?. *About campus*, *4*(6), 12-18.
- Berger, J.B. (1997). Students' sense of community in residence halls, social integration, and first-year persistence. *Journal of College Student Development*, *38*, 441-452.
- Cho, S. W., & Karp, M. M. (2013). Student success courses in the community college: Early enrollment and educational outcomes. *Community College Review*, *41*(1), 86-103.
- Cuseo, J. B. (1997). Freshman Orientation Seminar at Community Colleges: A Research-Based Rationale for Its Value, Content, and Delivery.
- Cuseo, J. B. (2010). The empirical case for the first-year seminar: Promoting positive student outcomes and campus-wide benefits. In *The first-year seminar: Research-based recommendations for course design, delivery, and assessment*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.
- Donaldson, P., McKinney, L., Lee, M., & Pino, D. (2016). First-year community college students' perceptions of and attitudes toward intrusive academic advising. *NACADA Journal*, *36*(1), 30-42.

- Glass, Jr, J. C. & Garrett, M.S. (2005). Student participation in a college orientation course, retention and grade point average. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* 19(2), 117-132.
- Hausmann, L. R., Ye, F., Schofield, J. W., & Woods, R. L. (2009). Sense of belonging and persistence in White and African American first-year students. *Research in Higher Education*, 50(7), 649-669.
- Hoffman, M. B., Richmond, J. R., Morrow, J. A., & Salomone, K. (2002-2003). Investigating “sense of belonging” in First-Year college students. *Journal of College Student Retention*, 4(3), 227-256.
- Jamelske, E. (2009). Measuring the impact of a university first-year experience program on student GPA and retention. *Higher Education*, 57(3), 373-391.
- Koch, A. K., & Gardner, J. N. (2006). The history of the first-year experience in the United States: Lessons from the past, practices in the present, and implications for the future. *The first-year experience and transition from high school to college: An international study of content and pedagogy*. Tokyo, Japan: Maruzen Publishing.
- Lepre, C. R. (2007). Getting through to them: Reaching students who need career counseling. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 56(1), 74-84. Retrieved from Professional Collection database.
- Marina, B., & McGuire, M. (2008). First-year experience: Reform in college freshmen programs for first-year students. *Educational Planning*, 17(3), 19-27.

- Masterson, K. (2017, August 22). How to make orientation stick. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <https://www.chronicle.com/article/The-New-Improved-Orientation/240978>
- Mullendore, R. H., & Banahan, L. A. (2005). Designing orientation programs. *Challenging and supporting the first-year student: A handbook for improving the first year of college*, 391-409.
- Newman, R., & Miller, M. (2002). Developing institutional trust for non-traditional students in orientation. *Adult Learner Newsletter*, Winter-Spring, 3–4.
- O'Banion, T. (1994). An academic advising model. *NaCADA Journal*, 14(2), 10-16.
- Rhee, B. (2008). Institutional climate and the student departure: A multinomial multilevel modeling approach. *The Review of Higher Education*, 31(2), 161-183.
- Rhodes, T. (2010). *Assessing outcomes and improving achievement: Tips and tools for using rubrics*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Slaten, C. D., Elison, Z. M., Deemer, E. D., Hughes, H. A., & Shemwell, D. A. (2018). The Development and validation of the university belonging questionnaire. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 86(4), 633-651.
- Stebleton, M. J., & Diamond, K. K. (2018). Advocating for career development and exploration as a high-impact practice for first-year students. *Journal of College and Character*, 18(2), 160-166.
- Strayhorn, T. L. (2012). *College students' sense of belonging: A key to educational success for all students*. Routledge.

Strumpf, G., & Wawrynski, M. (2000). NODA databank 2000. *College Park, MD: University of Maryland: National Orientation Directors Association.*

Suvedi, M., Ghimire, R. P., & Millenbah, K. F. (2016). How prepared are undergraduates for a career? *NACTA Journal, 60*(1A), 13-20. Retrieved from ProQuest Research Library database.

Swing, R. (2002) *What type of seminar is best?* Brevard College. Retrieved from www.brevard.edu/fyc/fyi/essays/index.htm

Teague, S. (2016, October 6). Re-inventing the first-year experience. *Community College Daily.* Retrieved from ProQuest Research Library database.

Thorne, A. (2016). Students Will Rise When Colleges Challenge Them to Read Good Books. *The Chronicle of Higher Education.* Retrieved from The Chronicle of Higher Education database.

Tinto, V. (2009, February). Taking student retention seriously: Rethinking the first year of university. In *FYE curriculum design symposium.*