44TH
ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON THE
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA
FEBRUARY 16-19, 2025

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina

Dear Conference Delegates,

On behalf of our team at the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition (NRC) at the University of South Carolina, we are delighted to welcome you to New Orleans for the 44th Annual Conference on the First-Year Experience! Whether you frequent NRC events or this is your first time attending, we are pleased to have you join the international network of educators and advocates who make up the NRC community.

Bob Dylan famously said of this city "There are a lot of places I like, but I like New Orleans better." New Orleans is a fitting venue for this conference: it is steeped in rich history and known for its cultural depth, as the birthplace of jazz and a gastronomic delight. And, of course, NOLA is known for being a good time. Much like this city, FYE is a conference where we come to exchange ideas, learn from and with each other, be in community, innovate our practice, and have a great time!

To that end, the NRC staff has planned an outstanding program of preconference workshops, keynote and plenary speakers, featured sessions, and conference presentations that aim to inform, engage, and inspire. In addition to these educational sessions, our team has planned myriad opportunities for delegates to connect with each other—we encourage you to take advantage of the formal and informal opportunities to interact with conference participants and discuss challenges and successes in your work, share what you are learning, plan to collaborate, and build your network of mentors, supporters, and friends.

Delegates at this year's conference hail from all fifty states, the U.S. territories of Guam, Puerto Rico, and Washington, D.C. as well as Belgium, Canada, France, Italy, Japan, South Africa, Taiwan, and the United Kingdom! Although we come from a myriad cultures and contexts, we are united in our commitment to the First-Year Experience movement and to the students we all serve. We are happy to have you here and look forward to helping you in any way that we can. Please do not hesitate to contact us or stop by the registration desk if you have any questions or concerns. We look forward to meeting you, working with you, and learning from you during our time together now and in the future.

Laissez les bon temps rouler!

Sincerely,

Kathleen J. Lehman

Kathleen (Kate) J. Lehman
Director, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience® & Students in Transition

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CONFERENCE SCHEDULE*

SUNDAY | FEBRUARY 16, 2025

7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Conference Registration
8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Preconference Workshops (additional registration fee)
5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.	Opening Session with Keynote Address ***— Joy Gaston Gayles***
7:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	Opening Reception

MONDAY | FEBRUARY 17, 2025

7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast
7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Conference Registration
8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Primer for First-Time Attendees
9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Conference Sessions
1:45 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.	Conference Sessions

TUESDAY | FEBRUARY 18, 2025

7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast
7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Conference Registration
8:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	Conference Sessions
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon	Plenary Address ***— Corey Seemiller***
1:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.	Conference Sessions

WEDNESDAY | FEBRUARY 19, 2025

7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	Continental Breakfast
7:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Conference Registration
8:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	Conference Sessions
10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.	Closing Session ***— Annie Kelly***

*All times are listed in Central Standard Time (CST)

THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® is a service mark of the University of South Carolina. A license may be granted to registered conference attendees and others upon written request to use the term THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® in association with educational programmatic approaches to enhance the first year developed as a result of participation in this conference series. This license is not transferable and does not apply to the use of the service mark in any other programs or on any other literature without the written approval of the University of South Carolina.

The University of South Carolina provides equal opportunity and affirmative action in education and employment for all qualified persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status. The University of South Carolina System has designated as the ADA Title II, Section 504 and Title IX coordinator the Executive Assistant to the President for Equal Opportunity Programs. The Office of the Executive Assistant to the President is located 1600 Hampton Street Annex, Columbia, South Carolina; Telephone (803) 777-3854.

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

CORE COMMITMENTS

Student Transitions: Student transitions, such as the first year of college, sophomore year, transfer experience, degree completion, and new graduate student experiences, are critical junctures in the educational pipeline and unique opportunities for postsecondary student learning and development. We strive to set a standard of excellence for supporting student transitions and facilitating educational success for a diversity of students in the 21st century.

Connection Between Research and Practice: We believe that good practice in higher education must rely upon a foundation of high-quality research. Conversely, good research draws from and informs practices in our field. As such, the work of the National Resource Center advances and supports both scholarly practice and applied research.

Inclusion: We strive to create a supportive and professional environment where a diversity of viewpoints are recognized and considered in the ongoing dialogue on student transitions. One of the greatest strengths of the first-year experience and students in transition movement is its ability to cut across traditional boundaries in higher education and involve professionals from multiple sectors of education, institutional roles, and disciplinary perspectives as well as from a variety of personal backgrounds, institutional environments, and educational experiences.

Collaboration: Partnership and collaboration draw from the interdisciplinary nature of higher education, communicate an ongoing commitment to inclusion, and, ultimately, enhance the success of our efforts to support student transitions. The National Resource Center models effective collaboration and aims to create intentional and integrative connections between colleagues, units, organizations, systems, educational sectors, regions, and countries in support of student transition and success.

Lifelong Learning: We believe that all educators continue to be lifelong learners. We support a climate of intellectual curiosity and provide the tools and media to pursue professional development and an ongoing process of inquiry, exploration, and discovery.

Welcome to the

This conference is designed to provide a structure intended to be as professionally enriching as it is individually pleasurable. We hope this will be a rewarding conference for you.

GOALS OF THE CONFERENCE

The primary goal of the Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience® is to assist educators and administrators in institutions of higher education in the planning, implementing, and refining of programs designed to enhance the first-year experience. The conference aims to promote a comprehensive and engaging community open to the diversity of ideas, in which all delegates are given the opportunity and resources to grow personally and professionally.

CONFERENCE SPONSOR

National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience® and Students in Transition

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience® and Students in Transition at the University of South Carolina has as its mission to support and advance efforts to improve student learning and transitions into and through higher education. The Center achieves this mission by providing opportunities for the exchange of practical and theory-based information and ideas through the convening of conferences, online courses, and workshops; publishing monographs, a peer-reviewed journal, a newsletter, guides, and books; generating and supporting research and scholarship; hosting visiting scholars; and administering a web site and electronic listservs.

University of South Carolina

Chartered in 1801 as South Carolina College, the University of South Carolina, Columbia remains on its original site in the state capital. The University of South Carolina is a publicly-assisted, coeducational institution dedicated to the entire state of South Carolina. The primary mission of the University of South Carolina, a multi-campus public institution, is the education of the state's diverse citizens through teaching, research and creative activity, and service. The University is committed to providing its students with the highest-quality education, including the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for success and responsible citizenship in a complex and changing world.

Registration Information

The conference Registration and information desk is located on the Level One; Elite Foyer. The staff of the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience® and Students in Transition will be available to assist you throughout the conference.

Hotel Map

A floor plan of the meeting rooms at the Hyatt Regency New Orleans are in Guidebook and on the last pages of the program.

National Resource Center Publications

We are pleased to announce that publications from the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience® and Students in Transition are being distributed by Stylus. Limited numbers of select publications will be available for sale during the conference. Major credit cards, cash, and check are accepted. Please visit the Stylus booth (Booth 03 in Vendor Hall) to browse our most popular titles.

Philanthropy Project

The Students Against Food Insecurity (SAFI) Pantry at Tulane University

The Students Against Food Insecurity (SAFI) Pantry is open to all Tulane undergraduate and graduate students with a valid Splash ID number. Whether students are in need of a quick snack between classes or ingredients for a hearty meal, SAFI is here to help. Their goal is to create a supportive environment where all students have access to the food they need to thrive academically and personally. If you want to donate to the SAFI Pantry, check out their Amazon Wish list to easily send donations directly to Tulane's campus!

Amazon Wishlist

Pencil Project

As in years past, The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience® and Students in Transition encourages you to participate in our ongoing outreach project to encourage low-income K-12 school students to consider higher education in their future. The conference organizers invite all conference participants to bring at least one new pencil (bring as many as you like) with your college or university name or logo to the conference registration desk so they can be distributed to low-income students in the host city or in Columbia, South Carolina. We hope you will participate in this effort.

Outstanding First-Year Student Advocate Sessions

2025 Advocate ***Past Advocate***

Several current and past recipients of the Outstanding First-Year Student Advocate award are presenting sessions at this conference. These sessions will be designated with the special symbols seen above.

Excellence in Teaching First-Year Seminars Award

2025 Award Recipient ***Past Recipient***

Current and past recipients of the Excellence in Teaching First-Year Seminars award are presenting sessions at this conference. These sessions will be designated with the special symbols seen above.

International Sessions

Sessions being presented by those representing countries other than the United States of America are designated by the globe symbol.

Nametag Ribbons

Blue Volunteers

Session Evaluations

Session evaluations can be completed through the interactive scheduler, Guidebook. The session evaluation can be found at the bottom of the screen after the session description or it can be accessed on the menu page.

Conference Evaluations

An Overall Conference Evaluation Form will be sent to you via Anthology after the conference. When you return to your campus, please take a few minutes to complete the evaluation. The information you provide is used to evaluate the conference and improve future conferences; therefore, your comments are extremely important. The link to this evaluation form will be emailed out following the conference.

Internet Access

Wireless internet access is complimentary in the guest rooms for conference attendees. Wireless internet access is also available in the conference meeting space.

Network Name:
HYATT_MEETING
Password:
44FYE2025

GENERAL INFORMATION

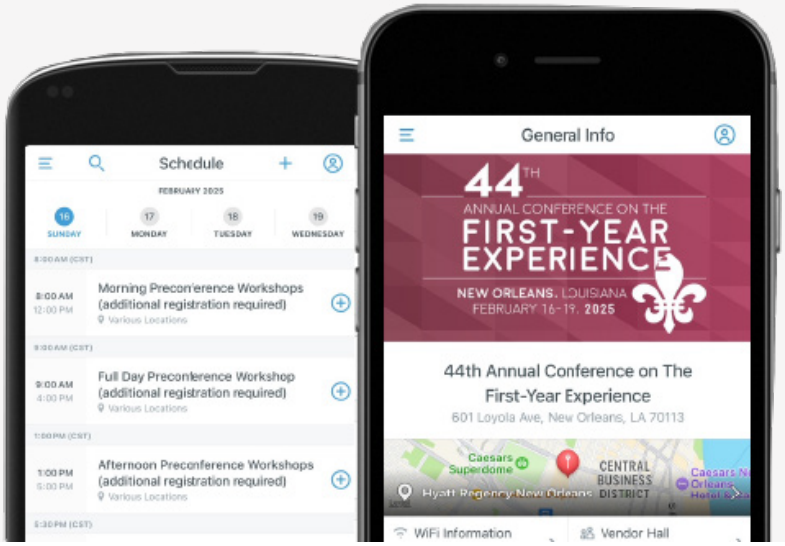
find us on

guidebook

Download the free Guidebook app and search *44th Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience,* or by scanning our QR code.

In order to develop your personal schedule for the conference, download the Guidebook app on your iOS or Android device. Use the "search" feature and enter "**44th Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience**" to find this year's guide. Open Guidebook and click on "Schedule." Once a session is selected, it will be loaded into the "My Schedule" icon on the main menu page.

scan to start using guidebook >



PROPOSAL REVIEWERS

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience® and Students in Transition would like to thank everyone who served as a proposal reviewer. The participation of our reviewers is instrumental in the success of this conference.

To view a full list of proposal reviewers, please see **page 109 and visit our website sc.edu/fye**.

Mark Your Calendar

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

March 31 - April 25, 2025
Underrepresented at a PWI - Supporting Students of Color through their Transition
Online Course

May 5 - 30, 2025
Understanding and Supporting Transfer Student Success
Online Course

June 2 - 27, 2025
Exploring the Middle Years: The Second- and Third-Year Experiences
Online Course

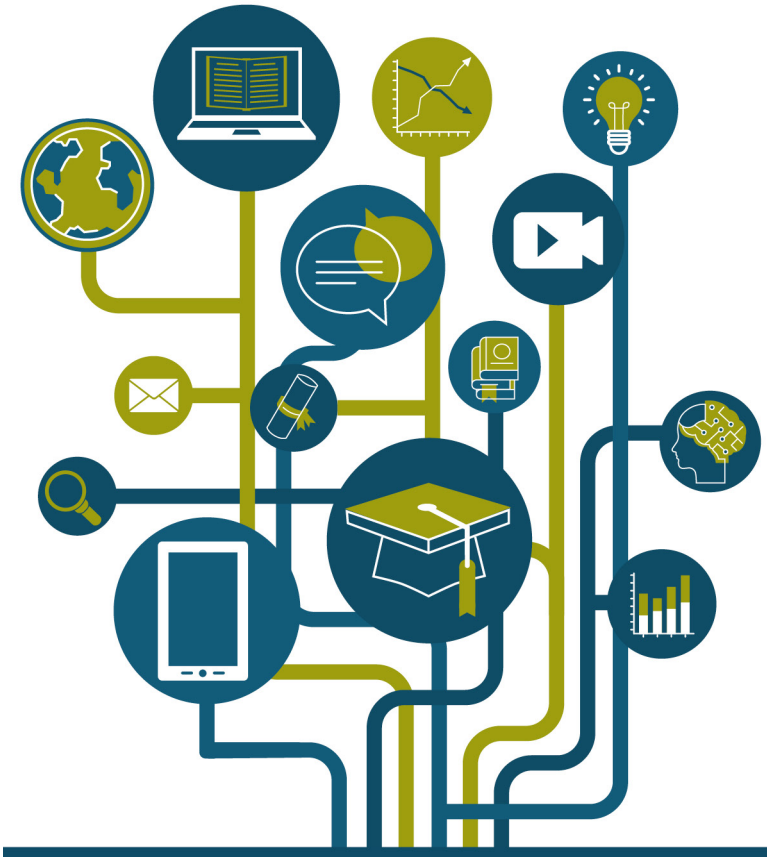
September 8 – October 3, 2025
The HBCU Experience from a Student Affairs Perspective
Online Course

September 18 - 19, 2025
Developing and Sustaining First-Year Seminars
Institute | Columbia, S.C.

October 1 - 3, 2025
32nd National Conference on Students in Transition

February 15 - 18, 2026
45th Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience
Seattle, Washington

www.sc.edu/fye fyesit @NRCFYESIT nrcfyesit



NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

ONLINE COURSES

ON THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION

MARCH 31 - APRIL 25, 2025

UNDERREPRESENTED AT A PWI – SUPPORTING STUDENTS OF COLOR THROUGH THEIR TRANSITION

Instructor: Talea Drummer-Ferrell

REGISTRATION DEADLINE:
MARCH 14, 2025

WWW.SC.EDU/FYE/**OC**

SESSION FORMATS

The sessions presented at this conference are in six formats. The alpha designation with the session numbers indicates the session type.

Concurrent Sessions

These sessions allow for 30-45 minutes of formal presentation and 15-20 minutes of discussion.

Concurrent session types:

(CR) Research – These sessions are on quantitative or qualitative research that has been conducted on issues addressing student transitions.

(CT) Trends & Issues – These sessions address emerging trends, current issues, and broad concepts.

(CI) Assessed Institutional Initiatives – These sessions address and highlight specific programs/initiatives that have been instituted, assessed, and shown to be successful on a particular campus.

(CP) Assessed Programmatic Approaches – These sessions present on a specific programmatic approach at a single institution.

(FD) Facilitated Dialogues

These sessions promote open discussion around a significant or major issue or theme. Rather than making a formal presentation, session facilitators will encourage and maintain substantive discussion.

(V) Vendor Presentations

These sessions allow conference vendors to showcase products and share information on services provided by the company/organization.

Poster Sessions

Poster sessions are presented in the form of an exhibit and delivered primarily through the use of visual display and handout materials. Numerous poster sessions will be scheduled concurrently, and conference delegates will be free to move from one poster session to another.

Poster session types:

(PR) Research Findings
This type of poster session presents research results focused on a specific topic or program.

(PP) Assessed Programmatic Approaches
This type of poster session presents on a specific programmatic approach at a single institution.

(PI) Assessed Institutional Initiatives
These posters address and highlight specific programs/initiatives that have been instituted, assessed, and shown to be successful on a particular campus.

STAFF ROSTER

National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience® & Students in Transition/University 101 Programs

J. Rex Tolliver
Vice President for Student Affairs and Academic Support

Silvia Patricia Rios Husain
Associate Vice President for Student Success

Dan Friedman
Assistant Vice President for University 101 Programs & the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition

National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience® and Students in Transition

Kate Lehman
Director

Conferences and Continuing Education

Krystal Reynolds
Assistant Director

Claire Hains
Student Affairs Specialist

Michael Hood
Program Coordinator

Beth Juelich-Velotta
Coordinator for Service Refinement

Resources and External Relations

Sean Cleary
Manager

Rosa Thorn-Jones
Administrative Specialist

Publications

Annie Kelly
Editor, *Insights for College Transitions* (formerly *eSource*)

Rishi Sriram
Editor, *Journal of The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition*

Research and Grants

Jamil Johnson
Associate Director

Cielo Ruiz
Graduate Assistant

Riley Shoemaker
Graduate Assistant

Kevin Wenger
Data Manager

University 101 Programs

Emily Boardman
Program Coordinator for Partnerships

Jasmine Carter
Manager of Faculty Development

Julia Clark-Spohn
Administrative Assistant

Callyn Fahey
Assistant Director for Resources

Sandy Greene
Associate Director for Peer Leadership and Partnerships

Dominique Harris
Graduate Assistant for Peer Leadership

Katie Hopkins
Associate Director for Faculty Development & Resources

Katie Morton
Assistant Director for Course Development

Dustin Roberts
Associate Director for Administration

Madison Wilke
Academic Course Scheduler

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Founding Director and Senior Fellow

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Senior Fellow

Jennifer Keup
Senior Fellow

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Jean M. Henscheid
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Cincinnati State University

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European First Year Experience Network

Annsilla Nyar-Ndlovu
South African National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition

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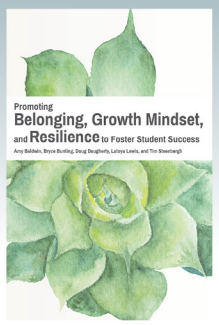
Reiko Yamada
Doshisha University, Kyoto (Japan)

RESOURCES ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

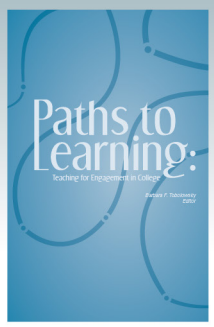
NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA



Promoting Belonging, Growth Mindset, and Resilience to Foster Student Success

Amy Baldwin, Bryce Bunting, Doug Daugherty, Latoya Lewis and Tim Steenbergh

ISBN 978-1-942072-37-9. 154 pages. **$30.00**

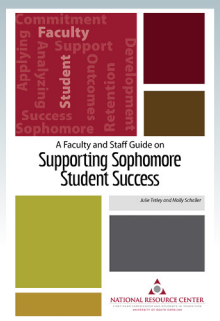


Paths to Learning

Teaching for Engagement in College

Barbara F. Tobolowsky, Editor

ISBN 978-1-889271-92-7. 177 pages. **$30.00**



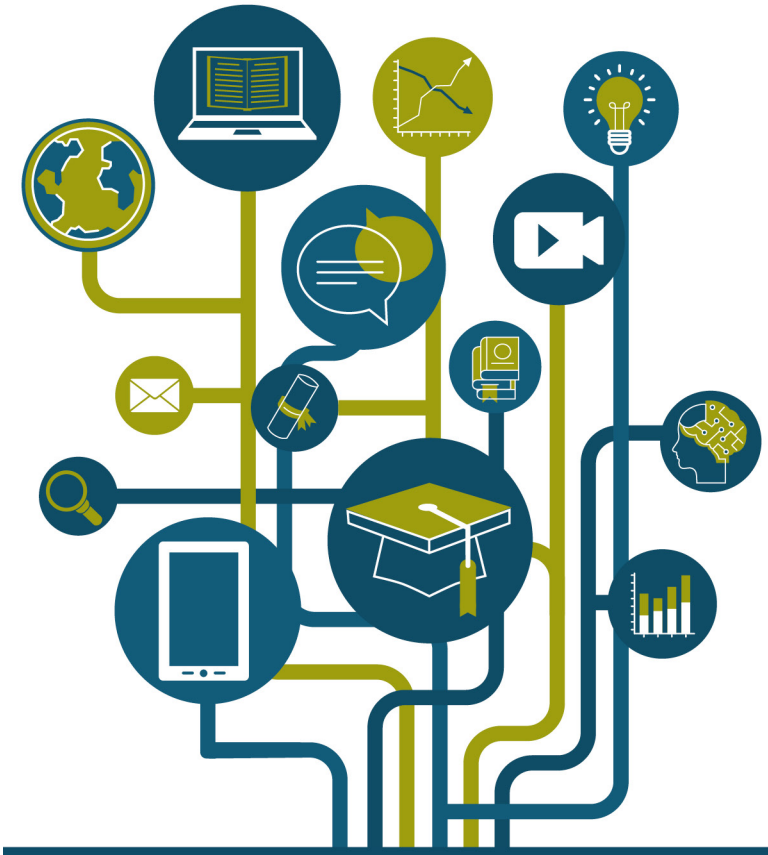
A Faculty and Staff Guide on Supporting Sophomore Student Success

Julie Tetley and Molly Schallers

ISBN 978-1-942072-62-1. 32 pages. **$6.00**

SAVE **20% & FREE SHIPPING** on orders placed through **MARCH 31**. Code: **FYE25**

Place your order at **WWW.NRCPUBS.COM** or visit **BOOTH 03**



NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

ONLINE COURSES

ON THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION

MAY 5 - MAY 30, 2025

UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING TRANSFER STUDENT SUCCESS

Instructor: Catherine Hartman

REGISTRATION DEADLINE:
APRIL 17, 2025

WWW.SC.EDU/FYE/**OC**

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FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA
FEBRUARY 16-19, 2025

SPONSORS & VENDORS

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

VENDORS

Vendor Information

Conference participants are invited to visit commercial and non-profit vendors showcasing their products and services for enhancing the first-year experience. Vendors are located in Elite Hall B; Level One.

National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition 1-2
Stylus Distribution 3
COLLEGE SUCCESS FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR 4
FOCUS 2 CAREER Planning 5
Comevo, Inc. 6
Amazon Books 7
Unify America 9
Hachette Academic 10
Simon & Schuster 11-12
Talking College 13
Macmillan Learning 14
Penguin Random House Academic 15-16
Penguin Random House Speaker Bureau 17
University of Chicago Press 18
U-Thrive Educational Services 19
Indiana University - NSSE 20
Acing The Undergrad 21
LAUNCH Student Success 22
Innovative Educators 23
Ingram Academic & Professional 24
HarperCollins Publishers 25
MentorPRO 26
Macmillan Publishers 27-28
Gardner Institute 29
Touchstones Discussion Project 30
Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society 31
Kendall Hunt Publishing 32-33
McGraw Hill 34
TracCloud 35
TruMotivate 36
W.W. Norton & Company 37
FIE: Foundation for International Education 38
Marlo Lyons Coaching 39
EdOdyssey 40
The Mental Health Literacy Collaborative 41
The National Society of Collegiate Scholars (NSCS) 42
VISIONS, Inc. 43
Glean 44
Suitable 45
NODA: Association for Orientation, Transition, and Retention in Higher Education 46
American Psychological Association 47
Intuit for Education 48
DIA Higher Education Collaborators 49
Holistic Higher Education Solutions 50
Best Fit Career Finder 51
Cambridge Educational Services of Illinois 52
FranklinCovey Education 53
Dante DiBattista 54

Thank you to our sponsors!

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INTUIT for Education

Bronze

McGraw Hill

Pathify

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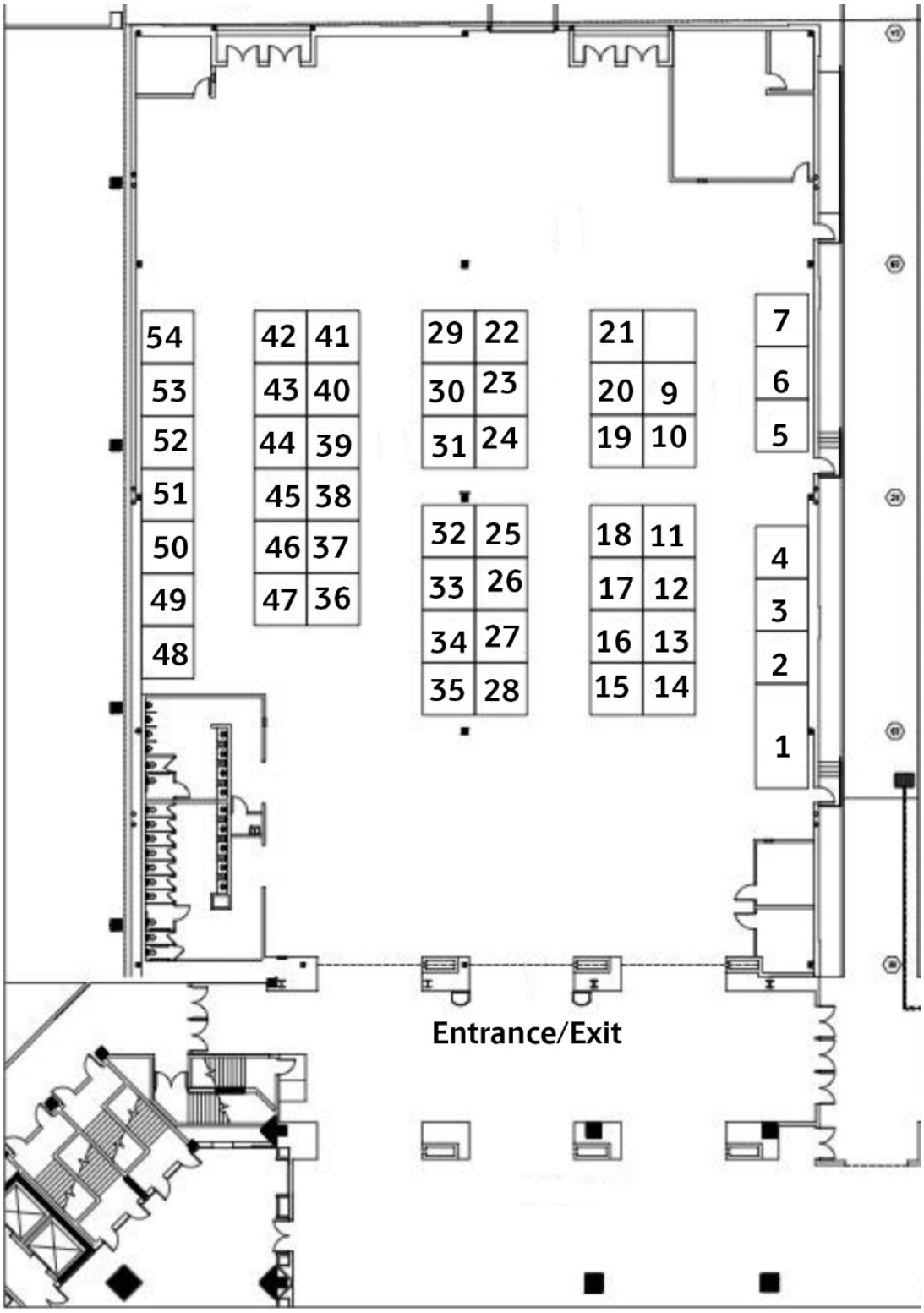
Penguin Random House EDUCATION

DIA Higher Education Collaborators



Vendor Hall Schedule

You will have the opportunity to visit with vendors during continental breakfasts, refreshment breaks, and the opening reception in addition to the vendor hall hours below:

Sunday, February 16, 2025
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Monday, February 17, 2025
7:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
12:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, February 18, 2025
7:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon

SPONSORS & VENDORS

Sponsor & Vendor Information

Conference participants are invited to visit commercial and non-profit vendors showcasing their products and services for enhancing the first-year experience.

Acing The Undergrad

Acing The Undergrad (ATU) is a college success organization dedicated to helping colleges and college access programs boost student retention and graduation rates. We achieve this by empowering students to reach their full potential through the Acing The Undergrad Method—our proven framework built on ten essential principles for academic success.

FOCUS 2 CAREER Planning

"FOCUS 2 Career Planning system helps students choose their majors/explore occupations. Instructor Training/Curriculum materials integrates career planning into your FYE program. Customized with your college's majors, assessment results are matched to occupations and majors at your college. Five Valid/Reliable Assessments, NACE Competencies. Students engage in career planning. "

Ingram Academic & Professional

Ingram Academic & Professional exhibits on behalf of the 300+ independent presses that are distributed by Ingram Content Group. Publishers include Fordham University Press, Kogan Page, and Grove Atlantic.

EdOdyssey

EdOdyssey is a boutique study abroad and educational travel provider. We work with colleges, universities, and secondary schools to create customized faculty-led trips and first year experiences, and semester study abroad programs that are authentic and educational.

FIE: Foundation for International Education

FIE is committed to the development of creative learning environments wherein an understanding of, and appreciation for, the privileges and responsibilities of international citizenship is fostered. This commitment is driven by the belief that interaction between people of diverse cultures is the base upon which empathy among nations is built.

MentorPRO

MentorPRO is an all-in-one student success platform that connects incoming first year students with peer mentors who act as personal navigators, guiding them to and through college.

W. W. Norton & Company

Independent since 1923, Norton publishes books that educate, inspire, and endure.

Innovative Educators

Innovative Educators is dedicated to providing superior training focused on critical issues facing students and educators today. Our primary goal is to provide the information, training, and skills necessary to implement positive change on a personal, professional, and institutional level.

Indiana University - NSSE

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) afford participating institutions diagnostic information and actionable reports on student engagement in effective educational practice that help inform efforts to improve undergraduate education and lend insights on learning and success.

American Psychological Association

The American Psychological Association publishes APA Scholarly and Professional titles as well as our LifeTools nonfiction imprint and APA Style books, including the bestselling Publication Manual. Visit apabooks.org and apastyle.org for more information.

Simon & Schuster

Simon & Schuster, a global leader in general interest publishing, is dedicated to providing the best in fiction and nonfiction for readers of all ages, and in all printed, digital and audio formats.

Hachette Academic

Hachette Academic is part of Hachette Book Group, a leading publisher of award-winning books, authors, and imprints with a commitment to diversity in our publishing program. We offer a range of thought-provoking books to engage students, whether it's fiction that fits particular themes or nonfiction that stimulates discussion across disciplines.

Talking College

"Talking College™ cards are the original discussion prompts and insider tips for incoming students, their parents, and those helping them when they arrive on campus. Currently used at over 60 colleges and universities, these curated conversation prompts are perfect for new families, student peer leaders, and first-year experience programs.

U-Thrive Educational Services

U-Thrive Educational Services is a mission-driven organization committed to proactively equipping college students with the skills to manage stress, become more resilient, and thrive throughout their college experience and beyond. We provide curricular and co-curricular solutions rooted in the fields of Positive Psychology, Mindfulness, and Self-Compassion.

Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society

Retain high-achieving first-year students with an Alpha Lambda Delta (ALD) chapter on your campus. Founded in 1924, ALD is an international honor society recognizing the academic success of first-year students. ALD provides early engagement opportunities and assists students in recognizing and developing meaningful goals for their unique roles in society.

McGraw Hill

As a leading global education company, we provide high-quality, trusted content developed with world-class authors – and flexible tools to meet the needs of different teaching and learning styles. Our digital platforms adapt to help meet learners where they are, and advance with them as they progress toward their goals.

Penguin Random House Speakers Bureau

The Penguin Random House Speakers Bureau represents an unrivaled roster of speakers whose work is shaping national conversations—on and off the page. Be it a community read or convocation, a medical conference or CEO roundtable, our speakers take audiences beyond their everyday horizon.

SPONSORS & VENDORS

Kendall Hunt Publishing Company
Kendall Hunt is a premier publisher in both digital and print media with over 75 years of experience and over 9,000 titles. Our extensive FYE library provides students with holistic college success strategies grounded in diversity, leadership, career planning, critical thinking, and far more.

University of Chicago Press
One of the oldest and largest university presses in the United States and a distinguished publisher of trade and scholarly books and journals. Refining minds since 1891!

HarperCollins Publishers
HarperCollins is the second largest trade publishing house in the world.

TruMotivate
TruMotivate is a transformative, story-based assessment for college students. The report centers on five top motivations, opening channels of self-discovery and paths of career exploration. Through complementary application exercises, students learn how to leverage their motivations for more effective communication, for higher performance, for career competencies, and for leadership development.

FranklinCovey Education
For nearly three decades, FranklinCovey Education has been a trusted partner for colleges and universities. Our courses, services, and technology help improve campus-wide initiatives related to learning and development, execution, and student success. Our mission is to enable greatness in administrators, staff, faculty, and students.

Macmillan Learning
Empowering every learner to succeed, we create engaging tools, content, and services that open doors to learning and achievement. In partnership with educators, we are committed to providing opportunities that inspire growth and help every student reach their full potential in a world where success is possible for all

Macmillan Publishers
Macmillan Publishers is proud to publish first-year favorites such as Citizen, Spare Parts, All Boys Aren't Blue, and The Worlds I See. Visit https://macmillanfyebooks.wordpress.com for more information.

Penguin Random House Academic
Penguin Random House publishes a broad selection of fiction and nonfiction titles appropriate for First-Year Experience and common reading programs. The books recommended in our 2024 exhibit are from our publishing divisions and client publishers, and will help instigate reflection and discussion among first year students. www.commonreads.com

Stylus Distribution
Stylus Distribution markets and distributes throughout the Americas the lists of a number of independent publishers and research institutions to bring you the latest work in education.

National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition
The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition serves as the trusted expert, internationally recognized leader, and clearinghouse for scholarship, policy, and best practice for all postsecondary student transitions.

TracCloud

TracCloud (formerly TutorTrac) is the most comprehensive, powerful, cloud-based software solution providing on-demand access to essential tools such as appointment scheduling, visits, demographics, and activity reports. Contacts, appointments, and schedules are managed on multiple criteria. Integration with campus information systems links course enrollments and other critical data.

Marlo Lyons Coaching

For over two decades, Marlo Lyons Coaching has provided career strategies to professionals at all stages, including college students and executives. As globally certified coach and award-winning author, Marlo recently released her latest book, Wanted →My First Career, for college students seeking a fulfilling career.

Touchstones Discussion Project

For more than 40 years, the Touchstones Discussion Project has developed and refined a process rooted in best practices to support collaborative discussion to transform learning and interactions. Discussion has the power to support transitioning students in content learning and in building genuinely supportive communities.

Gardner Institute

The Gardner Institute partners with institutions, philanthropies, organizations, and systems to lead educational innovation leading to long-term transformation. Utilizing analysis, holistic planning, and targeted interventions, we empower institutions, faculty, and staff to ensure that every student can graduate. With significant outcomes correlated with our work, our initiatives drive meaningful change.

Comevo, Inc.

Comevo is dedicated to cultivating technology that streamlines communication services. We specialize in delivering online orientation, onboarding modules, and communication software solutions, complimented by innovative design, custom content, and development services. Our ultimate product is not just software; it's helping staff create effective programs to support student and employee success.

LAUNCH Student Success

LAUNCH Student Success is the premier student success curriculum/program in helping increase success rates across the nation. LAUNCH combines student text books, video, and an interactive mobile platform for student engagement into one seamless experience. In addition, LAUNCH's workshops and professional development sessions help campuses create cultures of student success!

The Mental Health Literacy Collaborative

The Mental Health Literacy Collaborative seeks to make the education framework of mental health literacy foundational in schools and communities.

VISIONS, Inc.

VISIONS offers customized training, coaching and planning in multicultural transformation for all aspects of justice and change in higher education.

SPONSORS & VENDORS

Intuit for Education

Intuit for Education is a free and flexible financial literacy program for students that offers real-world tools to get them excited to learn and build their financial confidence.

Amazon Books

Amazon Books supports organizations with print and digital needs, enhancing DE&I, leadership, events, and more. Our "Your Company Bookshelf" tool enables customized book selections and vouchers, offering format choice and direct delivery. Plus, our new "All Books" voucher lets recipients choose any book on Amazon.

NODA: Association for Orientation, Transition, and Retention in Higher Education

As an inclusive community, NODA enhances and elevates orientation, transition, and retention practices in higher education that cultivate the professional development and education of student leaders, graduate students, practitioners, and scholars.

DIA Higher Education Collaborators

DIA strives to improve student learning and success in higher education by partnering with institutions of higher education to improve cultures, strategies, and practices for understanding and supporting students. Through collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement, we serve as a collaborator, partner, and guide.

The National Society of Collegiate Scholars (NSCS)

The National Society of Collegiate Scholars is a non-profit honor society for high-achieving first- and second-year students. It offers career connections, leadership opportunities, service projects, and exclusive scholarships. NSCS is accredited by the Association of College Honor Societies.

Dante DiBattista

Dante DiBattista is an author, speaker, and leadership consultant. He offers programming for college students that aligns directly to the leadership development he provides executives of some of the largest and most successful companies in the world.

Suitable

Suitable is a mobile-first student engagement platform that provides a virtual roadmap for the entire student journey. From the moment of enrollment, Suitable lets you begin scaffolding each step of the student experience while optimizing for career readiness, skill development, and student success. Our platform helps schools increase student participation outside the classroom, track and assess experiential learning, and prepare students for life after graduation.

Glean

"Glean is the #1 trusted note taking and study tool for independent learning. We've partnered with 900+ institutions over 15+ years, supporting and empowering students of all backgrounds. Our award-winning, ethically-developed technology is rooted in learning science to help students succeed. Discover how Glean makes 95% of students better learners."

Best Fit Career Finder

Best Fit Career Finder helps student define who they want to become, what careers will help them in that pursuit, and what educational and experiential path they will need to go down. BFCF uses a comprehensive assessment and an AI assisted counseling app to deliver highly individualized advising at scale.

Holistic Higher Education Solutions

Holistic Higher Education Solutions partners with institutions of all sizes—including HBCUs, two-year colleges, and PWIs—to improve student success. From admissions to graduation, we specialize in curriculum, learning support, leadership development, and institutional processes, leveraging proven expertise to deliver customized, equity-focused strategies that enhance retention, graduation, and inclusion across campuses.

Cambridge Educational Services of Illinois

We have helped 10,000,000 students with remediation, college success, and graduate prep. Materials/services include College Here I Am, Financial Literacy, Workplace and Career Success, GRE, LSAT, GMAT and more. Receive $50,000 grant to assist disadvantaged students, register for Tiffany crystal & 35th Anniversary Trip to Disney.

COLLEGE SUCCESS FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR

College success for students of color: A culturally empowered assets-based approach. The authors of this book will be present to discuss the text as well as present during the regular sessions.

Pathify

Pathify is the leading provider of modern student engagement solutions, revolutionizing student journeys from prospect to alumni (and beyond!). Pathify connects clients with a modern, cloud-based platform that enhances digital campus experiences with personalized dashboards, resources, support services and more.

Unify America

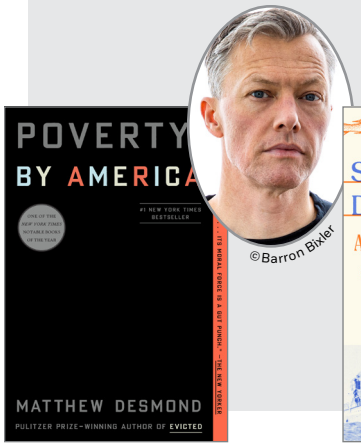
Serving over 200 colleges, Unify's America Civic Gym is a suite of experiential learning tools designed to build and strengthen civic skills. Especially effective for first-year programming, Unify's proven methods help students practice communicating across differences and build the leadership skills needed for a stronger campus and a better future.

Penguin Random House

Author Events at First-Year Experience®

AUTHOR BREAKFAST

Monday, February 17th | 7:15 am – 8:45 am | Celestin A–D



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Poverty, by America

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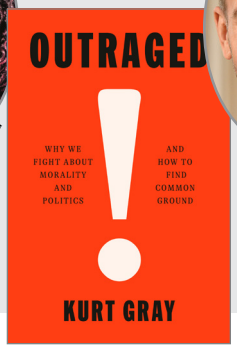
Jasmin Graham
Sharks Don't Sink



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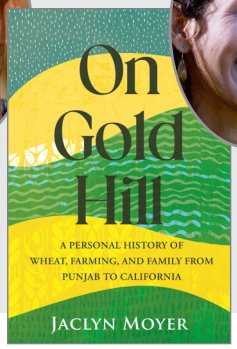
Kurt Gray
Outraged



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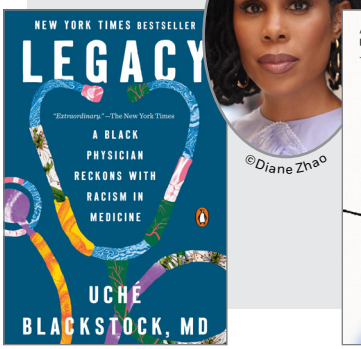
Jaclyn Moyer
On Gold Hill

AUTHOR LUNCH

Monday, February 17th | 12:15 pm – 1:45 pm | Celestin A–D



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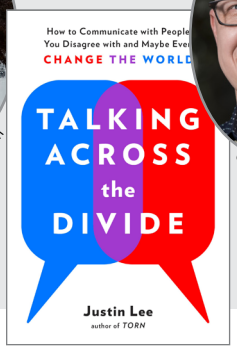
Ayana Elizabeth Johnson
What If We Get It Right?



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Justin Lee
Talking Across the Divide

Sharon McMahon
The Small and the Mighty

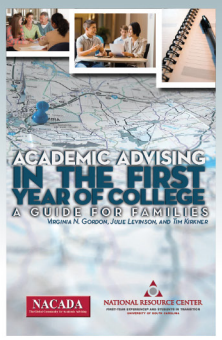
Penguin Random House
COMMON READS

To register for events and for more information visit:
prhlink.com/fye-events-2025

commonreads.com

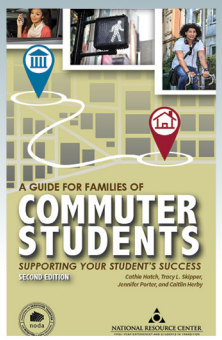
GUIDES FOR **PARENTS AND FAMILIES**

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA



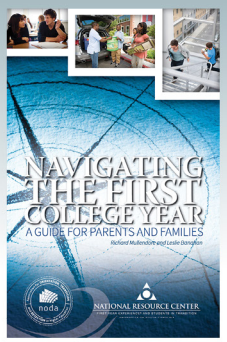
Academic Advising in the First-Year of College
A Guide for Families

Virginia N. Gordon, Julie Levinson, and Tim Kirkner
A joint publication with NACADA, the Global Community for Academic Advising
ISBN 978-1-889271-94-1. 30 pages. **$6 each**.
$4.50 each when purchased in 100-unit lots.



A Guide for Families of Commuter Students
Supporting Your Student's Success (2nd ed.)

Cathie Hatch, Tracy L. Skipper, Jennifer Porter, and Caitlin Herby
A joint publication with NODA, the Association for Orientation, Transition, and Retention in Higher Education
ISBN 978-1-942072-11-9. 36 pages. **$6 each**.
$4.50 each when purchased in 100-unit lots.



Navigating the First College Year
A Guide for Parents and Families

Richard Mullendore and Leslie Banahan
A joint publication with NODA, the Association for Orientation, Transition, and Retention in Higher Education
ISBN 978-1-889271-91-0. 32 pages. **$6 each**.
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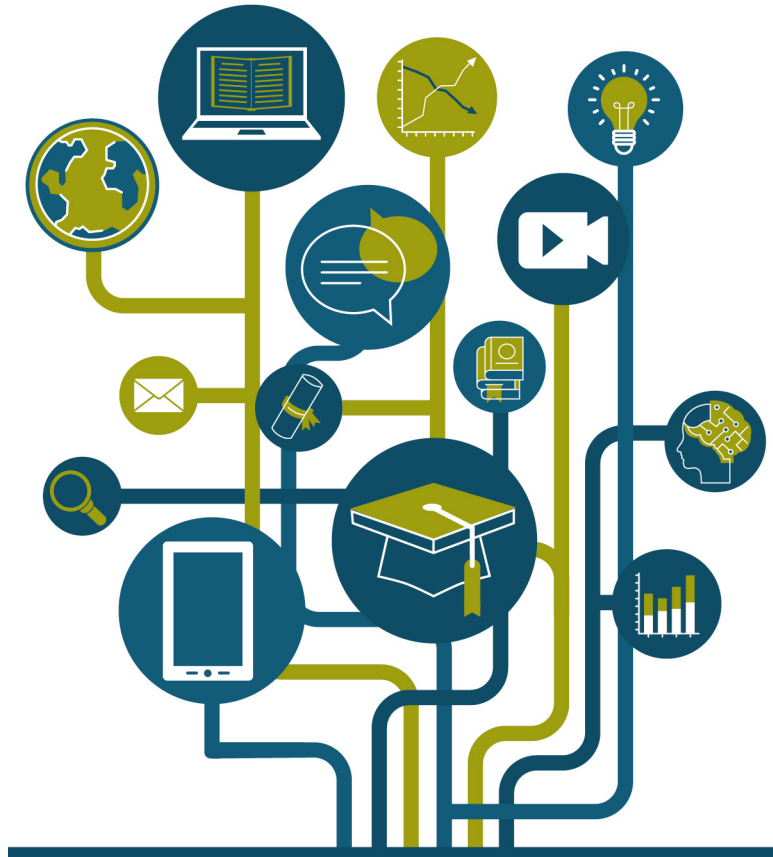

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

ONLINE COURSES

ON THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION

JUNE 2 - JUNE 27, 2025

EXPLORING THE MIDDLE YEARS: THE SECOND- AND THIRD-YEAR EXPERIENCES

Instructor: Kimberly Dressler

REGISTRATION DEADLINE:
MAY 16, 2025

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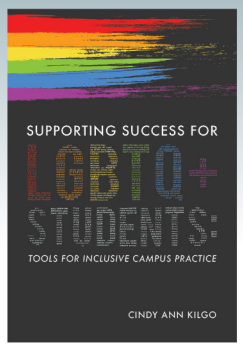
RESOURCES ON THE COLLEGE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

From Disability to Diversity
College Success for Students with Learning Disabilities, ADHD, and Autism Spectrum Disorder
Lynne C. Shea, Linda Hecker, and Adam R. Lalor
ISBN: 978-1-942072-29-4. 144 pages. **$30.00**

Academic Recovery
Supporting Students on Academic Probation
Michael T. Dial, Editor
ISBN: 978-1-942072-59-1. 265 pages. **$30.00**



Supporting Success for LGBTQ+ Students
Tools for Inclusive Campus Practice
Cindy Ann Kilgo
ISBN 978-1-942072-33-1. 112 pages. **$25.00**

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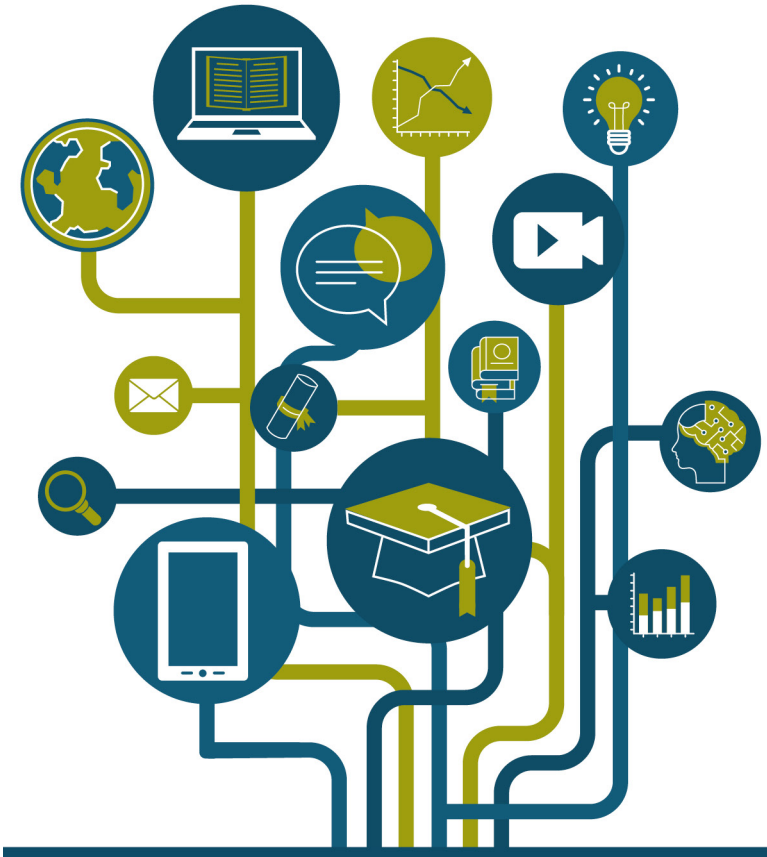

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

ONLINE COURSES

ON THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION

SEPT. 8 – OCT. 3, 2025

THE HBCU EXPERIENCE FROM A STUDENT AFFAIRS PERSPECTIVE

Instructor: Tasha Carson

REGISTRATION DEADLINE:
AUGUST 22, 2025

WWW.SC.EDU/FYE/**OC**

PRECONFERENCE WORKSHOPS – FEBRUARY 16, 2025

Conference Registration
7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. CST
Level 1 - Elite Foyer

ADDITIONAL REGISTRATION FEES REQUIRED FOR PRECONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

These workshops offer extended presentation, discussion, and interaction on a particular topic or area of interest.

Full Day Workshop | Best Practice in the First College Year: Defining What Works and Why
February 16, 2025 | 9:00 am - 4:00 pm CST | $250
Room: Strand 10A; Level Two

John N. Gardner, Founder and Executive Chair
Betsy O. Barefoot, Senior Scholar
– *Gardner Institute*

For more than three decades, a significant investment has been made by many colleges and universities to improve the first year. But funds spent have often not yielded expected returns in student learning and retention. In this workshop, the presenters will explore the questions, "What works in first-year programs and why... or why not?" They will draw from recent research findings and provide a variety of examples of best practice. Participants will be challenged to reflect on the first year at their own campuses-what initiatives have made a positive difference in the first year and what challenges remain?

W-1 | Engagement Strategies to Address Student Disconnection in the First Year
February 16, 2025 | 8:00 am - 12:00 noon CST | $175
Room: Strand 11B; Level Two

Dottie Weigel, Associate Professor and Program Director
– *Messiah University*

James Winfield, Associate Dean of First Year Experience, General Education and Retention Strategies
– *Southern New Hampshire University*

A quick glance at headlines for the Chronicle of Higher Education show student disconnection is problematic. As educators, we know student engagement is critical for student success. Unfortunately, it can seem like an insurmountable task in a digital age where reaching students is challenging. In this workshop, participants will gain strategies to engage students in a variety of classroom and beyond-the-classroom contexts, including first-year seminars. Participants will be able to enhance curriculum or first-year programming. Special attention will be given to engaging first-generation students and the dispositions of effective instructors. Participants will be better equipped to engage students in a powerful way.

W-2 | Transitions as Becoming: Theory-Based Tools for Designing High-Impact Transition Programs
February 16, 2025 | 8:00 am - 12:00 noon CST | $175
Room: Strand 13A; Level Two

Bryce Bunting, Assistant Dean
– *Brigham Young University*

Dallin George Young, Assistant Professor
– *University of Georgia*

Today's students are nearly always in transition – they enter, choose majors, temporarily leave and return, move back and forth between work and school, and experience many more periods of change. While these transitions present challenges, they can also be the source of tremendous growth. In this workshop we introduce a new theory of transitions grounded in ideas of community, participation, and becoming. Participants will have opportunities to work collaboratively to apply theory-based practical tools, evaluate their current practices, and develop prioritized plans for improving and refining the ways they support students across their many transitions.

W-3 | Mapping FYE to University Missions: Developing and Assessing Program Outcomes
February 16, 2025 | 8:00 am - 12:00 noon CST | $175
Room: Strand 10B; Level Two

Jacob Manlove, Associate Professor
Shaquita Renelique, Associate Dean and Coordinator of the First Year Experience
Toccara Carter, Director of Transition Studies
Rasheda Hamilton, Transition Studies Coordinator
– *Arkansas State University*

This workshop will equip participants with tools and provide collaborative opportunities to enhance their first-year experience (FYE) program, aligning them with university goals, fostering retention, and securing administrative support. The focus will be on crafting clear learning outcomes, aligning them with broader university missions, and adopting appropriate assessment cycles. Participants will engage in reflective collaboration to help imagine or reimagine their programs, develop efficiencies, and employ both formal and formative assessment strategies to evaluate program progress and performance. Facilitated brainstorming topics will include: marketing campaigns, bridging the gap between student and academic affairs resources, and innovative programming efforts.

PRECONFERENCE WORKSHOPS – SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16

W-4 | Difficult Conversations: How to Confront the Elephant in the Room
February 16, 2025 | 8:00 am - 12:00 noon CST | $175
Room: Strand 7; Level Two

Tara Coleman, Professor
– Kansas State University

Engaging in thoughtful dialogue and constructive conflict is crucial for college success. Not only do students struggle with this, but many of us are hesitant to admit that we can also struggle. Personal experience, cultural lens, emotions, power dynamics, and social capital influence how, why, and if you will engage. In this workshop, participants will analyze why conflict and difficult conversations can be challenging, role-play scenarios from the group's campus experiences to help them develop scripts for handling difficult situations, share advice on making the conversation more bearable and productive, and when it is ok to avoid it altogether.

W-5 | Supporting a Generation in Need: Fostering Resilience, Mindfulness, and Personal Leadership
February 16, 2025 | 8:00 am - 12:00 noon CST | $175
Room: Strand 12A; Level Two

Marinda Ashman, Associate Professor
Stacy Waddoups, Associate Professor
Benjamin A. Johnson, Associate Professor
– Utah Valley University

Sandi Bennett, Peer Mentor Supervisor and Adjunct Faculty
– Brigham Young University

It's no secret that the severity and prevalence of anxiety and depression among college students has reached an all-time high. Students are grappling with fear, stress, isolation, lack of focus, decreased happiness, and learning difficulties. This workshop, facilitated by skilled educators and experienced practitioners, equips participants with the tools to counter this growing trend. It offers proven strategies that are suitable for all types of institutions, fostering engaging educational methods for resilience and stress management. Participants will gain tangible tools and practical exercises that they can apply immediately in their teaching, advising, and mentoring roles.

W-6 | Shaping the First Year Experience for African-American and Hispanic/Latinx Males
February 16, 2025 | 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm CST | $175
Room: Strand 3; Level Two

Wayne Jackson, Director, Ginsburg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement
– University of Central Florida

Maurice "Tony" Davis, Advisor
– Montgomery County Community College

Jamil Johnson, Assistant Professor
– University of South Carolina

This workshop will address in particular the first–year experience of African American and Hispanic Males at institutions of higher education. We know that African American male students have the lowest retention and graduation rates compared to females and other ethnic groups (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). This workshop will also provide you the opportunity to begin the work of designing new programs and initiatives to implement during the first-year experience that will address the retention issues of African American and Hispanic/Latinx males on your campus.

W-7 | Creating Culturally Affirming and Meaningful Assignments
February 16, 2025 | 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm CST | $175
Room: Strand 1; Level Two

Christine Harrington, Professor
Karen Irving
– Morgan State University

During this interactive workshop, faculty, leaders, and student success professionals will discover student-endorsed and research-based approaches to assignments. Be challenged to think beyond traditional assignments and develop assignments that validate, honor, stretch, and engage your diverse students and help students build skills employers desire. Explore how to use choice, increase transparency, and determine support to engage students in learning tasks that affirm their varied lived experiences. Participants will walk away with practical strategies on how to create or revise assignments that students will find culturally affirming and meaningful, and be ready to champion this approach with colleagues on campus.

W-8 | First Year Engagement Strategies to Support Connection and Success
February 16, 2025 | 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm CST | $175
Room: Strand 11A; Level Two

Rebecca Grove, Associate Professor and Director of First Year Seminar
Lisa Copenhaver, Associate Dean of Student Success
– Hood College

Laurie Cella, Professor and First Year Experience Faculty Co-Coordinator
Steve Burg, Professor and First Year Experience Faculty Co-Coordinator
– Shippensburg University

College students who are connected and engaged experience higher levels of academic success and social satisfaction. Most campuses offer countless activities, supports, and opportunities to first-year students; to maximize the effectiveness of such resources, FY programs can design responsive, student-centered outreach that aligns with the unique needs of today's students. Further, programs can implement structured participation requirements in FYS with the goal of improving student learning, connection, and resource utilization. Workshop participants will analyze successful campus engagement strategies; brainstorm and problem-solve with colleagues; and develop activities, outcomes, materials, and assessments that will work in their environment to increase student engagement.

W-9 | Innovating Education Through Integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Technology
February 16, 2025 | 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm CST | $175
Room: Strand 8; Level Two

Megan Lopez, Lecturer II for Center for Teaching and Learning
– University of Tampa

Alyssia Miller De Rutté, Assistant Professor
– Colorado State University

Get ready for an Artificial Intelligence (AI) and technology-focused interactive workshop! We will review how to integrate AI into your courses, workflow

and even programs to address your institutional needs. Whether you're creating courses for students, optimizing workflows for staff, or designing programs for faculty, this workshop will equip you with the tools and knowledge to innovate within your role. The possibilities with AI are endless. Join us as we delve into AI's potential to transform learning into an engaging adventure. Let's unlock new possibilities together in the dynamic realm of AI, technology and education.

W-10 | Beyond FERPA: Embracing Family Communication to Support New Student Success
February 16, 2025 | 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm CST | $175
Room: Strand 13B; Level Two

Lauren C. Bell, Special Assistant to the Provost
Andrea Keith, Director of New Student Orientation and Transition Programs
– Randolph-Macon College

Alana R. Davis, Associate Provost and University Registrar
– William and Mary

Jonathan Fuller, Director of First and Second Year Experience
– Virginia Commonwealth University

The transition to college doesn't only affect new students. Families are also making an important transition, one that institutions can support through carefully-calibrated information sharing and expectation setting. In turn, families can be vital partners in supporting institutional goals and helping their students have a successful first year. This pre-conference workshop brings together professionals from multiple institutions in central Virginia to provide guidance about how best to incorporate families in mutually supportive ways, from the time of acceptance through the end of the first-year. Participants will leave the workshop with draft family communication plans for their own campuses.

W-11 | Planning Implementation for a Multi-Modality Training Model for First-Year Seminars
February 16, 2025 | 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm CST | $175
Room: Strand 2; Level Two

Robert Tripp, Interim Assistant Director for Advising and Curriculum
Kelsey Axe, Director, Center for Academic Advising
– University of North Carolina, Wilmington

Richard Mullendore, Professor Emeritus
– University of Georgia

Training for faculty teaching in First-Year Seminar classes is not consistent and can vary from the minimal to intensive. This session will explore the opportunities and challenges associated with the implementation of a multi-modality training model which utilizes a variety of strategies simultaneously. The workshop will use case studies to explore the use of asynchronous online training, a campuswide "professional style" conference on the first-year experience, faculty peer mentoring programs, and avenues for ongoing professional development. Discussion will emphasize the practicality of implementation at attendee institutions, and registrants will leave with a plan for adaptation at their institutions.

Opening Session and Keynote Address

5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. CST | Celestin Ballroom; Level Three

Joy Gaston Gayles
Head of the Educational Leadership, Policy, & Human Development Department and Alumni Association Distinguished Graduate Professor

— North Carolina State University

A Vision for Life in a Vanishing Land: A Love Letter to Leaders

Dr. Joy Gaston Gayles is Head of the Educational Leadership, Policy, & Human Development Department and Alumni Association Distinguished Graduate Professor in the College of Education at North Carolina State University. Dr. Gayles is internationally recognized for her research and scholarship on women and people of color in STEM fields and her work in intercollegiate athletics. Issues of equity, inclusion, and justice undergird the collective body of her work. Dr. Gayles is a primary thought leader in her field. In 2022, she was named one of 25 innovative women leading higher education in DIVERSE: Issues in Higher Education magazine. She served as the 2022 President of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), the primary association for studying post-secondary education issues. Dr. Gayles is nationally known for her work in partnership with the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (NCFDD), the largest faculty development center in the United States. She is a community builder at heart and values engaging in work that makes a real difference in the lives of others.

OPENING RECEPTION | 7:30 PM – 8:30 PM CST
Elite Hall B; Level One

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Featured Session

An Evening with John Gardner

8:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. CST | Room: Foster 2, Level Two

John N. Gardner, Founder and Executive Chair
— Gardner Institute;
Founding Director,
National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, University of South Carolina

The FYE conference has many traditions, one of which, over the past 43 years, has been for the conference founder, John Gardner, to host an opening presentation and conversation after the reception for those attendees who are night owls! The tradition continues this year in which John will narrate the history of the "first-year experience" movement with special attention to how this history affects our work and challenges now. He will help participants to use these perspectives to consider how best to enhance first-year student engagement and success. We invite you to join and contribute to what will be an engaging conversation.

Award Ceremony

Awards Reception | Tuesday, February 18 | 4:15 - 6:00 p.m. CST | Room: Foster 1, Level Two

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition is pleased to recognize the Outstanding First-Year Student Advocates. Sponsored by Penguin Random House and the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition, University of South Carolina.

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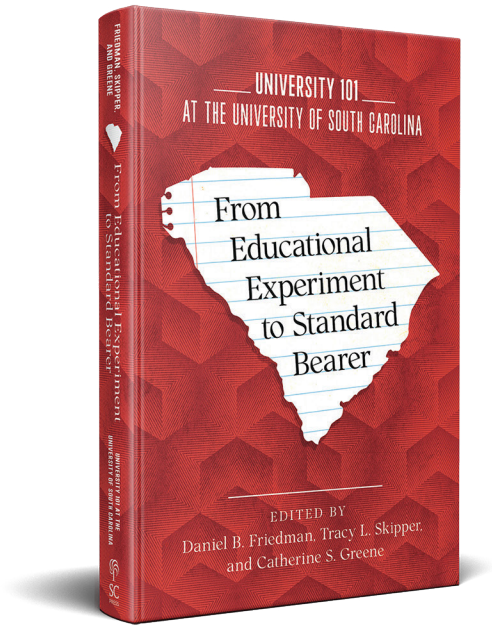

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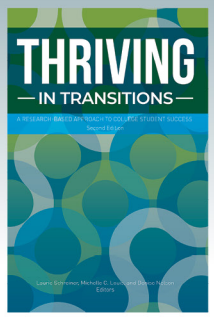
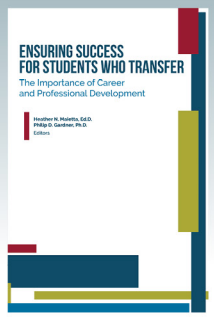
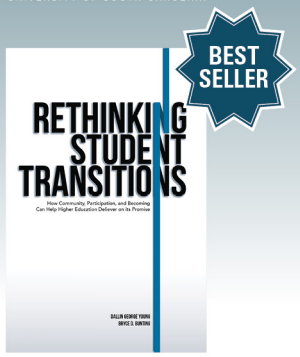


Thriving in Transitions
A Research-Based Approach to College Student Success (2nd ed.)
Laurie A. Schreiner, Michelle C. Louis, and Denise D. Nelson, Editors
ISBN 978-1-942072-46-1. 240 pages. **$35.00**



Ensuring Success for Students Who Transfer
The Importance of Career and Professional Development
Heather N. Maietta and Philip D. Gardner, Editors
ISBN: 978-1-942072-66-9. 286 pages. **$35.00**



Rethinking Student Transitions
How Community, Participation, and Becoming Can Help Higher Education Deliver on its Promise
Dallin George Young and Bryce D. Bunting
ISBN: 978-1-942072-69-0. 210 pages. **$35.00**

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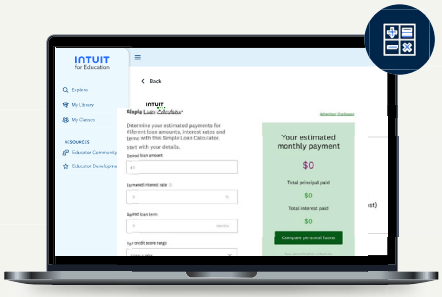

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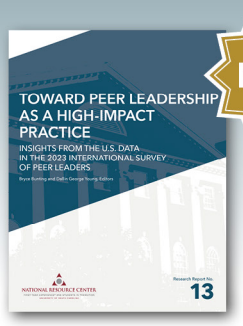


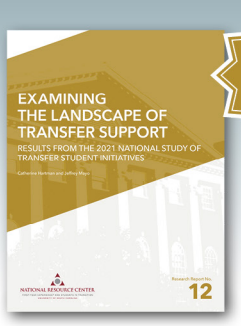
Research Reports on College Transitions No. 13

Toward Peer Leadership as a High-Impact Practice

Insights from the U.S. Data in the 2023 International Survey of Peer Leaders

Bryce Bunting and Dallin George Young, Editors

ISBN 978-1-942072-77-5. 152 pages. **$29.95**



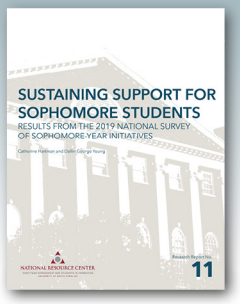
Research Reports on College Transitions No. 12

Examining the Landscape of Transfer Support

Results from the 2021 National Study of Transfer Student Initiatives

Catherine Hartman and Jeffrey Mayo

ISBN 978-1-942072-74-4. 152 pages. **$29.95**



Research Reports on College Transitions No. 11

Sustaining Support for Sophomore Students

Results from the 2019 National Survey of Sophomore-Year Initiatives

Catherine Hartman and Dallin George Young

ISBN 978-1-942072-54-6. 140 pages. **$25.00**

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NEXT ISSUE RELEASES MARCH 2025

Formerly *e-Source*, *Insights for College Transitions* is a free online resource that emphasizes evidence-based strategies for practitioner-scholars who support first-year students and students in transition inside and outside the classroom.

Insights is accepting fall 2025 article submissions for the following columns:

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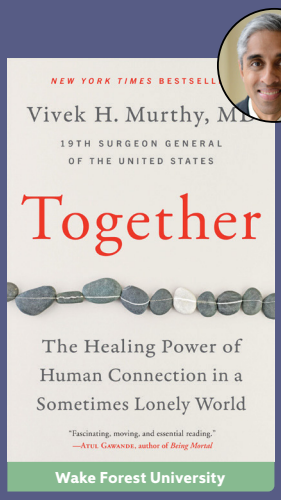

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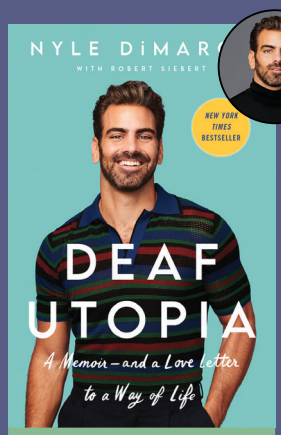

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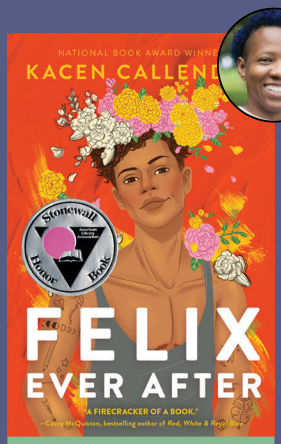

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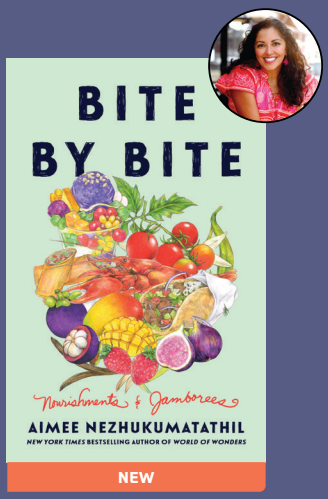

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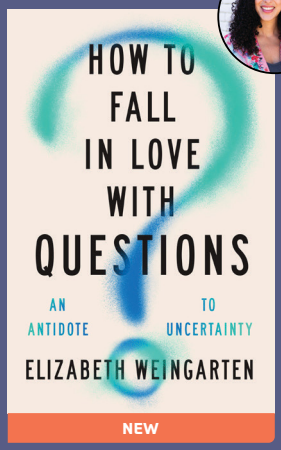

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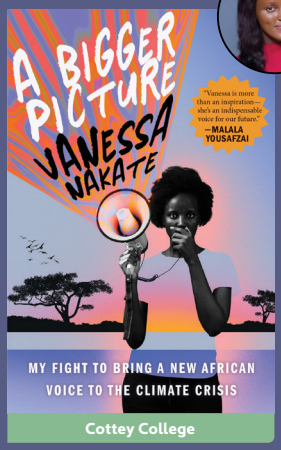

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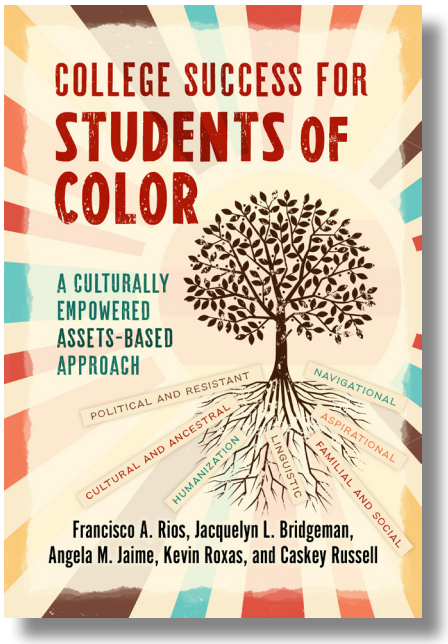

"An essential tool kit for young people of color who are considering postsecondary education but are unsure how to make it work for them."

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"I needed this book when I was a young Native student thinking about going to college."

—Tiffany S. Lee, University of New Mexico

"As a Latina and the first in my family to graduate from high school, I wish I would have had this book to help me successfully navigate college."

—Margarita Bianco, CU Denver

College Success for Students of Color

A Culturally Empowered, Assets-Based Approach

Francisco A. Rios is professor and dean emeritus of Woodring College of Education, Western Washington University. Jacquelyn L. Bridgeman is Kepler Professor of Law at the University of Wyoming. Angela M. Jaime is vice provost Indigenous engagement and professor at the University of Saskatchewan. Kevin Roxas is a professor and dean of Woodring College of Education, Western Washington University. Caskey Russell is a professor and dean of Fairhaven College, Western Washington University.

This one-of-a-kind, "how to" guide is designed to help Indigenous and Students of Color (ISOC) to thrive in post-secondary education. It spotlights the personal and cultural capital ISOCs bring with them on their postsecondary educational journey. This book helps students identify, strengthen, and use these assets so that success in higher education is not only possible but inevitable. Written by faculty and administrators of color, from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, this guide contains insider advice and strategies to help ISOCs successfully navigate the challenges they might face wherever their postsecondary journey takes them. Through stories and relatable vignettes that help readers envision themselves in the book, this easy-to-use, interactive resource includes features such as Professional Tips, Think Alone/Think Together discussion prompts, and skill-building end-of -chapter activities that help students to develop their assets and hone their skills. Designed to help ISOCs thrive in post-secondary education as their full, authentic selves, this book is a guide that can be returned to at any point along one's postsecondary journey.

Book Features

- Perspectives, ideas, and advice that address the unique experiences that Indigenous and Students of Color are likely to have in post-secondary institutions.
- Written collaboratively by a diverse group of faculty and administrators of color representing a variety of academic disciplines including law, education, ethnic and women studies, and English.
- A user-friendly format that students can easily navigate to address their needs as they plan and attend post-secondary education.
- Appropriate for students attending or considering a variety of postsecondary options, including technical schools, community college, or a 4-year college or university.

Sept 2024 224 pages
Paperback, $36.95, 9780807786222
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Conference Check-In
7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. CST
Elite Foyer; Level One

Continental Breakfast
7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. CST
Elite Hall B; Level One

Primer for First-Time Attendees

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. CST
Room: Celestin Ballroom E-H; Level Three

Daniel Friedman
Assistant Vice President, University 101 Programs and the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition
University of South Carolina

Kate Lehman
Director, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition
University of South Carolina

A tradition at The First-Year Experience Conferences since 1983, the primer reviews the events that led to the creation of University 101 at the University of South Carolina, the resulting series of conferences, and an international education reform movement known as The First-Year Experience. The presenters will situate the meaning of this now ubiquitous concept in higher education in both historical context and present circumstances and define the philosophical assumptions undergirding this conference. They will also reflect on the current status of the movement, its accomplishments, and the current challenges bringing us together at this meeting. The session will conclude with practical and specific suggestions for how to make the most of the conference.

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. CST

CI - The Big Easy? Building Effective FYE Teaching Teams

Room: Bolden 1; Level Two

Brad Harmon
Grace Prince
Furman University

Building effective teaching teams of first-year seminar instructors and peer mentors is crucial to ensuring new students feel supported as they transition to college. However, managing teaching team dynamics can be one of the more challenging aspects of seminar administration. This presentation will provide a case study from the 2024 John N. Gardner Institutional Excellence for Students in Transition Award winner institution that explores how teaching teams are constructed and managed in the first-year experience. Participants will spend time discussing the challenges they face while also brainstorming ideas for improving the development of teaching teams on their respective campuses.

CT - A Student-Centered Dynamic Success Plan in a First-Year Probation Seminar

Room: Bolden 2; Level Two

John Paul Cleveland
Walker Mask
New York University

This session presents the development and implementation of a dynamic academic success plan for students on academic probation. The plan is designed to support students from an equity- and asset-focused perspective, taking inspiration from recent initiatives for student support to become properly student-centered. We discuss the planning and development of the success plan scaffold from the advising and seminar instructor perspective, the implementation of the document as a scaffold to support both learning in the seminar and advising sessions, and the evolution of the document from version one to two, as well as challenges to its use in practice.

CT - 7 Habits of Equitable Accommodations for College Students with Disabilities

Room: Bolden 3; Level Two

Barbara Hong
San Antonio College

According to the National Disability data, 1 in 5 college students reported having a disability, yet over 40% of faculty do not believe their students need accommodation, 31% do not know how to accommodate, 29% of students are afraid to talk to professors about their accommodations, and another 33% never received adjustments despite handing the letter of accommodation to faculty. This presentation will delineate 7 habits of legal implications for "reasonable accommodation" to protect the rights of students, faculty, and the institution.

CI - Transforming FYE through Community, Shared Space, and Cross-Campus Partnership

Room: Bolden 4; Level Two

Maura Hollister
University of Colorado Boulder

Student retention is a multifaceted challenge and a key concern for professionals in both student and academic affairs. As students' needs evolve, campuses must adapt by exploring new strategies for service delivery and student engagement. Presenters will explore innovative and collaborative approaches to integrating the residential, academic, and community aspects of the first-year experience at a large, public 4-year institution. We will discuss how these strategies can foster a stronger sense of belonging and positively impact student retention in a high-performing STEM program. Attendees will leave with actionable ideas and a framework to propose similar initiatives at their own institutions.

CR - Let's Talk Data: Results from 10-Year Literature Review on FYS

Room: Bolden 5; Level Two

Christine Harrington
Morgan State University

Discover the findings from a 10-year literature review on first-year seminars. Results are based on 72 articles that met the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Learn about the positive and long-lasting impact the first-year seminar has on student persistence, grades, graduation, beliefs, and behaviors. Study findings on topics such as course type, number of credits, course topics, and teaching methods will also be shared. Walk away with a strong understanding of the literature and practical ideas about how to put research into action.

CT - Incentivizing and Rewarding Voluntary Peer Mentorship at FIU

Room: Strand 1; Level Two

Alexa Urra
Soray Morgado
Florida International University

FIU Peer Mentors are influential student leaders dedicated to positively impacting first-year students at Florida International University. This session will explore the initiatives we've developed to incentivize and reward our voluntary Peer Mentors who participate in the program without financial compensation. By integrating comprehensive training programs, professional development opportunities, a certified student leader badge, and a graduation medallion, we've successfully recruited and retained new student mentors at FIU. We will also review our methods for incentivizing and recognizing these student leaders, along with how we assess their engagement in co-curricular activities.

CT - Lighting the Path: New Strategies for Guiding Undecided Students

Room Strand 10A; Level Two

Joanna Zimring Towne
Jessica Cristo
Los Angeles Community College District

The Los Angeles Community College District has embarked on a professional learning series utilizing the CCRC's framework of Ask, Connect, Inspire, and Plan to explore how to help students who are still exploring make a meaningful and informed choice. This session will explore models and best practices for expanding and embedding the career exploration process throughout the campus and providing opportunities for career exploration as part of a whole college effort. By pivoting the focus from the decision to the journey, students understand the nature of the career development process and feel supported as they engage in career discovery.

CP - Low & No Cost Faculty Development for First-Year Seminar Instructors

Room: Strand 10B; Level Two

Jasmine Carter
Katie Hopkins
University of South Carolina

Implementing high quality faculty development initiatives does not have to break the budget. Using the University 101 Program at the University of South Carolina as a model, this session will explore best practices for designing and implementing faculty development initiatives that are low or no cost. Presenters will share recommendations on how to keep expenses low while ensuring the quality is high and the experience will be beneficial for instructors. Attendees will learn how to create faculty development opportunities that can be implemented while keeping it low or no cost to provide FYS instructors with varied and continual support.

CP - Passport to Success: Supporting Diverse First-Year Transitions

Room: Strand 11B; Level Two

Chris Holguin
College of the Holy Cross

The Passport Program at College of the Holy Cross is a four-week summer transition program supporting first-year students from first-generation, low-income, and marginalized backgrounds. Participants earn college credit, engage in community-building activities, and attend workshops on topics such as financial literacy, time management, study skills, and mental health resources. By building academic and life skills, Passport empowers students to thrive in college. This session will detail the program's structure and outcomes focusing on how it fosters success for diverse students. Attendees will leave with actionable strategies and resources to implement similar transition programs at their institutions.

CP - Integrating Experiential Learning and Professional Development in First Year Programs

Room: Strand 12A; Level Two

Taylor Bryant
University of West Georgia

Carolyn Davis
Prairie View A&M University

This session is a collaboration between University of West Georgia's Experiential Learning Lab and Prairie View A&M University's College of Business to integrate experiential learning into first-year professional development seminars. The HBCU and PWI partnership aims to enhance students' marketability and success by providing practical skills and cross-racial engagement opportunities. Experiential learning, aligned with High Impact Practices, allows students to apply classroom knowledge to real-world contexts and professional development from their first year onward. Through a collaborative approach, we integrate experiential learning in a professional development first year program to observe the increase in student engagement with professionals.

FD - College Readiness: A Transformative Perspective on Recruitment and Retention

Room: Strand 12B; Level Two

Sonia Delaquito
Ryan Hassler
Pennsylvania State University, Berks

Revisiting their FYE 2024 topic, the presenters engage participants in developing a "College-Ready" plan to proactively address identified deficiencies in higher education using Participatory Action Research. Historically colleges have relied on post-secondary interventions such as Summer Bridge and FYE to accelerate college success skill acquisition; this session examines how to identify high-impact, low-cost collaborations with K-12 institutions in this "new normal." Now emerging are Gen Z students whose critical deficiencies need to be addressed. Attendees will leave empowered with the skills/tools required to engage academic communities in action-research centered on transformative recruitment and retention practices in post-Covid society.

CT - ReImagining the First Year Experience for Early College, FTIC-AA Freshmen

Room: Strand 13A; Level Two

Constance Goodman
Lee Anne Spalding
University of Central Florida

Early college initiatives are expanding across our nation and changing the landscape of the traditional first year experience. As a result, colleges and universities are experiencing a rise in FTIC-AA freshmen, students entering college with an associate arts degree. This interactive session highlights a bellwether initiative at a large university in Florida, the STEP 2.0 Learning Community. Presenters will share (1) a framework for addressing the developmental needs of FTIC-AA and workforce demands, and (2) effective programming strategies that encourage cross-campus collaborations between student success and academic units to provide rich academic and social supports for this unique population of students.

CT - Onboarding First-Gen Students and Families

Room: Strand 13B; Level Two

Ryan Bailey
Rigo Castillo
Samantha Briggs
Utah Valley University

Utah Valley University (UVU) is the largest public university in the state and offers open enrollment as a part of its access mission. This leads to a large first-generation student population, in fact 40% of UVU's enrollment are first-gen students. This session will explore how UVU intentionally designs orientation content, programming, and communication to support first-gen students and their families. Come explore strategies for engaging both groups, and practical insights into how orientation leaders and other staff are prepared to effectively connect with and advocate for this audience.

CT - Y'all Really Means All: The Importance of Libraries in FYE

Room: Strand 2; Level Two

Jillian Eslami
Texas A&M University

Kelly Williams
Texas A&M University, Central Texas

Through programming that includes campus events, book displays, curriculum mapping, and more, we will highlight how creating and maintaining a warm, welcoming and engaging environment with library resources and services can help first year students and beyond feel welcome and represented. Attendees will be able to learn about different types of library programming with different demographics and identify partnerships and relationships they can seek out and build in an effort to create spaces and programs for their students specifically in their first year as well as beyond.

CI - Innovating First-Year Experience Courses Through Connection and Collaborative Partnerships

Room: Strand 4; Level Two

Danielle Porter
Stephanie Tillman
Florida State University

This presentation provides an in-depth overview of Engage 100, a groundbreaking retention initiative at Florida State University that has consistently achieved record-breaking retention rates since its inception. The presentation will explore the program's structure, highlighting the reliance on effective partnerships, and the integration of peer mentoring to support student success. The presentation will also delve into the three programmatic pillars of Engage 100, where attendees will begin to strategize individually and as a group. Finally, the presentation will address areas for improvement and future goals, again emphasizing the importance of collaboration in enhancing first-year seminars and creating vibrant learning communities.

CT - Trauma-Informed Practices for First-Year Experience Peer-Mentors

Room: Strand 5; Level Two

Hailey Sands
Samantha Burns
Sadonia Garner
Angela Vaughan
University of Northern Colorado

This session discusses trauma-informed practices that can be utilized by peer-mentors, including the impact of trauma on student success, the necessity of self-regulation, and cultural responsiveness as a peer-mentor. Participants will learn about recent research in trauma-informed practices, discuss skills necessary to facilitate difficult conversations and provide support to peer-mentors and students. Participants will discuss relevant issues impacting students and how peer mentors can help students navigate these challenges. Throughout this session, professionals will learn how trauma-

informed practices can be implemented by peer-mentors leaving with strategies for how to best support students with trauma histories or currently experiencing trauma.

CT - Supporting Successful Transitions: A Model for Intentional Conversations

Room: Strand 7; Level Two

Bryce Bunting
Jae Sampson
Lenna Wilcox
Brigham Young University

First-year students face a variety of challenges as they begin college including finances, learning to study effectively, and finding belonging. So, where do we start? This session will introduce a research-based model that serves as a practical guide for powerful reflective conversations that empowers first-year students to identify their unique challenges and begin developing solutions. Participants will also learn how the model can guide program development, staff training, and assessment. The session will conclude with time for participants to collaborate with each other to identify practical application of these ideas on their own campuses.

CR - Utilizing the Potential of Multifaceted Service-Learning First-Year Seminar Courses

Room: Strand 8; Level Two

Masha Krsmanovic
Larry Sparkman
University of Southern Mississippi

This study evaluated the impact of a new curriculum integrating mental and emotional wellness into a service-learning FYS at a large public university. Utilizing a pretest-posttest research design, this project assessed the impact of the FYS on student development in five areas: stress and resilience, mindfulness, well-being, mental health, and self-compassion. Results showed significant improvements in students' understanding of and self-efficacy for four of the five domains. Additionally, after completing the course, 76% of students felt more confident in their academic success and coping strategies, while 71% felt more comfortable discussing mental health. Students' qualitative feedback further illuminates these findings.

CI - Predicting Student Success Through a Multi-Faceted Mathematics Diagnostic Assessment

Room: Strand 9; Level Two

Andrew Skelton
York University

We piloted a multi-faceted mathematics diagnostic assessment, in which students were asked to complete a 30-question mathematics quiz consisting of both multiple-choice questions and free-form written responses, as well as a 32-question validated mathematics attitude survey. We then used various text analysis, machine learning, and clustering tools to produce a customized report giving advice on each student's individual strength on specific mathematical topics, soft skills, and attitudes. We then tested the results of this diagnostic against a student's first semester mathematics academic result to give a picture of which factors are most predictive of student success and attrition.

CT - Beyond the Field: Helping First-Year Student Athletes Succeed

Room: Bolden 6; Level Two

Dottie Weigel
Nate St. Luise
Messiah University

The transition to college can be challenging and complex for first-year athletes, and research shows that barriers such as negative stereotypes, anxiety and depression, and role engulfment can threaten their ability to succeed. In this interactive session, participants will be given practical tools and strategies that can be used in a variety of contexts (including first-year seminars, advising, and co-curricular programming) to help mitigate challenges and encourage athletes toward success in the first year. Participants will be better equipped to engage and support student athletes in a meaningful way.

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. CST
Featured Session

FS - Ctrl+Alt+Teach: Rebooting Higher Ed Teaching and Learning with AI

Room: Foster 2; Level Two

Brad Garner
Indiana Wesleyan University

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is one of the hottest topics in higher education. Some call it a threat to our safety and well-being, while others see it as an amazing opportunity. As educators, we are responsible for preparing faculty and students to use AI tools conscientiously, understanding its potential and pitfalls. This interactive workshop will guide participants in creating AI-integrated assignments and activities. Additionally, participants will receive a treasure trove of digital resources to assist them in future AI-driven pursuits.

FS - Voices from the Field: The Invisible Voices from Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Room: Strand 11A; Level Two

Jamil D. Johnson
University of South Carolina

Lafarah S. Frazier
Clinton College

Jamila Lyn
Bottom Up Thinking

Are you passionate about HBCUs? Are you excited about our student success? Join for a session highlighting the invisible voices of students attending HBCUs. Dr. Lafarah S. Frazier of Clinton College

(Rock Hill, SC) discusses the impact of first-year seminars and the larger first-year experience on HBCU student success outcomes. Dr. Jamila Lyn will overview an innovative online course sharing model to improve student success metrics for HBCU students. Moderated by Dr. Jamil D. Johnson, the session will engage participants with findings supported by the Advising Success Network (ASN).

FS - A Collaborative, Yearlong Approach to the First-Year Transition

Room: Strand 3, Level Two

Cristina Lawson
Egypt Ballet
Holly Proctor
Patrick Long
Rosie Yates
Tulane University

The first-year experience at Tulane University spans multiple departments working together under the philosophy that it takes a full year for a student to transition to the university. This presentation offers an overview of key initiatives, beginning with pre-arrival communication and extending through the entire first year. Topics will include programmatic efforts like orientation and the first-year seminar, targeted communication strategies, residential life, first-year advising, and the use of assessment as a proactive tool for intervention. Additionally, attendees are invited to join a campus tour and reception on Tulane's campus, with transportation departing from the hotel at 4:15pm on Monday.

REFRESHMENT BREAK | 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM CST
Elite Hall A; Level One

Morning Break with Poster Sessions
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CST
Room: Elite Hall A/B; Level One

Poster sessions are presented in the form of an exhibit and delivered primarily through the use of visual display and handout materials. Numerous poster sessions will be scheduled concurrently, and conference delegates will be free to move from one poster session to another.

PR -1 Trauma-Informed Pedagogy's Impact on Student Self-Efficacy, Motivation and Satisfaction

Room: Elite Hall A; Level One

Hailey Sands
Angela Vaughn
University of Northern Colorado

Trauma-informed approaches to pedagogy in university settings have become a relevant issue facing many instructors. However, many instructors are unable to find empirically supported guidelines toward best practices of trauma-informed instruction. When information is taught in a way that supports the student's sense of safety, that student is more likely to retain the information and have more favorable experiences of the learning environment. It is known that consistent environments increase a student's sense of safety and provide more positive learning outcomes. This study explored the impact of trauma-informed pedagogy on student self-efficacy, motivation and satisfaction in an FYS.

PR -2 Enhancing Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills through Active-Learning Strategies

Room: Elite Hall A; Level One

Armelinda Agnello
University of Liège

Critical thinking, data analysis and problem-solving are highly valuable analytical skills for academic and professional purposes, especially in the healthcare sector. These skills are a key focus of the organic chemistry course for first-year undergraduate students in veterinary science. There are clear analogies between diagnostic process and the molecule identification based on the analysis of spectroscopic data. Both tasks involve gathering relevant information, developing causal hypotheses and testing them. Statistical data show that chemistry problem-solving tasks involving interactive digital technologies contribute to enhancing students' analytical skills and motivation. Face-to-face, distance and blended learning approaches will be shared.

PR -3 Evolution of the University of Wyoming First Year Experience

Room: Elite Hall A; Level One

Mollie Hand
University of Wyoming

Learn about the evolution of the University of Wyoming's First Year Experience course. From 2019 to 2023, 560 University of Wyoming first-year students took the one-credit STEP 1102 course, led by professional staff. This course helps students connect with campus resources and explore personal interests. Evaluations revealed key themes, leading to a simplified syllabus, centralized assignments, and alignment with Living Learning Communities. Retention rates for first-generation students enrolled in the class improved by 3%. Student feedback revealed increased appreciation for the role of the instructors due to adaptations in the summer professional development.

PR -4 Inter-institutional, Inter-organizational, Inter-professional Community of Practice to Support Student Transitions

Room: Elite Hall A; Level One

Séverine Parent
Michelle Deschênes
Gabrielle Desmeules Thériault
Université du Québec à Rimouski

The project, part of an action research program, established a community of practice (CoP) to support student transitions in higher education. The research project documented the value of an inter-institutional, inter-organizational, and inter-professional CoP for its members. The CoP engaged diverse participants, including researchers, professionals, and educators, in ten meetings over eight months. The analysis of the barometer questionnaires revealed numerous instances of immediate, potential value, and fewer manifestations of applied and realized value. The project will provide guidelines for setting up such CoP and share insights into their benefits.

PT -5 Igniting Inquiry: A First-Year Research Experience

Room: Elite Hall A; Level One

Alnita Porea
Xavier University of Louisiana

Undergraduate research fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and a deeper understanding of one's field. A well-structured program can empower first-year students with the essential knowledge and skills to excel in research-based endeavors. By providing early exposure to research methodologies and mentorship, students can develop confidence, independence, and a lifelong passion for inquiry.

PR -6 Enhancing Critical Thinking in FYE Through AI and Problem-Based Learning

Room: Elite Hall A; Level One

Caroline Davis
Lauryn Rosas
San Antonio College

For this proposal, we intend to use Action Research as a methodology to evaluate the application of Problem-Based Learning assignments with generative AI applications on their effectiveness in increasing critical thinking skills and the impact of holistic learning in the FYE classroom. The research will focus on students from a Learning Framework course and an English Composition I course. In addition to the application of generative AI, students will be asked to research a problem, reflect on their personal connections and awareness of the issues' impacts, and explore, analyze, and evaluate possible creative solutions.

PI -7 Building Community: Fostering Success in First-Year Student LLCs

Room: Elite Hall A; Level One

Jeremy Logsdon
Daniel Super
Jessie Hussung
Western Kentucky University

Western Kentucky University's Living Learning Communities (LLCs) play a crucial role in supporting first-year students by enhancing their retention and engagement. This session will provide an overview of the broader institutional impacts of LLCs, with a specific focus on the experiences within the Education LLC. Two faculty fellows will share practical insights on fostering a sense of community among first-year students, highlighting key program outcomes and strategies for supporting underrepresented and first-generation students. Attendees will gain insights into the successes and challenges of creating meaningful learning environments for new students.

PI -8 What Effect Do Learning Communities Have on First-Year Seminars?

Room: Elite Hall A; Level One

Kathrine Paget
Brigham Young University

Incoming first-year students at Brigham Young University must take a first-year seminar course. This course was implemented to help students succeed by offering student-faculty relationships, knowledge of and access to campus resources, increased feeling of belonging through out-of-class activities and assignments, and small class size where enrollment for each section is capped at 25. Some sections of the seminar are also incorporated into learning communities, where the class cohort is enrolled in three courses together, based on a common interest. This research will look at what learning communities can offer to first-year students that such a rich first-year seminar can't.

PI -9 Centralizing & Structuring First-Year Student Engagement in Engineering

Room: Elite Hall A; Level One

Olivia Lemke
Adrien Chu Burnette
College of Engineering at University of Wisconsin-Madison

First-year students have access to a wide variety of groups, opportunities, organizations and services that will help them build a foundation for student success. The Badger Engineers (BE) Engaged program centralizes and structures engagement opportunities for first-year students. BE Engaged is a collection of programs, events, and resources that support students in developing success in four core areas: academic, career, community, and wellness. The program works in collaboration with engineering resources and departments to provide impactful experiences that cultivate engagement and belonging and foster a sense of community for Badger Engineers.

PI -10 Sense of Belonging and Help-Seeking Behavior in First-Year Students

Room: Elite Hall A; Level One

Lizzie Santiago
Michael Brewster
West Virginia University

A strong sense of belonging and help-seeking behavior are essential for student retention in first-year programs. In this study, we analyzed changes in sense of belonging and help-seeking attitudes during the first semester of college among students enrolled in a first-year engineering program. We examined these changes to identify differences between groups, including low-income and first-generation students, as well as variations among students in different engineering majors. This information is being used to develop strategies aimed at enhancing sense of belonging and help-seeking behavior in first-year students.

PI -11 Guided by Outcomes: Refining the CLAS Voyage Embarking Experience

Room: Elite Hall A; Level One

Bradford Dykes
Rachel Campbell
Grand Valley State University

"Start with your outcomes." Tia McNair shared these words with our team, which have become the rallying cry for the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences' efforts to institute a first-year, or embarking, experience available to all students. In this poster, we share how we collaborated with existing programs offered to students in their first year at Grand Valley State University to develop a comprehensive assessment plan that explores student success and belonging. We will share results from students in approximately 110 course sections across 20 disciplines and faculty instructing these courses.

PI -12 Developing Digital Competence in a Distance Program: A First-Year Challenge

Room: Elite Hall A; Level One

Séverine Parent
Michelle Deschênes
Gabrielle Desmeules Thériault
Université du Québec à Rimouski

In Quebec (Canada), tradespersons aiming to become vocational teachers are required to enroll in a bachelor's degree in vocational education, a program offered through distance learning. In a research project, we found that students were unaware of the resources available to support the development of their digital skills. To address this, we focused on improving the dissemination of these resources by centralizing them in a single tool. We will present the tool, co-designed by a team of professors, current students, and graduates. Additionally, we will share the results of two improvement iterations based on students' feedback and their usage data.

PI -13 iCharleston: 10 Years of High Impact Practice and Student Success

Room: Elite Hall A; Level One

Eliza Dinh
Ava Gonglewski
Erin Thomason
Carly Pruitt
College of Charleston

The growth in freshman abroad programs is accounted for by benefits to students and institutions alike. Study abroad - a High Impact Practice - supports essential life skill development for students beginning their college experience immersed in a non-traditional start. Discussion focuses on international bridge programs and the components required for success. Celebrating 10 years in 2024 iCharleston is a first-semester abroad experience. We'll explore the successes and challenges of the program and hear from site directors who lived the experience alongside the students. Additionally, attendees explore approaches that mitigate the common concerns when developing an 'alternative start abroad' program.

PI -14 Support Measures to Develop Student Digital Skills in Higher Education

Room: Elite Hall A; Level One

Edith Jolicoeur
Marie-Eve Gonthier
University of Quebec at Rimouski

This poster presentation discusses the use of measures to support Quebec college students in developing digital skills. It focuses on students with disabilities and their needs. A total of 23 semi-structured interviews were conducted in three stages. First, interviews explore students' views on maps grouping existing measures in postsecondary institutions (interview 1). Then, a proposed map tailored for their institution was presented to them (interview 2). Finally, the participants were invited to use the map for a few weeks and provide feedback

(interview 3). The results show that mapping measures appear to convey information to students with special needs.

PP -15 Piloting a Practical Practicum for First-Year Students

Room: Elite Hall A; Level One

Leah Bryant
Keith Mikos
Doug Long
DePaul University

Responding to social and educational changes in higher education, DePaul developed a new "College 101" curriculum. Employing a streamlined, seminar-styled set of discussion sessions, Practicum helps students address crucial concerns of student life (e.g., challenges of AI, waning confidence in liberal arts, wellness, academic advising, and DEI initiatives). Practicum was designed in collaboration with specialists from across the university and faculty from every college. The goal of this new program, through evidence-based assessment, is to support university-wide curricular changes. Due to its flexible approach, this new curriculum is both easily adaptable by other institutions and more engaging to today's students.

PP -16 Persisting Barriers to First Year Student Retention Post Pandemic

Room: Elite Hall A; Level One

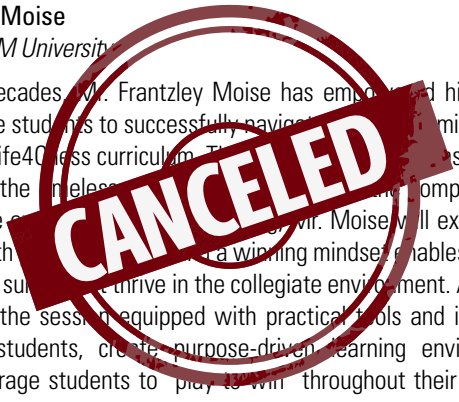
Frank Ridzi
Le Moyne College

We have seen an increase in [illegible] historically underrepresented [illegible] remains as to whether pr[illegible]ough for students with the greatest cha[illegible]aduate and remain in college. In this presentation w[illegible]ew the case of Say Yes to Education in Syracuse, New York to exami[illegible] not only how this has affected high school graduation but also trends in college enrollment and retention. We draw on qualitative student feedback to highlight what barriers persist for retention even after providing free tuition.

PP -17 How to Checkmate College

Room: Elite Hall A; Level One

Frantzley Moise
Florida A&M University



For two decades, Dr. Frantzley Moise has empowered high school and college students to successfully navigate [illegible]mic journeys using his Life4[illegible]ess curriculum. [illegible]strate how he blends the [illegible]omplexities of the college e[illegible]. Moise will explore how playing with [illegible] a winning mindset enables students to not only su[illegible] thrive in the collegiate environment. Attendees will leave the sessi[illegible] equipped with practical tools and insights to motivate students, create purpose-driven learning environments, and encourage students to "play to win" throughout their academic careers.

PR -18 Analysis of Difficulties in the Learning Process from a Handwriting

Room: Elite Hall A; Level One

Yukari Hashimoto
Kyonmi You
University of Nagaski

Tateo Hashimoto
Nishikyushu University

Understanding individual learning processes is essential for achieving optimal, personalized learning. To investigate this, we used a handwriting tracking system called Bamboo Slate by Wacom to examine individual challenges in learning a foreign language. We compared the time taken to begin writing and the time spent answering each question, as well as all questions in quizzes, with the final grades for the semester. We also analyzed the amount of note-taking during the teacher's instruction. The results showed no significant relevance between these metrics. We will discuss additional metrics that may better reflect individual learning difficulties.

PI -19 Faculty Performance and Student Success

Room: Elite Hall A; Level One

Deborah Oh
Wonjoo Shepard
Nazgol Makki
California State University, Los Angeles

For continued improvement in closing the equity gaps, faculty observation on establishing a classroom culture based on asset-based and growth-mindset concepts and their sense of belonging were observed. Their sense of ownership of the course and confidence level in the subject matter showed a strong and direct link between faculty performance and student learning outcomes. In addition, those who were most invested in their work were most successful with student engagement and performance. Common practices were also extracted for faculty norming purposes.

PI -20 Approaching Mental Health As a Peer Mentor

Room: Elite Hall A; Level One

Alex Thornton
Ammon Harris
Southern Utah University

This poster will examine how Southern Utah University (SUU) enhances first-year student mental health through various resources, such as in-person therapy, the TimelyCare app's 24/7 chat hotline, self-help tools, and access to health coaches and psychiatrists. We'll review data on service use to assess their impact. Participants will learn strategies for integrating mental health support into first-year programs, with a focus on the crucial role of peer mentors in connecting students to professionals and navigating mental health resources.

11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. CST

CT - Jazzing Up the First Year Experience Course

Room: Bolden 1; Level Two

Terry Filicko
Robert Derr
Clark State College

The Clark State College FYE course, College Success Course, was reimagined in 2023 as part of a multi-pronged approach to improve student completion rates in their first term. Following recommendations from Achieving the Dream coaches, faculty in developmental education and College Success revised several courses. The College Success course was revised to focus on four "pillars": Belonging, Career Exploration, Affirming Strengths, and Structuring Supports. This presentation will explore how faculty developed and implemented this newly re-envisioned course.

CT - Personal Well-Being in the First-Year Experience Classroom

Room: Bolden 2; Level Two

Jane Robertson Evia
Virginia Tech

The World Health Organization defines health as, "complete physical, mental and social well-being" (1948). Personal well-being is crucial to a healthy lifestyle for everyone, but especially for late adolescents as they transition from high school to college. And yet, the ways to achieve and foster personal well-being are not typically part of the college curriculum. This session will focus on how you can bring well-being curriculum into your first-year experience classroom as an enhancement to any discipline specific or general education FYE. We will discuss how to include topics such as physical well-being, mental well-being, and digital well-being.

V - From Surviving to Thriving: Practical Activities to Foster Student Well-Being

Room: Bolden 3; Level Two

Simone Figueroa
Dawn Bornheimer
U-Thrive Educational Services

According to a 2023 survey, 80% of college students report struggling emotionally, yet only 14% use their college health services for support. This interactive session explores how activities from the evidence-based fields of Positive Psychology, Mindfulness, and Self-Compassion can increase student engagement and equip students to take an active role in their own mental and emotional well-being. Participants will experience hands-on activities that can be used with students to manage stress, enhance well-being, and foster belonging. The session concludes with an open discussion on empowering students to take an active role in their mental and emotional health.

CT - How to Establish a Mentoring Program for First Year Students

Room: Bolden 4; Level Two

Wayne Jackson
University of Central Florida

Tony Davis
Montgomery County Community College

In this workshop, participants will learn the key components in developing a successful mentoring program on their campus. With university and college budgets tightening due to lack of funds, college administrators are exploring ways to develop cost effective measures to increase student retention, without killing the budget. This session will particularly benefit those who are interested in developing or enhancing their mentoring program with the expressed intent of increasing retention and persistence.

CT - 31 Classroom Activities for Teaching Student Success

Room: Bolden 5; Level Two

Amy Baldwin
University of Central Arkansas

Are you searching for new activities and assignments for a student success course? Do you want to integrate academic strategies into a first-year seminar and are not sure how? This presentation will provide fresh ideas for helping your students develop the habits, skills, and behaviors that they can apply throughout their college careers. Topics will include the hidden curriculum, adjusting to college, time and priority management, academic skills, and degree and career planning. Participants will leave with at least 31 ideas that they can share with students and colleagues.

CT - Creating "Backstage" Spaces for Authentic Student Engagement

Room: Foster 2; Level Two

Kayla Molnar
University of Houston

Jose Hinojosa
McLennan Community College

This session explores the importance of campus space for first-year student engagement and authentic expression from a dramaturgical perspective introduced by sociologist Erving Goffman. Participants are encouraged to: (a) consider the critical role of co-curricular environments for fostering holistic growth and (b) discuss practical strategies for designing intentional spaces to support new students' identity development, overall well-being, and sense of belonging.

CI - Hidden Benefits for Faculty Participating in First Year Curricula

Room: Strand 2, Level Two

Bo Odom
University of Virginia

Our goals for first-year curricula are often student-centered, and rightly so. Yet, for the University of Virginia's Engagements program, faculty development has been an articulated core principle of our first-year curriculum from the outset. This unique first-year seminar series provides the rare occasion for faculty from across the liberal arts and sciences to convene with one another, design (and critique) common coursework, and develop a common sense of mission. Come learn how to leverage your first-year programming towards developing communities of practice among your faculty and some of the benefits reaped from teaching in a common curriculum.

CP - I've Been There! Peer Coaching for Students on Academic Notice

Room: Strand 10B; Level Two

Ashley Gragido
Marnie Eldridge
California State University San Marcos

Learn about California State University San Marcos' Department of First-Year University Programs coordinates peer mentoring for students on academic notice. As part of our Academic Recovery Courses (ARC) program, we run several 1-unit, graded, success courses for students on academic notice. Current data trends show a double-digit increase in 1-year retention and higher GPAs for students enrolled in these courses. Our UNIV Peer Coaches (previous UNIV students) are paired with UNIV sections to build connection and meaning in and out of the classroom. In addition to ongoing training and support, coaches are also enrolled in a peer leadership 1-unit course.

CT - Fearless Fighters for a Community College Cohort Model of FYE

Room: Strand 11A; Level Two

Belen Robinson
Annaliese Hausler-Akpovi
Modesto Junior College

In the past decade, California Community Colleges have shifted how students attain their 2-year degrees based on new legislation. Though the winds of change blow, Modesto Junior College has found a sustainable approach to its FYE program that has endured the test of time and had a measurable impact on students. This session will provide attendees with an overview of the crucial steps that have helped the college's "cohort model" FYE program become a success. Presenters will share their comprehensive structural plan, innovative pedagogical approaches, personal insights, and college data that will assist other two-year institutions achieve their FYE goals.

CT - Strategies to Promote Community Building in a First-Year Seminar

Room: Strand 11B; Level Two

Sandy Greene
Katie Morton
Katie Hopkins
Dustin Roberts
University of South Carolina

In University 101 Programs at the University of South Carolina, community building is viewed as one of the most critical aspects of our first-year seminar. Creating an inclusive classroom community that promotes a sense of belonging has the power to positively impact student learning, success and persistence to the second year and beyond. Community building should not be an after-thought. It should be integrated intentionally into the course from the first-day to the last. Presenters will share strategies that can be used to effectively build community through group work, meaningful assignments, and activities both in and beyond the classroom.

FD - An Opt-In Model for First Year Programming

Room: Strand 12B; Level Two

Jade Polizzi
University of Colorado

Participate in a discussion on developing a First Year Experience program that will engage and excite students by using an opt-in model. This yearlong program has no homework, no mandatory classes, no credits and virtually no requirements. Students choose to engage in this program because the events are led by undergraduate mentors with a focus on community building and fine-tuning their academic skills with an element of fun woven throughout.

CT - Staying Current: The Evolution of a Longstanding First-Year Experience Program

Room: Strand 13A; Level Two

Heather Bowman
Michele Luzetski
Quinn Weikel
Indiana University Indianapolis

Lisa Angermeier
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

This session offers an in-depth overview of a longstanding first-year experience (FYE) program, from Bridge Week through the second semester. We will explore how the program supports students' transition, sense of belonging, engagement, and academic success throughout their first year. Attendees will gain insights into key evolutions, including a full-scaled Bridge Week, restructured first-year seminars across campus, and a new second-semester seminar that focuses on high-impact practices. By examining emerging trends, challenges, and adaptations over time, this session provides valuable perspectives for educators and administrators seeking to evolve their own FYE programs and improve student outcomes.

CT - Unique Onboarding Process Replacing Traditional First Year Seminars

Room: Strand 13B; Level Two

Abby Brazier
Ada Mckeehan
Kade Simmons
Ammon Harris
Southern Utah University

While first year seminar courses can be effective in many ways, Southern Utah University (SUU) found the traditional FYS course model was still lacking in delivering skills of self-efficacy, peer-to-peer connection, and long-term support & connection from resources. In an effort to fill each of those gaps, SUU has created a unique tiered onboarding process that has successfully met the common FYS course objectives through continued communication from peer-mentors (Aces), personalized campus visits, career preparation, and a four-day long orientation event called Thunder U.

CP - Beyond Silos: A Scalable Model for Integrative, Participatory First-Year Orientation

Room: Strand 5; Level Two

Willy Oppenheim
Omprakash

Billy Parker
Colby College

This session presents case studies from two liberal arts campuses that have worked to make their first-year programming more integrative, expansive, and participatory by partnering with a US-based education nonprofit that facilitates learning and dialogue across differences. Both programs are mandatory for all incoming students, and combine customized asynchronous online learning with multiple cycles of facilitated small group dialogues guided by trained student leaders. Taken together, these case studies invite audiences to reimagine the dominant paradigms of first-year orientation and DEI education, and suggest practical steps towards creating more inclusive, flourishing campus communities.

CR - Implications of Inclusive Discussion-Based Curricula on the Motivational Self-System

Room: Strand 7; Level Two

Sarah Wolff
Sage Stafford
Chelsie Hawkinson
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

This project examines the efficacy of inclusive discussion-based curricula in supporting motivation and persistence of first- and second- year seminar students. Drawing from Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and theories of school engagement, the study explores autonomy, competence, and relatedness in fostering belonging within the university environment. Utilizing network analysis, the research examines the complexity of motivational processes over time. By assessing how inclusive discussion curricula contribute to motivation and belonging, the study aims to elucidate mechanisms underlying student persistence and withdrawal intentions. Findings will inform instructional practices and support initiatives for enhancing student engagement and retention for students in transition.

CR - There's No Place Like Home: Estimating the Impact of LLCs

Room: Strand 8; Level Two

Kyle Holtman
Iowa State University

There is strong evidence that residential learning communities have a positive influence on student outcomes, including retention and graduation. But what makes this experience so unique and powerful? And do residential learning community students experience greater outcomes than those in course-based learning communities? This presentation will provide results from a research study comparing student success outcomes for residential, course-based, and non-learning community students using propensity score matching, a quasi-experimental method designed to reduce self-selection and other biases. Mapworks Transition Survey responses for each group will also be explored. Attendees will discuss the results and application to their programs.

CT - Everything Zen: How Libraries Can Support Student Well-Being

Room: Strand 9; Level Two

Hali Black
University of Southern Mississippi

Interested in getting ideas for initiatives that can easily be adapted for different types of libraries, student populations, facilities, and budgets? This session shares one academic library's recent initiatives to help students reduce and manage stress and support student well-being. Join us to learn how your library can support students' mental health and well-being!

11:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. CST
Featured Sessions

FS - In Conversation with Dr. Linda Sax: Reflections on a Lifetime of Questions in Studying the College Experience

Room: Bolden 6; Level Two

Kate Lehman
University of South Carolina

Linda Sax
UCLA

Join NRC Director Kate Lehman for a conversation with her mentor and research partner Dr. Linda Sax (UCLA) as they discuss the evolution of Dr. Sax's research on college students conducted over the past three decades. Weaving in personal anecdotes, Dr. Sax will share the key questions that have guided her research and how those questions evolved over time, often in unexpected ways. Dr. Lehman will engage Dr. Sax in conversation about the major phases of her research, from making sense of her own college experiences to investigating students' interactions with family and faculty to studying gender gaps and student diversity, especially in STEM and computing fields. Through their conversations, they will encourage the audience to reflect on how their work (as practitioners and/or scholars) naturally evolves over time, but cannot always be predicted from the start.

FS - Designing High-Impact Peer Leader Experiences: Findings from a National Survey

Room Strand 10A; Level Two

Bryce Bunting
Brigham Young University

Dallin George Young
University of Georgia

Serving as a peer leader can be a highly impactful experience. But what do peer leaders report learning? How do they grow? What aspects of these experiences have the potential to foster deep and meaningful learning? This session will highlight results from the US administration of the 2023 International Survey of Peer Leaders and explore the aspects of the peer leader experience that are particularly impactful. Participants will be provided with opportunities to consider how these results might inform their own work and how to structure the peer leader experience in ways that align with the characteristics of high-impact practices.

FS - Establishing and Improving Peer Educator Programs for First-Year Seminars

Room: Strand 3; Level Two

Brad Harmon
Grace Prince
Furman University

Tom Price
Sybal Tahirova
Temple University

One of the most important factors for first-year seminar success is the utilization of peer educators (Friedman, 2019). How do you build and sustain a high impact peer educator program? What if you want to fine tune, restructure, or dismantle and build your program anew? Attendees will review essential elements of peer educator programs with campus experts. Through an examination of two critical components – training and support and program administration – participants will consider how they can establish goals for program creation or improvement and develop sustainable action plans to initiate or elevate their peer educator programs.

FS - Financial Empowerment: Creating YOUR Campus' Financial Wellness Program from Start

Room: Strand 4; Level Two

Philip Tew
Melanie Ricker
Kerry Tew
Arkansas State University

Research has shown that higher levels of financial stress led to an increased likelihood of leaving college early. Financial education has been shown to reduce financial stress. In this session, participants will learn how to start a financial wellness program from scratch with an emphasis on first-year, including the development of a comprehensive (100+ question) assessment tool, partnership opportunities within your college or university, hands-on programming events to emphasize financial wellness topics, and how to create, maintain and grow interest in your program from all important stakeholders: students, parents, administrators, faculty, and staff with a limited(!) budget

1:45 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. CST

CT - Increase in Student Retention by Strategic Intervention Tactics

Room: Bolden 1; Level Two

Britta Miller
Kelly Wenig
Julie Watts
University of Wisconsin, Stout

This session will cover innovative methodologies for increasing first-time full-time student retention at a medium Midwestern polytechnic institution. We will cover integrations between advising, FYE, and faculty. We will also discuss "easy" data tracking methods that other institutions can use to improve student support including attendance tracking/early alert processes, using SIS/degree audit system filters to target at-risk demographics, and delegating work to appropriate offices to increase intervention efficiency and effectiveness.

CT - Fostering A Culture of Curiosity to Breed Belonging at University

Room: Bolden 2; Level Two

Justin Cardenas
University of Texas at El Paso

"I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious." Albert Einstein. Helping students find their own passionate curiosity and learn to develop a generous mindset about exploring relationships with others is the goal of UTEP's Entering Student's Experience program. Fostering opportunities to find belonging and meaningful relationships gives students the chance to grow new ideas, create new pathways for learning, and develop connections with others. This synergy breeds excitement, new energy, and helps students persist to graduation and beyond.

CT - Learning Notebooks: A Tool to Increase Engagement and Build Buy-In

Room: Bolden 3; Level Two

Alexa Cecil
Emily Knorr
Coastal Carolina University

The presenters will introduce an adaptable classroom tool incorporated into two sections of UNIV 110C - The First Year Experience at Coastal Carolina University. This tool is informed by the K-12 strategy of interactive notebooks and grounded in select higher education student development theories. This pilot initiative is intended to help students engage creatively, create meaningful reflections on their first semester experience, and engage with information through the practices of sketchnoting, reflection, and project planning. Attendees will be provided an overview of the pilot, engage in learning notebook prompts, and participate in a discussion about first-year student engagement.

CT - Who is Gen Z and How Can You Support Them?

Room: Bolden 4; Level Two

Natalie Meredith
The Ohio State University

Beth Kropf
Colgate University

As practitioners working with first-year students who also identify as members of Generation Z, we have a unique perspective of the current generation of students we are seeing. Join us as we discuss the trends we have seen with incoming students, student leaders, and even our own experience. We will share ways to cater your support to this current generation of college students and new professionals. Throughout this presentation, we plan to bring experiences from two distinct institutions that differ in enrollment size, location, institution type, and student demographic.

CT - Parent and Family Engagement in College: An Equity Imperative

Room: Bolden 5; Level Two

Laurie Hazard
New England Institute of Technology

Stephanie Carter
Community College of Rhode Island

Higher education is committed to providing all students with the ability to achieve academic, personal, and career goals. Still, research shows that for underrepresented and first-generation students, their chances of persistence and degree completion decreases during their college experience despite interventions to close persistence gaps. While there are transition programs and support services aimed at supporting the success of these populations, not many consider the role of parents and families in program design. When parents and families are intentionally engaged, there's a positive impact on student success. First-year experience programs can be instrumental in educating families and advocating for students.

CI - Increasing Buy-In and Effectiveness of First-Year Seminars Through Campus Partnerships

Room: Bolden 6; Level Two

Emily Boardman
Dan Friedman
University of South Carolina

The success of a first-year seminar hinges on buy-in from all corners of the university. Presenters will explore the intentional implementation of campus partnerships to maximize the effectiveness of seminar course content and delivery. We will explain how University 101 at the University of South Carolina leverages talent and expertise across campus to contribute to the governance, curriculum and resource development, and delivery of presentations in U101. Participants will understand why partners are a vital component of the first-year experience, the means of implementing and assessing partnerships, and the balancing act of sharing the classroom with the campus community.

CT - Empowering Student Success with Generative AI: Practical Applications for FYE

Room: Foster 2; Level Two

Debi Rutledge
Rochester Christian University

Discover how College Success instructors can harness the power of Generative AI to support student engagement and growth. This session explores actionable strategies for integrating AI to tackle common first-year student challenges, including adapting to new academic environments, enhancing critical thinking, and fostering social connections. Through real-world examples, participants will explore AI tools that offer personalized learning support, encourage peer collaboration, and help educators assess student understanding. This hands-on session equips attendees with the knowledge to effectively incorporate AI into their teaching practices, ensuring a meaningful impact on student success.

CP - A Full Year of Support from Two Peer Mentor Programs

Room: Strand 1; Level Two

Emily Clossin
Kara Woodlee
Indiana University Indianapolis

Incoming students at Indiana University Indianapolis's Honors College adapt and thrive through mentoring opportunities provided to them in their first year. Honors Peer Mentors serve as individual peer support to first year Honors Scholars, extending the reach of advising offered by the College. In their first semester, students can choose to have a mentor and in their second semester, all students receive a mentor as a part of a required course for honors students. This session will provide assessed results from both programs, as well as resources and lessons learned for schools interested in starting peer mentor programs.

CI - The Evolution of UNIV 301- Transfer Student Seminar

Room Strand 10A; Level Two

Krista Wallace
Abby Hart
University of Maryland, Baltimore County

The evolution of transfer seminars at University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) has been a fruitful and collaborative journey. From the inception of these courses in 2016, these seminars enhance the academic, personal, and professional development of students by providing structured connections to campus resources, fostering a sense of belonging, and offering tailored guidance for academic success. Through a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach, the seminars create a supportive environment addressing the unique needs of transfer students, facilitating their transition to UMBC and contributing to improved retention and student outcomes. In this session we will discuss the transformation of our UNIV301 courses.

CI - Living & Learning at Elon: Framework for First-Year Residential Learning

Room: Strand 10B; Level Two

Kirsten Carrier
Jennifer Stephens
Elon University

Living and Learning in the First Year examines Elon University's innovative approach to integrating academic and residential life for first-year students. This presentation highlights how Elon's structured living experiences, including Neighborhood Associations, Faculty-in-Residence, Living-Learning Communities (LLCs), and Linked Courses support student growth in five key areas: Mentoring in Meaningful Relationships; Individual Development; Academic Success; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Wellness and Well-Being. Attendees will learn about effective strategies for aligning residential programming with student development and institutional goals while also addressing common challenges. The session provides insights for educators and administrators aiming to enhance first-year experiences and build cohesive residential communities.

CR - Empowering First-Year Students: Innovative Strategies for Success

Room: Strand 11A; Level Two

Amanda Andrews
Northern Kentucky University

This research will showcase Northern Kentucky University's innovative approach to supporting first-year students through a strategic combination of Open Educational Resources (OER), peer coaching, and a comprehensive first-year seminar curriculum. Attendees will explore the implementation and impact of these initiatives, which encompass financial and information literacy, career and educational development, and cultural competence. The session will also highlight the Common Experience program's role in fostering community engagement alongside tailored care coordination and mental health support. Interactive elements will engage participants and provide actionable insights. The research aims to identify effective strategies for first-year initiatives to foster belonging and intellectual growth.

CI - Leveraging Data to Maximize the Impact of Peer Mentorship

Room: Strand 11B; Level Two

Ammon Harris
Vanessa Lo'amanu
Southern Utah University

Peer mentorship for first-year students is most effective when guided by data-driven insights. Southern Utah University's Peer-Mentors use a dashboard to integrate actionable data metrics linked to student retention. These metrics are collected and tracked using a point system mixed with data from a 3-week survey, 1:1 appointments, and a 6-week check-in. Peer mentors also assign confidence rankings in four dropout-related areas. This data combines to build an easy-to-use dashboard that facilitates a targeted, personalized approach. Assessment shows that use of the dashboard reduces mentors' workloads and increases

their confidence, while students report higher trust and engagement with their mentors

CT - Supporting Incoming Dreamers Amid Changing Policy

Room: Strand 12A; Level Two

Rachel Messenger
Ashley Holt
Utah Valley University

Have you ever wondered how to best support your incoming undocumented students or "dreamers"? Come to this presentation to learn from the experience and resources used at an institution which has the highest number of undocumented students in their state for a four-year university. The assistant director and academic counselor of the First-year Advising Center will share about how to navigate supporting this special population without a "dream center." You will be able to leave with ideas and resources on how to better support your incoming dreamers amid changing policy.

FD - Building Bridges: Enhancing Professional Development Through Faculty and Staff Collaboration

Room: Strand 12B; Level Two

April Dawn
Dora Lee
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

High-quality First-Year Experience (FYE) programs rely on motivated and engaged faculty and staff. Research highlights that significant improvements in student learning stem from continuous professional development and sustained support for educators. This presentation showcases a collaboration between our FYE Community and the Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence (CAFE), aimed at fostering a supportive environment for FYE instructors. The goal is to offer a consistent experience for students and create opportunities for instructors to share insights on effective teaching strategies, ultimately enhancing student success.

CI - Shock the Start: Enhancing Student Success through Shocker Pre-Season Programs

Room: Strand 13A; Level Two

Brett Bruner
Wichita State University

The transition to university life can be challenging for new students. For decades, colleges and universities have intentionally designed new student orientation programs through 1–2-day summer programs and/or fall welcome weeks/ends. As a cornerstone component to its strategic enrollment management plan and corresponding student success and persistence initiative, Wichita State University developed Shocker Pre-Season Programs as pre-orientation initiatives aimed at preparing incoming students for the academic year, focusing on fostering academic and social connections, building resource awareness, and enhancing academic skills. Two years' worth of statistical analysis indicate these programs have measurable positive impacts on student success and persistence.

CR - The First Year Experience of Ethnic Minority Female Students

Room: Strand 13B; Level Two

Jenny Petrucci
The American University of Rome

This presentation is focused on a study that explores the transition to university and the first-year experience of Ethnic Minority Female students at a predominantly white American institution located in Italy. The presenter will highlight the results of the study and offer insight on possible low-cost measures that any institution could take to support this underrepresented student population during their first-year experience in college; including a detailed description of the First Year Seminar used at the Institution.

CR - Wellbeing Across 8-Dimensions: First-Year Seminars Delivered in Residential Learning Communities

Room: Strand 3; Level Two

Chan Thai
Brita Bookser
Santa Clara University

A 10-week First Year Seminar (FYS) pilot program based on the Eight Dimensions of Wellbeing was delivered through the Residential Learning Communities (RLCs) at a private Jesuit university in California. The purpose was to promote students' wellbeing through reconnection with themselves; connections with RLC staff, faculty, and peers; and increasing their knowledge of campus resources. Data were collected from students using pre/post-seminar surveys and weekly unit surveys to assess students' wellbeing. Significant growth ($p<.05$) was observed in students' responses on their intellectual and financial wellbeing, their confidence building relationships with faculty, and their ability to balance life responsibilities.

CT - Surpassing Expectations: Redefining the First-Year Experience through Cross-Division Collaboration

Room: Strand 4; Level Two

Jenn Labbance
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

Kayla Hollins
Stonehill College

Is an 11-day new student orientation the key to improving retention? Likely not on its own. However, a revamped First-Year Experience (FYE) that fosters direct collaboration between Student and Academic Affairs could be. This presentation explores how a cross-division partnership transformed the FYE and boosted first-to-second-year retention rates. Although our approach included an 11-day orientation, we'll focus on the key insights to show how strategic collaboration can effectively enhance student retention. Extended duration optional!

V - Do THEY Really Believe THEY Can Achieve? The Power of Beliefs

Room: Strand 5; Level Two

LaDonte King
Launch Student Success

Success, it is what we want for all students! It is no secret that students who succeed possess similar characteristics and strategies for success. Grit, persistence, time management, and a growth mindset are just some of those characteristics that research shows can help students from all backgrounds achieve their goals. The question is, can we be even more intentional in the way we coach students to success? In this interactive workshop, we will explore and demonstrate the importance of how to teach these skills to students during transitional periods of their academic careers through the lens of equity.

CT - Holistic First-Year Experience: Building Academic and Campus/Social Engagement

Room: Strand 7; Level Two

Oksana Hagerty
Dana Manzo
Rosemarie DeJarnett
Beacon College

Beacon College's holistic student engagement model addresses the critical concerns of sense of belonging, mental health, and academic success for students with learning and attention issues (LAI). The model integrates transition, academic, and social/campus support services, emphasizing proactive, tiered, and coordinated strategies to enhance student engagement and, ultimately, retention. The session will explore the needs of neurodiverse students, the role of engagement in fostering persistence, assessing institutional support systems, and implementing effective strategies for freshman retention. Aimed at higher education professionals, it offers actionable insights for improving outcomes for students with LAI.

CI - Implementing the First Year Experience Module: A Case Study Analysis

Room: Strand 8; Level Two

Veronica Israel
Kgadi Mathabathe
University of Pretoria, South Africa

The University of Pretoria (UP) mainly addresses the academic transition of first years into the university during Orientation Week. However, a more holistic approach to first-year student development is needed to help students navigate transitional challenges and maximize their opportunities for success. UP has implemented the First Year Experience (FYX) as a co-curricular offering to go beyond addressing the transition issues first-year students face, to include their personal growth in a complex university environment. The Department of Student Affairs leveraged UP's learning management system, ClickUP, to deliver the FYX module, building on its successful use of other student development initiatives.

V - Transforming Your Institutional Strategy Toward New Era of Student Success

Room: Strand 9; Level Two

Lisa Dela Cruz
NODA-Association for Orientation, Transition and Retention in Higher Education

NODA's philosophy toward orientation, transition, and retention is to blur the traditional independent fields known more specifically to orientation-transition is the continuous process leading toward orientation and retention. Practitioners must recognize the intersectionality of orientation, transition, and retention to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to successfully support students. Institutions must adapt and be prepared for demographic shifts among students within the United States. Standard approaches to orientation, transition, and retention will likely not be as effective if institutions do not take a better data-informed approach that addresses the unique and individualized needs of their students.

REFRESHMENT BREAK | 2:30 PM – 3:15 PM CST
Elite Hall B; Level One

3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. CST

CI - Financial Coaching Through Peer-to-Peer Relationships

Room: Bolden 2; Level Two

Christian Actouka
NathanSean Kirkby
Ammon Harris
Southern Utah University

From the moment students consider Southern Utah University, personalized financial coaching is available, playing a crucial role in guiding them through college. SUU uses a dual-method approach, where trained coaches and peer mentors collaborate to support first-year students. A key question arises: How much do students know about their finances when entering college? The Ace-Peer Mentor program focuses on learning, retaining, and sharing financial knowledge to help first-year students navigate budgeting, financial aid, and money management. This session, from the perspective of an Ace-Peer Mentor, explores how this approach optimizes financial education for first-year students.

V - FYE Abroad: Strategic Enrollment Management Initiative AND High Impact Practice

Room: Bolden 3; Level Two

Grahaeme Hesp
Foundation for International Education

An enrollment management plan that neglects retention is missing the most important part: student success. Study abroad develops essential life skills & when students begin their college experience immersed in a High Impact Practice learning environment, the transformation can be significant. This presentation looks specifically at the theory of HIPs, first year study abroad programs for students within an enrollment management & retention strategy, & how these components are blended together to successfully create and implement the College of Charleston's pre-matriculated study abroad program as well as the University of Wisconsin-Madison's scholarship study abroad program.

CT - Faculty-Based First-Year Advising: A Model for Student Success

Room: Bolden 4; Level Two

Emily Halligan
Towson University

This presentation explores the benefits of a primarily faculty-based first-year experience (FYE) advising program. Our FYE program fosters early, meaningful faculty-student connections through purposefully small cohorts and frequent touchpoints that allow for highly personalized interactions. This high-touch approach meets increasing student needs post-pandemic and supports strong first-year retention. Faculty support the program enthusiastically, and we maintain a high retention rate for faculty advisors, who opt in to participate. Attendees will gain insight into the program's structure and components, key institutional partners, and strategies for building strong connections with academic departments to promote both student success and faculty satisfaction.

CT - Creating a Professional Development "Crash Course" for FYE Faculty

Room: Bolden 5; Level Two

Amy Baldwin
University of Central Arkansas

Laurie Hazard
New England Institute of Technology

Are you in charge of onboarding FYE faculty and overwhelmed with meeting the diverse needs of your instructors? Some faculty need teaching strategies while others may need current research-based student success content--some need both! Those responsible for delivering professional development for their FYE instructors need a "crash course" that delivers high-quality training quickly—a key priority to prepare faculty to teach. This session provides a framework by which you can effectively create a powerful on-boarding program. It also highlights innovative ideas for successfully supporting FYE faculty as they teach one of the most important courses for first-years.

CI - Empowering FYE Students for Success: A Toolkit for AI Readiness

Room: Bolden 6; Level Two

Joel Gladd
Liza Long
Amy Vassar
College of Western Idaho

At the College of Western Idaho, we implemented generative AI training in our First-Year Experience courses in Spring 2024. This training was well received and correlated with improvement to retention and passing grades. The training combines a practical, hands-on approach to AI skills, guidance on ethical use, and education about compliance with our institutional AI policies. This presentation shares our experience in developing and implementing the AI training as an open education resource (OER). We demonstrate how AI training can be embedded in a FYE course to prepare students for rapidly evolving academic and professional landscapes while building digital competencies.

FD - Publishing Research and Practice on College Student Transitions

Room: Foster 2; Level Two

Kate Lehman
Sean Cleary
University of South Carolina

Annie Kelly
University of Cincinnati

The National Resource Center offers multiple outlets for publishing research and practice related to college student transition experiences: The Journal of The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition and Insights for College Transitions. NRC staff and the editors of these publications will be on hand to provide an overview of the submission processes, discuss strategies for crafting strong manuscripts, and describe opportunities for involvement with the Journal's editorial board.

CT - Fostering Student Success Through Faculty-Staff Partnerships in Linked Inquiry-Based Courses

Room: Strand 1; Level Two

Jessica Clark
North Carolina State University

Inquiry-based learning positively impacts student satisfaction, course learning outcomes, and increases student engagement through intentional development of student learners (Smallhorn et al., 2015), but the most important aspect of this pedagogy is the relationship built between student-faculty-staff. By applying the concept of inquiry-based learning and fostering relationships through a linked-course model, the presenters will share their experiences with fostering faculty-staff partnerships that benefit students in first-year, undergraduate programs. Attendees will be able to develop strategies to foster positive faculty-staff relationships to enhance student success and bridge the gap between first-year programs, advising staff, and teaching faculty.

CI - The Impact of Academic Planning Coaches on Underserved FTIC Students

Room Strand 10A; Level Two

James Wicks
Shannon Kearns
Collin College

Over the past few decades, academic coaching has developed into a distinct form of support, offering holistic, individualized assistance that promotes student autonomy and development. At Collin College, the Academic Planning Coach Program (APCP) focuses on underserved first-time-in-college (FTIC) students, providing them with targeted guidance throughout their first year. Data from the 2023-2024 academic year shows that APCP participants outperformed their FTIC peers in both GPA and credit hour accumulation. During this session, attendees will learn about strategies for recruiting and training academic planning coaches and learn best practices for implementing and assessing a successful planning coach program.

CT - The First Year: Advising the In Between

Room: Strand 10B; Level Two

Jennifer Shaw
Indiana University

Much advising literature approaches students from a psychological perspective, with the emphasis on the individual. We can gain insight into first year student experiences by adopting an anthropological perspective, viewing students as members of a cultural group undergoing a rite of passage as they transition from high school to college. In rites of passage, novices are in a liminal state: no longer occupying their earlier status, but not yet having achieved the next stage. Viewing first year students as liminal beings allows us to assist them in moving from one stage to the next as engaged participants.

CR - What Do You Think? Self-Determination Theory Assessing Metacognitive Curriculum Effectiveness

Room: Strand 11A; Level Two

Michael Graham
Amanda Darden
Lander University

This presentation provides an overview of a research study that examined the implementation of new curriculum constructed through a metacognitive lens to promote autonomy and critical thinking. Results showcase student experience and learning gains from sequenced reflective based writing assignments where students examined societal perceptions toward Gen-Z. Attendees will be provided literature around Metacognition and Self-Determination Theory as it relates to assessing the effectiveness of newly implemented curriculum. This structured curriculum meets students where they are while promoting the development of autonomy. The presenters will engage in dialogue with attendees throughout the presentation to enhance personal takeaways.

CR - Building Validating Relationships with Students - Personal and Ecological Approaches

Room: Strand 11B; Level Two

Zoe Corwin
Joseph Kitchen
University of Southern California

Jen Harvey
University of Nebraska, Kearney

Many postsecondary institutions struggle with equitable retention and graduation rates for low-income, racially minoritized, and first-generation (i.e., at-promise) students. Educators are seeking evidence-based, resource-conscious approaches to support and improve at-promise students' college transition and success. Our research-practice partnership highlights the importance of educators doing their work differently and the value of adopting validating, collaborative, and ecological approaches to student support. The empirically-informed approach we identified–called ecological validation–significantly increases at-promise students' success. Drawing from ten years of research-practice findings, panelists will describe how faculty and staff can foster validating relationships with at-promise students and offer actionable strategies for success.

CT - "Life Tree" Metaphor: Valuing Lived Experiences, Shaping our Future Selves

Room: Strand 12A; Level Two

Rebeca Navarrete
Stephen Schellenberg
San Diego State University

Metaphors provide a powerful means to connect diverse students to institutional programming. For our one-unit first year seminar, we have developed a four-component graphical "Life Tree" wherein students progressively develop, share, and discuss their "Roots" (i.e., important experiences, people, places, etc.), "Trunk" (i.e., set of core values that inform their decision-making), "Overlying Air" (i.e., aspects of an envisioned future-self), and "Branches and Leaves" (i.e., short- to long-term actions in service to their future self). Preliminary qualitative analyses of student and instructor feedback indicate a positive response to the project, and ongoing analyses will provide valuable insights for iterative program refinement.

FD - The Role of Learning Communities in Accelerated Success

Room: Strand 12B; Level Two

Jack O'Toole
University of Cincinnati

High-credit students, those who have achieved early academic success, often enter college with advanced standing but face unique challenges as they transition to higher education. How can learning communities provide the additional support they need to thrive? In this session, we will explore the benefits of placing these students in a learning community that fosters academic growth, social belonging, and professional development. Participants will gain insights into how learning communities create a space for collaboration, enhance student

engagement, and offer tailored support for high-credit students as they navigate their accelerated pathways to graduation.

CP - Creating Community through Accounting and First-Year Seminars

Room: Strand 13A; Level Two

Elise Lewis
David DeWeil
University of South Carolina

During the fall of 2024, the Capstone Scholars Program at the University of South Carolina initiated a unique collaboration with the Darla Moore School of Business and University 101. Forty incoming freshmen choose to be pre-enrolled into a section of Principles of Accounting and U101. The primary goal of the program was to foster a stronger sense of community among our pre-business students and to facilitate study groups for the accounting class, a class that has historically been very challenging. We collected programmatic assessment data through surveys, and this session will delve into the findings and lessons learned.

CT - Educators in Action: Strengthens and Challenges of Teaching the FYE

Room: Strand 13B; Level Two

Andrew Pueschel
Wendy Merb-Brown
Ryan Johnson
Ohio University

This session delves into the unique strengths and challenges faced by Instructional Faculty, Executives in Residence, Tenured Faculty, and Professional Staff in teaching first-year students. Attendees will gain valuable insights into how each group's expertise (Favero, 2003) and approach influence student engagement and success. We will explore collaborative potential among these educators, highlight strategies to overcome common obstacles (Broscheid, 2019), and showcase best practices for fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment (Velez, 2015). By leveraging the distinct advantages and addressing the challenges faced by each group, educators can significantly enhance the first-year experience, promoting student retention and achievement.

CT - Island Wisdom: Localizing First-Year Seminar for University of Guam Students

Room: Strand 2; Level Two

Michael Clement
Muturwan Choay
University of Guam

In Fall 2024, University of Guam launched a new First Year Seminar (FY101) course as part of it's "Island Wisdom" initiative. This change addressed the disconnect between the university's framework and its predominantly Asian-Pacific Islander student body. The new course replaces the previous one-size-fits-all approach with a curriculum that values students' unique backgrounds and guides them through the university system. It incorporates community feedback, scholarly literature on DEI and First Generation Students, and recognizes UOG's challenges as an open enrollment institution. Organized into thematic units, the course aims to foster a sense of belonging and familiarity with UOG among students.

CT - Apoyando a las Familias de Habla Hispana (Supporting Spanish-Speaking Families)

Room: Strand 3; Level Two

Robyn Brock
Florida State University

New student orientation is a critical time for students and their families as they transition into the college environment. For Spanish-speaking families, language barriers can create additional challenges in understanding important information and navigating the campus. By offering resources such as bilingual staff, translated materials, and Spanish-language sessions, institutions can ensure that these families feel supported and included. This session will share how Florida State University improved their family orientation program by offering sessions to support Spanish speaking family members with the help of campus partners and student leaders. Lessons learned and tips will be included!

V - Holistic Pedagogy: Bringing Faculty into the Student Success Game

Room: Strand 4; Level Two

Ross Markle
DIA Higher Education Collaborators

David Thompson
Northern Kentucky University

To enhance student success and retention, it is essential to equip faculty with the skills and strategies necessary to create a holistically supportive learning environment. This session outlines a comprehensive training program aimed at helping faculty develop pedagogical approaches that improve key student factors such as sense of belonging, growth mindset, engagement, and self-efficacy. Attendees will learn how to distinguish holistic pedagogy from "adding onto the curriculum," examples of effective classroom strategies, and how to engage faculty in this process

CP - Does It Scale? Library Instruction and Institutional Pressure

Room: Strand 5; Level Two

Matt Ogborn
Sierra Schuman
Jessica Jenner
Leela Denver
Arizona State University

Libraries often attempt to scale up their services to support more students and faculty without compromising quality, despite limited resources. Yet at our large public university, five instruction librarians reached only 10% of in-person composition classes, leaving many in-person and online students underserved. This panel will focus on two ways we address this issue: providing high-quality online modules and tutorials to support all first-year students and building relationships with veteran instructors in a program that targets new students needing extra support. These strategies allow us to provide more tailored and frequent support to improve these student's success.

CT - The Major Ambassadors Initiative: Building Major-Specific Culture

Room: Strand 7; Level Two

Vincent Corbo
Southern New Hampshire University

Coming back from COVID, faculty and staff noted the increased difficulty in establishing relationships with new students, especially first-year students, and a decline in attendance at academically oriented events. To help solve these issues, we proposed to create a new program called the Major Ambassadors who are tasked with connecting new students to their full-time faculty and modeling the interaction between students and faculty. They are doing this by partnering with a faculty member to organize major-specific events that focus on building a scholarly culture within programs.

CT - Holistic and Social Justice Pedagogy in First-Year Course Curriculum

Room: Strand 8; Level Two

Jenai Johnson
Morgan State University

In this session, participants can expect to understand the value of a holistic approach in course curriculum to the overall student experience of first-year students. As a freshman seminar and English 101 professor, I combine critical thinking, student well-being, and social justice efforts to assist student development beyond academics. Check-in methods, intentional selection of literature, and meaningful engagement are pivotal in fostering a positive environment for first-year students. This effort aims to combat first-year students' retention rate and teach them resiliency to persist through their undergraduate experience.

CT - Connection and Retention in a Major-Specific FYS

Room: Strand 9; Level Two

Cathe Nutter
Texas Tech University

CANCELED

Like many other institutions, our uni[illegible] in retention for engineering-focused st[illegible] semester. A trend in our dat[illegible] LM students who are less successful ac[illegible] intended were less likely to return the following [illegible]. To address this concern we spent a little over a year developing an FYS specifically for students in engineering pathways. We discussed with faculty, staff, and students what engineering-focused students need to succeed academically, and we built it, piloted it, refined it, and launched it. Now, we are ready to share it.

V - Transforming the First College Year and Beyond: Lessons Learned and Next Steps

Room: Bolden 1, Level Two

John Gardner
Drew Koch
Gardner Institute

In this session, two long-time contributors to the student success and first-year experience movements will share the key lessons from their extensive work and prolific scholarship on the first college year and beyond. Spanning from the origins of the first-year experience to the present day, the presenters will discuss what matters most in student success and support their assertions with evidence drawn from their work with hundreds of colleges and universities of all types over 5+ decades. In addition, the presenters will share how several efforts currently offered by the non-profit Gardner Institute apply these lessons and do so in ways that are accessible to all institutions, faculty, and staff. Come join us to participate in a decidedly different "exhibitor" session.

4:15 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. CST

CT - The Health Engaged Learning and Mentorship Program: Supporting At-Risk Students

Room: Bolden 1; Level Two

Mazen Hamadeh
York University

This session presents the Health Engaged Learning and Mentorship (HELM) program, designed to support Faculty of Health students on academic probation at York University. HELM addresses the unique needs of these students by combining highly interactive self-paced online modules, academic advising, and peer mentorship to foster personal and academic growth. The program highlights the importance of skill-building for the completion of post-secondary education (PSE), particularly for at-risk student populations. Participants will explore how HELM fosters resilience, supports academic recovery, and enhances

student retention through an inclusive approach, providing insights adaptable to other postsecondary contexts.

CT - Amplifying the First-Year Experience: Engaging Students in Digital Media Strategy

Room: Bolden 2; Level Two

Sydney Osifeso
Stanford University

The first year of college is a critical period of transition, where students are eager to connect, belong, and understand their new environment. This session will focus on leveraging student-driven social media strategies to enhance the first-year experience, emphasizing inclusion, engagement, and community building. By involving first-year students in creating and managing social media content, institutions can provide authentic and relatable messaging that supports new students as they navigate their initial year on campus.

V - The Importance of Recognizing Academic Achievement in First-Year Students

Room: Bolden 3; Level Two

Eileen Merberg
Alpha Lambda Delta

Colleges and universities have programs in place for students who struggle academically during their first year and these are important components to the higher education landscape. But are we doing enough to support students who do well? Learn how recognizing and supporting successful first-year students can enhance your academic offerings and support the retention of high-achieving first-year students.

CT - Connections That Count: Relationships for College Success

Room: Bolden 6; Level Two

Stephanie Ramsey
Princess Henderson
St. John's University

Transitioning into college is crucial for a student's development. For first-year students, building strong relationships enhances their experience and success. Studies show that connecting with at least four people on campus increases the likelihood of returning the next semester. This presentation explores the impact of relationships on first-year student success, highlighting the role of peer and faculty networks in reducing isolation, increasing engagement, and fostering belonging. Key research, successful strategies, and real-life examples of relationship-building programs will be shared, offering actionable insights for fostering meaningful connections to enhance first-year retention and academic success.

CP - Promoting Sense of Belonging among Incoming Students through Earlier Engagement

Room: Foster 2; Level Two

Kara Janowski
Sarah Deheck
Concordia University, Wisconsin

We noticed a need to engage our students between when they commit and their typical onboarding next steps to help them alleviate common anxieties, foster their sense of belonging, and establish connections to our campus. To fill this gap, we created "Concordia Crew," providing much earlier outreach from current student mentors and campus resources, earlier opportunities to connect with fellow incoming students, and continued engagement throughout their first semester. The program launches in the January prior to their fall arrival and involves online community building, on-campus and virtual social meet-ups, and orientation events, all promoting an earlier sense of belonging.

CT - Implementing Strategies to Redesign the First-Year Seminar

Room: Strand 1; Level Two

Haley Hoyt
East Central University

This session will provide an update on several ideas that East Central University's Academic Success Center team implemented after attending the 2023 FYE conference. Some of the changes included developing a peer-mentoring program, updating the first-year seminar curriculum, adopting a textbook for the seminar, offering a "freshmen-seminar recovery" option and developing training sessions for first-year seminar instructors. Attendees will leave this session not only with ideas, but also with strategies for implementing suggestions successfully.

CR - Insights to Maximize the Student Leader Experience

Room: Strand 10B; Level Two

Rajeeb Das
Texas A&M University

FYE programs often include peer leaders. We examine why students are motivated to be leaders, what they uniquely gain from the experience, and how skills apply beyond the leader role. We review published literature, describe our mixed-methods study, and offer takeaways to improve similar programs at your institution. We outline quick-win research strategies to gain insights about what makes student leadership special, allowing administrators to use data to improve such programs. Assessment approaches span qualitative and quantitative methods, from simple to complex. Whatever level of expertise, there are takeaways for everyone.

CT - The Development, Implementation and Success of Maricopa's FYE Courses

Room: Strand 11B; Level Two

Sharon Zygowicz
GateWay Community College, Maricopa Community College District

Meredith Warner
Maricopa Community College District

The Maricopa Community College District's (MCCCD) year-to-year retention data showed steady decline, falling from 62% in 2016-17 to 51% in 2020-21. In response, MCCCD launched a mandatory FYE course for all new-to-Maricopa, degree- and transfer-seeking students. The course was built with input from myriad stakeholder groups; 100+ Maricopa employees were engaged. The course is a common Maricopa experience - students develop an empowered mindset/college-going habits, make meaningful connections, learn resources, explore careers/educational offerings that align with purpose and interests, map an individualized education plan and financial plan. Preliminary retention data shows the course has moved the needle.

CT - Leadership in Action: Student Ambassadors Empowering Freshman Success

Room: Strand 12A; Level Two

Julie Boyken
University of South Carolina

As the Capstone Scholars Program is entering its 20th year at the University of South Carolina, we are continually trying to holistically develop students beyond the classroom with our various programming, promotion, and funding opportunities. As a result of knowledge gained through the 43rd FYE Conference and end-of-the-year assessment data, we have shifted our sophomore student leadership role to focus on freshman empowerment and success. This session will highlight the role of our student ambassadors, putting theory to practice, and discussion around how you can utilize student leaders to foster a community of success within LLCs.

FD - Peer Mentors in Action: Connecting and Engaging First-Year Students

Room: Strand 12B; Level Two

Jasmine Simmons
University of Florida

This session will examine how a peer mentor program at the University of Florida is designed to enhance the first-year student experience by promoting early access to library support services and resources. The focus will be on how the Undergraduate Library Advisor program connects with new students through orientation activities, pop-up events, direct interactions in their own environments, and engagement on popular social media platforms. Attendees will gain insights into how these strategies boost awareness and participation while also helping to create a supportive learning environment for first-year students.

CI - Creation, Evolution and Sustainability of a Summer Bridge Program

Room: Strand 13B; Level Two

Ryan Hassler
Sonia Delaquito
Pennsylvania State University, Berks

Summer bridge programs are one of the most effective ways to help students transition from high school to college. But what goes into the creation of a bridge and how can its evolution ensure sustainability? This session will answer these questions and more by analyzing Engineering Ahead (EA), a four-week bridge program which provides academic enhancement for underrepresented students from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Over the past 9 years, EA has evolved from simply a math boot-camp to a fully immersive and dynamic program which includes hands-on labs, metacognition training, mentoring, career readiness, industry collaboration and community engagement.

CT - Creating a FY Common Connection Program with Zero Budget

Room: Strand 2; Level Two

Terri Rosenberg
Lebanon Valley College

In times of financial austerity at small liberal arts institutions, it can be challenging to afford initiatives that aid in student satisfaction and retention. This session will offer an alternative to the costly one-book programs. The presenter will share Lebanon Valley College's process for creating the FYE Common Connection on zero budget. The results at LVC have included greater collaboration across campus stakeholders and greater community-building with our students.

CP - Students Teaching Students: The Game-Changing Role of Student-Taught Freshman Seminars

Room: Strand 3; Level Two

J.D. Thomas
University of Texas at Dallas

The First-Year Leader (FYL) Program at the University of Texas at Dallas trains undergraduate students to teach the university's Freshman Seminars. These student-taught seminars provide unique, almost entirely adult-free spaces where older undergraduates teach and mentor a class of first-year students, helping new students adjust to university life, learn about key resources, connect with peers, and feel a greater sense of belonging on campus. This session will provide an overview of the FYL Program—from its training curriculum and budget to its recruitment timeline and assessment practices—so that attendees can understand the scale and impact of student-led Freshman Seminars.

CT - Building Bridges: Library and Learning Community Collaboration Benefiting Engineering Students

Room: Strand 4; Level Two

Annika Deutsch
Louise Pedersen
University of Utah

At our institution, instructors in a first-year learning community work closely with academic librarians to achieve a comprehensive learning objective focused on information literacy. In one course, students approach engineering topics from the perspective of the social sciences and the humanities. In this session, we will share lessons learned and describe the benefits of effective collaboration and planning for all parties. We will also cover the scalability and interdisciplinarity of our strategies. By meeting the information literacy learning objective, the students obtain valuable skills and tools they need to become successful in their undergraduate careers and beyond.

V - The Transformational College Experience: First-Year Common Read Program

Room: Strand 5; Level Two

Dante DiBattista
DiBattista & Co.

Imagine the transformation required for someone to go from failing out of college with a 0.8 GPA to becoming an executive coach, leadership consultant for global multi-billion dollar businesses, and facilitator for courses offered by MIT's Leadership Center. That is the story of Dante DiBattista, a story he documented in his book, "The Transformational College Experience", that he has translated into a first-year seminar. This session will cover an overview of the program, what it entails, and how it has increased retention rates by 18% on campuses that use it. Come learn how we're building the leaders of the future.

CT - Scaffolded Approaches to Teaching Critical Information Evaluation Skills

Room: Strand 7; Level Two

Katherine Kapsidelis
University of California, Los Angeles

Elizabeth Galoozis
University of California, Irvine

First-year students are dealing with an incredibly complex information landscape that includes generative artificial intelligence, social media, fragmentation, and hyper-personalization. How can we help students develop skills to evaluate the information they encounter and use it ethically? In this workshop, two librarians will guide you through definitions and strategies to start students off on the right foot when it comes to finding and using information for academic, personal, and civic needs. We'll highlight research on student behaviors and help you brainstorm collaborations with your institutions' libraries. You'll leave with a specific plan of action, no matter your role or context.

V - Increasing Student Success/Retention through Financial Wellness Integration into FYE Programs

Room: Strand 9; Level Two

Dave Zasada
Intuit

Donovan Livingston
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Kate Mielitz
Kansas State University

Financial wellness is becoming an increasingly important component of FYE courses at post-secondary institutions to address issues related to student financial and health stress. In this session, participants will explore best practices for integrating financial wellness topics into their FYE programs. The session will cover topics including creating a comprehensive financial wellness framework, developing supporting partnerships, and key topics to cover to ensure first year students are set up for success. Participants will leave with a better understanding of the importance of financial wellness and the tools and resources needed to increase student success and retention.

4:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. CST
Featured Sessions

FS - Spirituality, Authenticity and Wholeness in American Higher Education

Room: Bolden 4; Level Two

John Gardner
Betsy Barefoot
Gardner Institute

Sandy Greene
Kate Lehman
University of South Carolina

Tiffani Riggers-Piehl
University of Missouri-Kansas City

A perfect way to end this intensive day of learning: this session is a conference tradition since 1997 continuing a practice of Alexander and Lena Astin, Arthur Chickering, and Laura Rendon. John, Betsy, Sandy, Tiffani, and Kate will lead this session in guided reflection in which they will ask participants to discuss such questions as: 1. How congruent are you in terms of your values and beliefs in the context of the practiced values of your supervisors and your institution? 2. How "authentic" as a person do you feel you are with your students and colleagues? 3. And thus, how "whole" are you as a person in your first-year experience work? 4. And how can we make necessary adjustments and commitments to practice our profession in ways that are more centered, congruent, authentic and whole?

FS - Examining the Landscape of Transfer Student Initiatives

Room: Bolden 5; Level Two

Catherine Hartman
North Carolina State University

Jeff Mayo
University of Texas at Austin

Promoting a comprehensive experience for transfer students requires an understanding of how transfer programs are structured to aid with students' transitions. This session will reveal findings from an upcoming report published by the National Resource Center, Examining the Landscape of Transfer Student Initiatives: Results from the 2021 National Survey of Transfer Student Initiatives. The presenters will provide attendees with a national overview of transfer-related policies, practices, and procedures as well as institutional and bureaucratic barriers to their development, coordination, and implementation. Participants will also engage in discussions about how transfer-related efforts may be improved to better meet students' needs.

FS - The Major-Career Disconnect: Preparing for an Uncertain Future

Room Strand 10A; Level Two

Chiara Bacigalupa
Sonoma State University

Antonia Bacigalupa Albaum
Indiana University

Incoming students feel pressured to choose a major with strong vocational potential. But if forced into classes they do not enjoy, their academic performance can suffer, their enthusiasm for college can wane, and their retention may drop. Research shows they can pursue many careers from most majors, and that the greatest career success often comes from the leadership skills that emerge from their education's breadth not from its depth, as well as from nurturing a passion for learning. This session reviews the research on career/major mismatch and the data showing what drives career advancement and lifetime earnings.

FS - Cultivating a Culture of Empathy Amongst Faculty: Educating Our Educators

Room: Strand 11A; Level Two

Patricia Moran
University of Texas at Austin

The percentage of students with disabilities enrolled in postsecondary institutions has almost doubled in the last decade. Research identified factors related to successful degree completion for students with disabilities and the need for empathy in the classroom. Developing curriculum for faculty aimed at creating empathic responses in the classroom can work to address this need. Through a series of videos, faculty and students were free to define empathy in their own words as well as reflect on lived experiences. The desired outcome is to encourage empathy from faculty regarding disabled student experiences to increase inclusion on campus.

FS - Keeping Us Engaged: Putting Student Stories (and Evidence) into Action

Room: Strand 13A; Level Two

Christine Harrington
Morgan State University

Discover student-endorsed strategies with research support that you can use to increase student engagement. During this highly interactive session, we will address numerous engagement strategies, such as getting to know students on the first day of class, connecting with students in and out of the classroom, using powerful teaching strategies, creating culturally affirming and meaningful assignments, and providing useful feedback. Although the focus will be on what professors can do to motivate and engage students, staff and administrators will find many strategies that will translate well into work. Walk away ready to increase student engagement!

FS - Critical Thinking in the Era of AI: Pedagogy & Writing

Room: Strand 8; Level Two

Robert Kenedy
York University

Critical thinking requires a specific approach that is student-centered and considers how students learn in person and online. Current research suggests that students who acquire critical thinking skills are more likely to successfully complete their degree (Kenedy, 2023, 2024). Teaching students to become critical thinkers and writers requires a comprehensive educational approach. This interactive workshop highlights strategies for critical thinking infused pedagogy through writing and critical skills components in FYE seminars, introductory courses, and other courses. We will evaluate relevant research, pedagogy, and substantive handouts that promote "best practices" for teaching critical thinking and writing and assessment.

4:15 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. CST
Tulane Campus Tour

Attendees of Tulane's featured session, "A Collaborative, Yearlong Approach to the First-Year Transition" scheduled for Monday (2/17) from 9am-10:15am in Room: Strand 3; Level Two will have the opportunity to attend a campus tour! You will need to attend this session in order to reserve your spot for the tour. Space is limited.

The tour will include:
30 min: Bus ride to campus
45 min: Campus tour, given by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, where attendees will receive similar information to Tulane's perspective students.
45 min: The tour will end in a reception where attendees will have the opportunity to network directly with staff and learn more about their specific initiatives.
30 min: Bus ride to conference hotel

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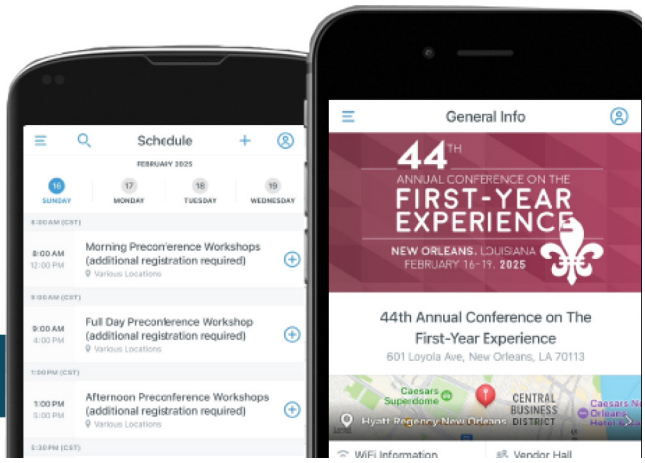

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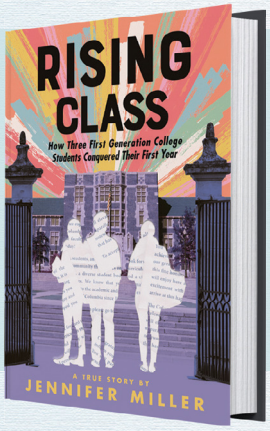

JENNIFER MILLER
Author of
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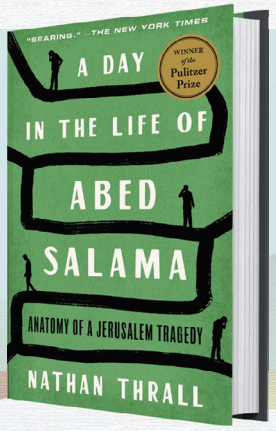
How Three First-Generation College Students Conquered Their First Year



NATHAN THRALL
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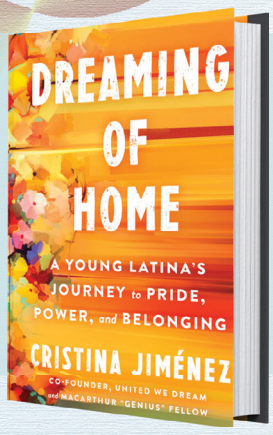
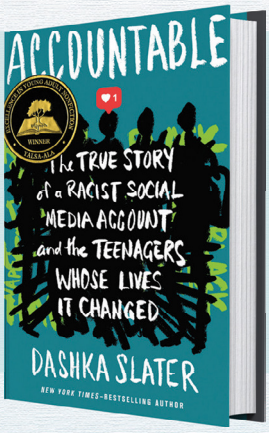
Anatomy of a Jerusalem Tragedy



CRISTINA JIMÉNEZ
Author of
Dreaming of Home
A Young Latina's Journey to Pride, Power, and Belonging



DASHKA SLATER
Author of
Accountable
The True Story of a Racist Social Media Account and the Teenagers Whose Lives It Changed

To RSVP, scan the QR code, visit us in Booth 27 in the exhibit hall, or email academic@macmillan.com.

Conference Check-In
7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. CST
Elite Foyer; Level One

Continental Breakfast
7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. CST
Elite Hall B; Level One

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. CST

CT - Supporting First-Generation Student Engagement in the 21st Century

Room: Foster 2, Level Two

Jamil D. Johnson
University of South Carolina

With support from the Advising Success Network (ASN), the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition engaged in work within TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) to examine first-generation success strategies through the lenses of (a) advising, (b) commitment to advancing equity, and (c) improving student success in higher education. Attendees will engage with the findings of our work that illustrate the voices of SSS professionals and the practices to support first-generation students in the 21st century.

CT - How Artificial Intelligence (AI) Will Transform the First Year Experience

Room: Strand 2; Level Two

Robert Feldman
University of Massachusetts

How is the landscape of education and the first-year experience evolving in the wake of the rise of artificial intelligence (AI)? In this session, we'll begin by exploring the unique characteristics of today's students and how these traits affect their classroom performance. We'll then dive into the educational uses of AI, unpacking its evolving role in education. You'll learn how to harness the power of AI to enhance student engagement, create innovative assignments, and transform the learning experience. Finally, we'll consider how AI can revolutionize our approach to teaching first-year students, empowering them to excel in today's complex educational landscape.

CR - Long-Term Impact of Inquiry Research Skills: First-Year Seminar Follow-Up Study

Room: Strand 3; Level Two

Arishna Agarwal
Wayne South
Angela Vaughan
University of Northern Colorado

Research indicates that students benefit from FYS as the curriculum is focused on developing various foundational and transferrable inquiry skills required for academic success. It can increase student self-efficacy and GPA while reducing attrition rates.This study explored how foundational inquiry skills acquired in a FYS program continued to impact students after the completion of their FYS class and well into their other courses a year later. The purpose was to identify the skills and tools students found most valuable through their experiences and which they still utilize in their other college coursework. Implications for FYS curriculum will be discussed.

CP - Preparing STEM Transfers for their First Year at a 4-year

Room: Strand 4; Level Two

Harold Stanislaw
Iqbal Atwal
California State University, Stanislaus

Community college students who are new to a 4-year institution face many of the same challenges as students who are in their first year at college. Incoming STEM majors may find it particularly difficult to remain enrolled and continue progressing towards graduation before their financial aid expires. Attend this session to learn about the approaches California State University, Stanislaus is taking to help STEM transfer students adapt to their new campus by selecting courses wisely (both before and after matriculation) and adjusting to the novel social and academic environment in which they find themselves.

FD - From Smallville to Metropolis: Supporting Rural Students in College

Room: Strand 5; Level Two

Keegan Lopez
Tara Coleman
Kansas State University

While Manhattan, Kansas, vastly differs from Manhattan, New York, the transition to college can pose similar challenges for many rural students. Despite higher high school graduation rates, rural students' college enrollment and graduation rates lag behind their urban and suburban peers. In this session, we will discuss challenges faced by rural students, identify barriers, and explore ways to build community and support their transition. Attendees will connect with academics invested in rural student success, identify needs and concerns, and share ideas on building relationships with rural high schools and engaging communities to create a sense of belonging for rural students.

CP - Archival Adventures: A First-Year Quest Through Campus History

Room: Strand 7; Level Two

Katie Strand
Katie Luder
Kelly Rovegno
Utah State University

Do university archives have a role in first-year programs? This session will explore how one institution transformed its university archives into a campus scavenger hunt. By blending archival photographs, historical facts, and current campus information, this innovative tool helped hundreds of new students explore their campus,

connecting them with its rich history. Discover how diverse archival materials were curated to enhance students' sense of belonging and connection to their new campus community. Join us to learn about our design process and how you can adapt this scavenger hunt to fit your institution, fostering collaboration between libraries and first-year orientation programs.

CP - Woven Together: Orientation & Residential Education's Collaboration to Building Community

Room: Strand 8; Level Two

Kristine Kengor
Andrew Greenwald
Carnegie Mellon University

At Carnegie Mellon University, our 9-day First-Year Orientation program prepares new students and their families to transition into our Tartan community successfully. This session will explore the collaborative approach between the Office of First-Year Orientation and the Office of Residential Education in helping new students build the foundation for academic success, community membership, well-being, campus involvement, and pride in being a Tartan. Participants will learn how the First-Year Orientation program, deeply rooted in Carnegie Mellon's House Model, partners with Residential Education to ensure new students receive peer-led guidance and support from the start.

V - Confidence Is Everything!

Room: Strand 9; Level Two

Emeka Anazia
Acing The Undergrad

Confidence is at an all-time low because of information overload. During this discussion-style workshop with chances to win prizes, you will learn about the three pillars to achieve confidence in any area of your life.

CT - Gateway to FYE Success: Engaging Part-time Faculty in Learning Communities

Room: Strand 10A; Level Two

Dori Haggerty
Geni Wright
Valencia College

Faced with launching our new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) focused on increasing FYE student success in Gateway courses, we designed a model to foster part-time faculty engagement in this project. The initiative included a comprehensive onboarding process for newly hired part-time faculty and a first-semester learning community program. Key components consisted of monthly newsletters providing resources and development opportunities alongside faculty learning communities on topics relevant to teaching first-year students across all modalities. By focusing on the "first-year experience" for new part-time faculty, this successful model established collaborative connections, encouraged experience sharing, and enhanced online course engagement expertise.

CP - From Pilot to Promise: Scaling an FYE Program for Success

Room: Strand 10B; Level Two

Liz Coronado Castillo
St. Philip's College

The First Year Experience (FYE) Program at St. Philip's College, an HBCU and HSI, is designed to support first-time, first-generation, and part-time students in their transition to college. Anchored by an FYE Model for Student Success, the program provides one-on-one guidance, peer mentoring, academic workshops, and access to resources like laptops. Through events such as Tiger Nation Family Day and the End of Year Awards Banquet, FYE fosters a sense of belonging and celebrates student achievements. This session will explore our successful pilot and scaling efforts, showcasing how we help students overcome challenges and thrive.

CR - Exploring How Time Use Affects First-Year, Low-Income College Students' Well-being

Room: Strand 11A; Level Two

Joseph Kitchen
Zoe Corwin
University of Southern California

Jennifer Harvey
Julie Campbell
University of Nebraska, Kearney

Low-income students make up a significant share of college-goers. During the college transition, they experience multiple, compounding factors—such as competing time commitments (e.g., family responsibilities, classes, employment), financial stress, classism, and culturally alienating environments—that could potentially shape their psychological well-being, a key factor in student success. This R-to-practice session shares novel findings from a mixed-methods study examining the link between low-income students' time use (i.e., class, studying/homework, working, socializing) and well-being. We also identified how and why their time use affects their well-being. Data-informed, practical guidance for educators seeking to support low-income students' well-being will be discussed.

CI - Integrating FYE and Support Services: Strengthening Engagement, Retention, and Achievement

Room: Strand 11B; Level Two

Sanci Teague
Mindy Bell
West Kentucky Community and Technical College

West Kentucky Community and Technical College's Student Success Center (SSC) opened in August 2021 as part of a comprehensive student success and retention initiative. Operated through Academic Affairs, the SSC integrates First-Year Experience (FYE), success coaching, and academic support under one roof. By combining academic and non-academic services, the SSC fosters collaboration and strengthens relationships across campus, creating a dynamic

environment where students receive holistic support. This session will share how WKCTC leveraged FYE's proven success to create an integrated, student-centered environment at the SSC, strengthening student retention and achievement and empowering students to dream, plan, and achieve their goals.

CP - Fostering First-Year Success: Because Seminar Faculty Can't Do It All!

Room: Strand 12A; Level Two

Nii Kpakpo Abrahams
Butler University

If an institution declares the first year of college is crucial but faculty outside First-Year Seminars (FYS) don't hear it, does it still matter? Absolutely! However, we recognize that gaining buy-in from faculty who primarily teach first-year students outside of FYS (core or departmental) can be challenging for a variety of reasons. This session addresses that gap by highlighting why it's essential to involve ALL faculty in fostering a campus-wide culture of care, while encouraging, empowering, and equipping you with actionable recommendations to reach faculty in new ways.

FD - Why Does My FYE Matter?

Room: Strand 12B; Level Two

Kendria Mason
Rob Jacks
Shannon Houghton
Virginia Tech

A common argument against the First-Year Experience (FYE) is "why does this matter?" or that the course does not contribute to the "rigor" that is needed to complete a college degree. In this facilitated dialogue, attendees will hear three different approaches from a FYE program coordinator, an administrator, and faculty perspective on how to effectively communicate the importance of FYE, the work you do, and what it means for the future of FYE and have opportunities to share their own ideas/experiences and problem solve their own challenges.

CT - Power of Partnering for Student Financial Success

Room: Strand 13A; Level Two

Jennifer Collins
Lassandra Brice
Carlotta Mitchell
Florida A&M University

This presentation highlights the transformative impact of a strategic partnership between the various campus offices to enhance first-year student financial success. This initiative aims to provide comprehensive guidance and support to first-year students navigating the complexities of financial aid and student financial services. Recognizing that financial challenges are a key to student retention and success, this partnership integrates financial literacy education, personalized advising, and parent engagement to ensure students have the resources and knowledge needed to make informed financial decisions.

CT - When Waitlists and Treatment Delays Threaten Student Success

Room: Strand 13B; Level Two

Phillip Rash
Brigham Young University

College students continue to experience increased rates of depression, anxiety, PTSD, depression, and other mental health concerns. Many first-year students arrive on campus having received mental health treatment in their communities. The transition from home to college can often disrupt access to medication, therapy, and other sources of support. Unfortunately, this disruption comes at a time of stressful change. This presentation will explore strategies that first-year and other student success programs might consider to facilitate a more smooth transition to college life for students who may experience challenges to mental health.

CI - Leaders of Leaders: Integrating Peer Coordinators into First-Year Mentorship Programs

Room: Bolden 1; Level Two

Zain Olson
University of Minnesota

This presentation explores the creation and impact of a new "Peer Coordinator" role within the Carlson School of Management's peer-mentorship program. This undergraduate leadership position has allowed the program to nearly double in size while halving the mentee/mentor ratio, thereby improving the quality of peer-mentorship for 1,000 incoming students annually. In an era of doing more with less, hiring Peer Coordinators can be one strategy to scale mentorship initiatives while also retaining student workers—all with minimal budgetary impacts. Attendees will leave with an understanding of the Peer Coordinator position and how it could be adapted at their institutions.

CT - Scaling Academic Pathways: Enhancing First-Year Success and Belonging at UTSA

Room: Bolden 2; Level Two

Rebecca Schroeder
Karen Daas
Debra Pena
University of Texas at San Antonio

UTSA introduced an Academic Pathway model for first-year courses to boost student success and graduation rates in 2018. Recognizing the pandemic's impact on students' sense of belonging, we've now transformed this model. The Adapted Model pairs first-year students with Freshman Composition, forming tight-knit cohorts of 25. This approach fosters strong relationships and a deep sense of belonging—key drivers of student success. Armed with pilot data and a refined strategy for scaling, we are poised to expand this initiative, ensuring a broader, sustainable impact on student engagement and retention.

V - Getting Strategic with Student Success Courses
Room: Bolden 3; Level Two

Ross Markle
DIA Higher Education Collaborators

Osaffo James
North Carolina Central University

Many first-year experience courses, while "student success flavored", fail to meaningfully impact long-term student success. These courses often feature overcrowded curricula delivered by undertrained instructors and course topics chosen with little-to-no insight into students' needs or which skills relate to success at the institution. In this session, we will explore how FYE courses can be designed to more effectively support student success through the strategic use of institution-specific data on holistic student needs. Additionally, we will share practical tools/strategies for providing targeted, holistic support in the classroom based on work at North Carolina Central University and other institutions.

CT - Supporting First-Year Readers to Increase Student Success and Retention
Room: Bolden 4; Level Two

Laura Ackerwold
Jamie Fryslie
South Dakota State University

This presentation addresses the critical need for effective reading support in higher education amidst a national K-12 reading crisis. Recognizing that many incoming students struggle with college level reading, this session will explore strategies designed to enhance academic reading skills, thereby boosting academic performance and retention rates. We will discuss current national reading trends, challenge the structure of remedial reading courses and provide strategies for incorporating reading support across curricula. Participants will gain actionable insights into creating a reading climate that contributes to the holistic success of first-year students.

CT - All Hands on Deck 2.0: Improving First-Year Student Success
Room: Bolden 5; Level Two

Jennifer Collins
Lewis Johnson
Allyson Watson
Florida A&M University

This proposal explores the implementation of strategies to improve first-year student success in higher education institutions. The focus will be on addressing common challenges faced by first-year students, such as academic preparedness, social integration, and mental health concerns. By conducting research on best practices and consulting with experts in the field, the proposal showcases a comprehensive plan implemented to support first-year students. The ultimate goal of this "all hands on deck" plan is to increase retention rates, promote academic achievement, and enhance overall student well-being during the critical transition period from high school to college.

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. CST
Featured Session

FS - Career and Leadership Lessons from National Advisory Board Members
Room: Bolden 6; Level Two

Bernie Savarese
The University of Tennessee System

Bryce Bunting
Brigham Young University

Dan Friedman
University of South Carolina

James Winfield
Southern New Hampshire University

Katharine Pei
Washington University at St. Louis

Join this conversation of national leaders in the FYE movement as they share key moments and lessons learned from their career journeys, how the National Resource Center helped to shape their professional experiences and perspectives, and insights for how to navigate uncertainty on our campuses and beyond.

9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. CST

CI - Reflection as a Pathway to Resilience in an FYE Course
Room: Foster 2; Level Two

Tracy Stone
Carrie Hutton
Amanda Copeland
Calumet College of St. Joseph

Calumet College of St. Joseph's "The CCSJ Experience" employs reflective practices to bolster resilience among freshmen and transfer students. This orientation program strategically incorporates reflection at multiple stages, from initial peer-led sessions to comprehensive assessments, culminating in projects that encourage deep self-examination. Data from 2022 and 2023 demonstrates marked improvements in students' academic confidence and integration into the college community, with a notable rise in self-reported resilience. This approach highlights the effectiveness of reflective practices in fostering a resilient student body prepared for academic challenges and personal growth

CT - Social Media as a Facilitator of Meaningful Interaction

Room: Strand 1; Level Two

Tanner Corbridge
Vanessa Lo'amanu
Southern Utah University

Most of today's first-year students were born between 2005 and 2007. Generation Z does not know an education system without technology and have spent the majority, if not the entirety, of their teenage years with regular, often daily, interaction with social media. Historically, social media has been a large inhibitor of social interaction. However, as these younger freshmen are coming to campus with a deeper familiarity of social media, we have noticed that the trends of social inhibition have begun to reverse. The rising generation's social media usage is not an inhibitor, but rather a facilitator of meaningful social interaction.

V - FIRST GEN: College Book Tour Insight & Observations

Room: Strand 2; Level Two

Alejandra Campoverdi
Author, Hachette Book Group

After visiting 50+ FGLI and TRIO programs at colleges and universities across the country for her national bestselling book FIRST GEN, Alejandra Campoverdi returns to FYE to share insights and observations from her personal interactions with students and educators, as well as lead an interactive audience Q&A. In FIRST GEN, Alejandra uses her own story - as a child who grew up on public assistance and a Pell Grant recipient who later attended Harvard and worked as a White House aide to President Obama - to frame an exploration of the emotional toll of social mobility on those who are first gen.

CR - Psychological Well-Being and Self-Regulation, Motivation and Wellness Curriculum in FYS

Room: Strand 3; Level Two

Samantha Burns
Arishna Agarwal
Breanna Rangel
University of Northern Colorado

First-time students may experience increased anxiety and stress paired with low motivation to persist in their academic goals. Students may be able to mitigate detrimental effects to their mental health and overall well-being while enhancing persistence towards goals after learning about various topics, such as wellness, motivation and self-regulated learning in their first-year seminar (FYS). This study will explore the relationship between these factors at the end of the fall semester in week 14. Implications include learning how wellness, motivation and self-regulated learning in FYS curriculum impact levels of psychological distress for first-time students. Further, curriculum strategies will be shared.

CP - Enhancing FirstYear@UTSC: Redesigning First Year Experience Through User-Experience Research Project

Room: Strand 4; Level Two

Rebekkah Nighswander
Esther Shin
University of Toronto, Scarborough

The University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC), located in Canada, completed a user-experience assessment of FirstYear@UTSC, UTSC's first year experience program. FirstYear@UTSC includes: an online hub, academic advising, peer mentorship, international student support, learning communities, and social programming. In this session, we will provide findings from this program assessment which examined the actions, thoughts, and feelings of incoming students. Learn how we identified shifting student needs and addressed key pain points in how students navigate transition supports. Participants will gain knowledge on methods for enhancing in-person and online student support services using data to drive optimization.

V - Addressing Loneliness and Isolation with the Right Mindset

Room: Strand 5; Level Two

Julie Larkin
Phyllis Kowis
FranklinCovey

65% of college students today are feeling lonely and isolated. What is the impact on engagement, retention, and completion rates when students struggle to build meaningful relationships on campus? This session will outline foundational principles of achieving "public victory" from the 7 Habits of Highly Effective College Students course. With the right mindset, first-year students can learn to proactively develop stronger relationships by establishing a paradigm of mutual benefit, mutual understanding, and creative cooperation.

CT - Supporting Student Success through Asynchronous Library Modules Involving Active Learning

Room: Strand 7; Level Two

Annika Deutsch
Jasmine Kirby
University of Utah

At our institution, increased enrollment and student success are two key initiatives academic librarians must consider. How do we help our students succeed when we don't always have the ability or opportunity to go into every class, especially post-COVID with changing student needs and limitations? As integrated partners in a first-year learning community, we are teaming with the instructors to shift from five in-person visits to asynchronous modules that involve active learning opportunities supplemented by two to three in-person, project-focused visits. These new modules will not only make the program scalable but ensure that students are getting consistent, assessable instruction.

CT - FYE Inclusivity for Neurodiverse Students

Room: Strand 8; Level Two

Sam Crandall
Phoenix College

As educators, we are often well-versed in understanding variations in the learning styles and are able to vary our course content delivery to meet the needs of these learning differences. When it comes to neurodiversity, however, there is still much to learn and apply to better meet the needs of neurodiverse students inside and outside of our classroom. This session follows a six-month journey of developing first-year-experience programming for a community college with the aim of increasing inclusivity for neurodiverse students.

CI - Experience, Reflection, and Action at Boston College

Room: Strand 9; Level Two

Priti Patel
Meg Corbett
Boston College

Boston College aims to spread awareness of the importance regarding the first year experience at university and how these first year experiences are heavily influenced by community and developmental growth. The first year program is rooted in Jesuit beliefs, such as encouraging its community members to be attentive to their own experiences, to reflect on them, and to use their talents to respond to the world's needs, especially in the search for truth and meaning. Boston college aims to center the academic year around sustainability and social justice crises to engage students in their community.

CR - Why They Stay: Second Year Persistence in L.A. College Promise

Room: Strand 10A; Level Two

Jessica Cristo
Deborah Harrington
Joanna Zimring-Towne
Los Angeles Community College District

The L.A. College Program is a two-year success program funded by the state through the L.A. Community College District (LACCD). The program serves almost 30,000 students representing 76% Latinx, 48% first generation and 54% Pell recipients. Although persistence from Fall to Spring remains high, above 80% there is a drop in fall to fall. To address this concern, LACCD embarked in a self-evaluation of second year students who persisted. Through a qualitative and quantitative review, including student transcripts, focus groups, student surveys, and interviews the LACCD is discovering what variables are key in keeping students enrolled and completing.

CT - Understanding All Facets of Large-Scale Course Coordination

Room: Strand 10B; Level Two

Allison Elowson
University of North Carolina, Charlotte

Efforts in course coordination for first-year, large-scale courses have two main objectives - (1) to create a consistent, equitable experience for students and (2) to provide a supportive learning community for instructors. Research suggests that course coordination has a positive impact on student performance in a class, yet is a nuanced and complicated system to maintain. This session will present a review of literature related to course coordination with a focus on mathematics courses. The presenter will also share efforts in course coordination at UNC Charlotte as part of the NinerWays initiative. Participants will be encouraged to share their experiences.

CR - Sharing Canadian Student Voices on Peer Leadership from Recent Research

Room: Strand 11A; Level Two

Robert Kenedy
York University

Dallin George Young
University of Georgia

This session will highlight data from the Canadian administration of the International Survey of Peer Leaders. The results highlight gains peer leaders experience, including connecting with diverse peers, belonging, retention, and interactions with campus community. Results also provide a portrait of the recruitment, training, compensation strategies, and time commitment of peer leaders. Research results, student quotes, and reflection questions will ground a discussion about the implications of these findings for campus programs, future research, and working towards a theoretical framework for understanding peer leadership based on sociological and psychological perspectives we refer to as "Concentric Intersectional Spaces of Lived Experiences."

CT - Integrating Career Education Student Outcomes in a First-Year Seminar

Room: Strand 11B; Level Two

Annie Kelly
Erin Alanson
Crystal Pfander
University of Cincinnati

It is more critical than ever to integrate career education within curricular and co-curricular programs. University of Cincinnati (UC) embeds career student learning outcomes throughout a student's undergraduate experience. This session reviews how a UC first-year seminar frames student transitionary topics within career education, provides examples of career discernment exercises, and addresses professional preparation skill building activities. Through this interactive session, participants will develop strategic opportunities and practical examples to embed career education topics within their courses.

FD - Supporting International Students in the First Semester and Beyond

Room: Strand 12B; Level Two

Debra Wainscott
Baylor University

In this session, learn about the 'First Year International (FYI): Transition to the U.S. University' course new incoming international students take in their first semester. Other academic support resources offered specifically to international students will be discussed. Providing these unique opportunities have helped international students thrive and have better experiences in the first year and beyond.

CI - From Good to Great: Creating New Orientation Traditions

Room: Strand 13A; Level Two

Cristina Lawson
Tyler Parker
Hannah Bush
Bryce Montalbano
Tulane University

Tulane University's orientation has long provided a solid welcome, but adjustments were needed to elevate the experience. This session explores the transformation of our model from New Student Orientation to Hullabaloo Hello, an immersive summer and fall learning model featuring asynchronous summer modules, a weeklong in-person experience, and a two-week fall welcome. Presenters will cover strategic planning, change management, and rebranding efforts and provide examples of the programming and feedback that shaped this new approach. No matter your model, whether enhancing your current orientation or redesigning it, this session will inspire you to take your program from good to great.

CT - The Classless Community: Living and Learning Without a Linked Course

Room: Strand 13B; Level Two

Rachel Dalton
Janet Hilder
Virginia Tech

Living-learning communities connect interests, identities, and intellectual experiences to the residential environment through programming, peer support, and staff oversight. They are often grounded in specific majors and tied to a linked course. But is a class the best medium for community? The Thrive Living-Learning Community at Virginia Tech focuses on personal growth, in community, through a highly individualized strengths-based lens. Rather than enrolling in a class, students from all years and disciplines are invited -- not required -- to attend a weekly gathering. This session explains how a living-learning community without an academic "hook" or required class is built, grown, and sustained.

CT - Promoting Community and Student Success through Makerspaces

Room: Bolden 1; Level Two

Tara Coleman
Jeff Sheldon
Kansas State University

The Sunderland Foundation Innovation Lab at Kansas State University offers a range of technologies, from 3D printing and sound booths to sewing machines and hand tools. Everything provided is free and open to K-State and the wider community. Deeply committed to the success of first-year students, our librarians and staff are dedicated to identifying and addressing potential challenges that could impede students' progress, ensuring they receive what they need without judgment or embarrassment. This session will share how and why we created the lab, how we support first-year students, and how you can do the same in your institution.

CT - It's Time: Connecting the First-Year and the Graduate Student Experience

Room: Bolden 2; Level Two

Dan Friedman
University of South Carolina

John Gardner
Gardner Institute

This session will explore: 1) a growing national conversation about what constitutes "the graduate student experience"; 2) how we should apply principles from FYE to supporting graduate student success; and 3) how the experience graduate students affects those who interact with our first-year students. Is it possible that we could improve the success of first-year students if we improved the experiences that our graduate students are having simultaneously? How could we bridge these two worlds of undergraduate and graduate student populations in ways that could enhance the success of both in a greater win/win for all

V - A Comprehensive Picture of First-Year Success Using NSSE & BCSSE

Room: Bolden 3; Level Two

James Cole
Jillian Kinzie
Indiana University, National Survey of Student Engagement

The Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) and National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) provide actionable results, whether focused on the students' fall transition or their end-of-year success. Along with student-level data and summative reporting, we will also discuss findings from the new October check-in survey on new students' well-being during the fall semester. NSSE's focus on the first-year experiences in the spring provides important insights regarding participation in programs and activities that foster learning and personal development. We will also discuss the newly updated First-Year Experiences module. Discussion will focus on using these results to improve student success.

CI - Seasons of Success: 20 Years of Georgia Tech's First-Year Seminar

Room: Bolden 4; Level Two

Steven P. Girardot
Catherine E. Thomas
Georgia Institute of Technology

Georgia Tech, a public, STEM-focused research university, has offered a first-year seminar course for nearly 40 years. The current version of the course, GT 1000, was established in 2004 as a hybrid of professional development and extended orientation models. This session will present the data story from a nearly 20-year longitudinal analysis, examining academic and other success outcomes of students who participated in GT 1000 compared to non-participants. Conclusions from these analyses will help us better understand the different roles first-year seminars can play in student success and contribute to the overall body of literature on first-year seminars.

CT - From Deposit to Day One: Reducing Melt and Increasing Enrollment

Room: Bolden 5; Level Two

Olivia Martinez
Anna Eichner
Stephanie Walker
Cedar Crest College

In a time of declining enrollment across higher education, Cedar Crest College achieved a 2.6% increase in new student enrollment while decreasing summer melt by 10%. This success was due to a comprehensive collaboration between the Divisions of Student Success & Engagement and Enrollment Management. Through weekly strategy meetings, bi-weekly high-engagement email campaigns, and a robust support model, we kept students connected from deposit through orientation. This session will share how Cedar Crest's integrated approach can be adapted by institutions of any size to improve retention and ease the transition to college.

CT - Cultivating the Habits of Mind for Success in College

Room: Bolden 6; Level Two

Laurie Hazard
New England Institute of Technology

A variety of mediating factors contribute to academic success during college. These factors shape both academic and social engagement. Research suggests that student success and engagement are influenced as much by certain attitudes and predispositions as by particular skill sets and levels of preparedness. Although there are patterned variables that influence success, practitioners argue that student success is highly idiosyncratic and individualized. Accepting this premise, how do institutions create climates that attend to individual predispositions? This session examines practical strategies for cultivating and integrating the habits of mind for academic success and lifelong learning into the first-year experience.

REFRESHMENT BREAK | 10:00 AM – 10:30 AM CST
Elite Hall B; Level One

Plenary Address

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon CST | Room: Celestin Ballroom; Level Three

Corey Seemiller
Wright State University

Who is Generation Z?

Loyal. Thoughtful. Compassionate. These are just some of the many characteristics of Generation Z, those born from 1995 to 2010. Despite some similarities with the Millennial Generation, Generation Z has a unique set of attributes, experiences, preferences, and expectations about how they communicate, learn, and engage with others. But, many of our structures, curriculum, environments, and pedagogies were developed with previous generations in mind, challenging us to re-conceptualize the way we design and deliver higher education for this generation.

This session showcases the context within which members of Generation Z have come of age and what we need to know about Generation Z to best mentor, support, teach, and supervise them to leverage their potential for success.

Excellence in Teaching First-Year Seminars Award Recipient

Jane Robertson Evia
Collegiate Associate Professor
Virginia Tech

Jordan Smith Undergraduate Student Fellowship Recipients

Chauncy Betts
Arkansas State University

Brock McHood
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

Grace Prince
Furman University

Karis Sustar
University of North Carolina, Greensboro

Kavitha Viswanadhan
George Mason University

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. CST

CT - Dynamic Lecturing in First-Year Courses: An Inclusive Teaching Practice

Room: Foster 2; Level Two

Christine Harrington
Morgan State University

During this interactive lecture, we'll explore how faculty can develop in-person or online class lectures that are sure to engage students from diverse backgrounds and help them walk away with essential information. Lectures, when done well, can be one of the best ways to help novice learners with varied lived experiences develop the foundational knowledge needed to succeed. We will discuss how strategies that activate prior knowledge, highlight the big ideas, and offer brief opportunities for students to reflect and critically think about the information just learned can help students make meaningful connections and build content knowledge and skills.

CI - Engineering Applications in Math: A Springboard for First-Year Success

Room: Strand 1; Level Two

Samuel Bechara
Colorado State University

This session presents the transformative outcomes of a program at Colorado State University, which incorporated real-world engineering applications into Calculus instruction. Our analysis demonstrates significant improvements in DFW rates, persistence, and overall GPA among first-year students. By comparing the pilot and regular sections, we reveal the pilot's positive impact on academic performance and retention. Attendees will gain insights into incorporating real-world examples into theoretical courses to enhance first-year experiences across disciplines. Join us to explore how innovative pedagogical strategies can drive student success and retention in their crucial first year.

CR - International Survey of Peer Leaders: Cross-National Panel, Results, and Implications

Room: Strand 2; Level Two

Dallin Young
University of Georgia

Bryce Bunting
Brigham Young University

Robert Kenedy
York University

In this interactive panel, we will be discussing the International Survey of Peer Leaders, a cross-national and collaborative project collecting data on peer leaders from Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, South Africa, and the US as well as countries in Europe. We will be sharing what we have learned from the survey so far, including presenting preliminary data and discussing the challenges and successes of cross-national collaboration.

CI - Elevating the First-Year Experience: A Peer Mentor Approach That Works

Room: Strand 3; Level Two

Kade Simmons
Abby Brazier
Ada McKeehan
Vanessa Lo'amanu
Southern Utah University

As student needs evolve each year, higher education continues to search for the best approaches to serving the needs of first-year students. Southern Utah University's peer mentor program demonstrates the adaptability, relatability, and individualized approach that is needed for an optimal first-year experience. Peer mentors (known as Aces) oversee all first-year students, providing individualized mentorship, resources, and support through personalized campus visits and ongoing one-on-one meetings for every new student. Over the last decade, SUU has fine-tuned the Aces program to best serve first-year students demonstrating success through increased persistence and retention year after year.

CP - Family FYE Course: Engaging Families for Student Success

Room: Strand 4; Level Two

Linda Krzykowski
University at Albany, SUNY

Family orientation begins the relationship between new students and their families. But students today are more connected to their families than ever. No longer seen as "helicopter parents", college students often want parents to be "co-pilots" and seek opinions and support from them about their college experiences. This session will review how a public, 4-year university created a semester-long FYE course for families in order to demystify the college-going experience and teach families positive ways to support their student's success. This session will discuss new ways families can influence their students to seek help, build resilience and be successful!

CI - Connecting the Dots: First-Year Experience Initiative by Student Affairs

Room: Strand 5; Level Two

Sachiko Ito
Institute of Science Tokyo

Since the 2016 educational reform at the Institute of Science Tokyo, Student Affairs has been connecting previously isolated First-Year Experience (FYE) programs across campus. Two key initiatives are: (1) biannual information exchange meetings with faculty and staff responsible for FYE programs, and (2) student-led orientation programs focusing on institutional education. These efforts, supported by a university-wide organization, proved effective during the COVID-19 pandemic. This proposal will explore the successes and challenges of these initiatives.

CT - Maximizing Dual Enrolled Student Success: A Blueprint for Community Colleges

Room: Strand 7; Level Two

Zanetta K. Robinson
Erin Parke
Cheryl Ryan
St. Petersburg Collegiate High School

As dual enrollment programs expand, community colleges face new challenges in ensuring the success of high school students navigating both high school and college environments. This session will share proven strategies from St. Petersburg Collegiate High School, a Blue Ribbon-winning charter on the campus of St. Petersburg College, that have led to consistently high achievement among dual-enrolled students. Attendees will gain actionable insights to improve student support, increase retention, and foster academic and personal growth. This session aims to bridge the gap between high schools and colleges, creating a pathway for shared success.

CP - A Community College's 25-Year Journey to Student Success

Room: Strand 8; Level Two

Cynthia Mosqueda
Julieta Aramburo
Seranda Sylvers
Salvador Navarro
El Camino College

Join us as we share our community college's 25-year journey in developing and refining a comprehensive First Year Experience (FYE) program. Discover how we've adapted to changing student needs, navigated shifting higher education landscapes, and sustained successful initiatives despite budget challenges. Our interactive workshop will highlight: Key strategies for fostering student engagement and retention Effective partnerships and collaborations Data-driven decision-making and assessment Lessons learned and best practices Take away actionable insights and practical strategies to enhance your own FYE initiatives and foster long-term student success.

V - Helping Students Study Like Champions in a World of AI and Digital Distractions

Room: Strand 9; Level Two

Regan A. R. Gurung
American Psychological Association

Many students struggle to find the most efficient ways to study, and even those familiar with evidence-based techniques often find it challenging to apply them consistently. In today's digital age, distractions are plentiful, with technological gadgets and apps vying for attention and disrupting even the best intentions. Join us for an enlightening session with Dr. Regan Gurung, co-author of Study Like a Champ, where we will delve into how educators can support effective studying in first-year students and beyond. This session will address these challenges head-on, offering practical solutions for educators to keep their students focused.

CR - She Thought She Could and She Did: Persisting to Graduation

Room: Strand 10A; Level Two

Barbara Harmon-Francis
Kean University

Tieka Harris
The College of New Jersey

Sabrina Magliulo
New Jersey City University

For decades, universities, colleges, Rers, policymakers, foundations, and think tanks have been trying to solve the issue of getting more students of color to persist to graduation. Research shows that the problem of increasing the number of students who graduate in four years with a college degree still exists. Black and Latinx female Students of color continue to have graduation rates that are significantly lower than their White and Asian counterparts. This interactive workshop examines best practices for female students of color to persist to graduation at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI).

CT - Developing a First-Generation Student Program for First-Year Success

Room: Strand 10B; Level Two

Wayne Jackson
University of Central Florida

Tony Davis
Montgomery County Community College

First-generation college students face unique challenges that can impact their academic success, retention, and sense of belonging. This workshop will provide higher education professionals with a roadmap for creating a comprehensive support program tailored to the needs of first-year, first-generation students. By the end of the session, participants will leave with actionable strategies to design, implement, and sustain a first-generation program that promotes student success from their first year through graduation.

CT - 30 for 30: Accelerating First-Year Success Through Strategic Engagement

Room: Strand 11A; Level Two

Todd Middleton
Dominique Bailey
Kenya Floyd
Florida A&M University

In response to the challenge of improving first-year student retention and timely graduation rates, the "30 for 30" initiative aims to provide a structured pathway for incoming college students to complete 30 credit hours in their first year and graduate within four years. This presentation outlines a comprehensive strategy integrating the Access Summer Bridge Program, the First-Year Experience SLS Course, and the Academic Success Initiatives (ASI) Course to enhance student engagement, persistence, and overall academic success. This presentation envisions a holistic approach to student success, leveraging early intervention and comprehensive support to ensure first-year students are well-prepared.

CT - Psychological Connections: Teaching Students the "How" and "Why"

Room: Strand 12A; Level Two

Tonya Trepinski
Daelynn Copeland
McLennan Community College

Psychological theories describe the conditions and processes through which things occur. When students are aware of these conditions and processes, they have a strong internal locus of control and can obtain an even stronger self-efficacy about the journey they are about to embark on in the college setting. This session will inform the audience about the different psychological theories that have proven successful in a first-year college course and how to apply them in the classroom using Universal Design for Learning.

FD - Facilitating Reflection Through Art Creation

Room: Strand 12B; Level Two

Sandy Greene
Emily Boardman
University of South Carolina

In this interactive workshop, presenters will facilitate discussion on how to use art to promote reflection. This session will cover how to use art to guide student reflection and personal reflection about the teaching process.

CR - An Empirical Method Aligning Faculty and Peer Leader FYS Expectations

Room: Strand 13A; Level Two

Jeff Scott
McMurry University

Using nominal group data collection techniques, the Rer separately engaged faculty and PLs to identify and prioritize more than 60 PL roles related to three FYE goals: Academic Success, Personal Wellness, and Belonging. Convergent and divergent perspectives in the findings were subjected to force field analyses with consideration to perceived importance, feasibility, and relevance. Ultimately, the study provides an evidence-based picture of the driving and restraining forces that could influence PL performance. The presenter will detail the analytical framework and specific research methods, so that attendees might replicate or customize the study for their own purposes.

CI - Supporting First-Year Underrepresented Students with Success Coaching

Room: Strand 13B; Level Two

P. Brandon Johnson
University of Utah

In 2022, the Office of Undergraduate Studies at the University of Utah incorporated the evidence-based Inside Track coaching methodology to create a Student Success Coaching program. The objective, to contribute to additional efforts toward increasing retention from 89% to 95% over the next five years. This session will discuss the development of the coaching program and present assessment data showing its impact on first-year students, with particular emphasis

on students of color, Pell-eligible, and first-generation students. The success of our coaching program has led to a new effort to assign a student success coach to all incoming first-year students.

CT - Support Students From Low-Income Backgrounds Better Through Intentional First-Year Programming

Room: Bolden 1; Level Two

Michael Sparrow
Morgan State University

Students from low-income backgrounds comprise almost a third of all undergraduate enrollment, yet these students languish in academic environments that are not optimized for their success. For example, only 12% of low-income students have earned a bachelor's degree by 24 compared to 73% of high-income students. Leveraging an extensive literature review from a grant-funded project, the presenter will share challenges that students from low-income backgrounds face, from pre-matriculation barriers through the first year. The presenter will also cover strengths of these students as well as programming ideas to help mitigate these barriers to college transition and success.

FD - Aligning LLC Outcomes with Career, Community, and Industry Engagement Goals

Room: Bolden 2; Level Two

Garrett Tur
Ball State University.

Distinct teams across different units often plan the communication and programs for first-year students. The siloed nature of this work- common at many universities- can have unintended negative impacts for all stakeholders. Lack of coordinated planning can lead to redundancies or gaps in key information for first-year students. To address this, the presenters formed a university-wide First-Year Curriculum Map committee tasked to map all first-year content from summer communications through first-year required courses. In this session, participants will explore the committee's work and discuss strategies for creating dynamic partnerships to ensure a cohesive first-year experience at their own institutions.

CT - Utilizing Exploratory Studies to Retain and Support Undecided Students

Room: Bolden 3; Level Two

Melissa Granum
Bonnie Shinn
Teri Johnson
South Dakota State University

On our university campus, undecided or exploratory students are considered one of the most vulnerable and "at-risk" student populations. The Exploratory Studies Program was developed to address the student needs of additional academic and advising support for this population. Our campus utilizes appreciative advising and a series of classes that aid in the first-year experience to retain and engage students. Research has shown that exploring students who are supported holistically in these and other areas have higher retention levels, are more engaged, and feel more confident in achieving their overall professional goals to graduate on time and begin their careers.

CP - First Year Surveys and Intervention Plans

Room: Bolden 4; Level Two

Shari Obrentz
Liz Alexander
Emory University

To improve first-year retention, Institutional research partnered with New Student Programs to create a comprehensive strategy to collect data on and respond to identified first year student needs. We designed a workflow that summarized information about student concerns for quick and personalized responses from campus partners. We will describe the history of the project, our partnership, and share examples of survey questions and the process flow between survey response and intervention.

CT - Integrating AI Literacy into First-Year Library Instruction

Room: Bolden 5; Level Two

Anders Tobiason
Elizabeth Borges
Georgann Kurtz-Shaw
Boise State University

As part of a campus-wide effort to develop generative AI initiatives, librarians at Boise State University revised the asynchronous Research and Critical Inquiry Microcourse (RCIM) to include AI literacy instruction. The RCIM is embedded in University Foundations courses and taken by over 3000 students each year. Librarians saw the RCIM as an opportunity to reach a majority of first year students and teach them AI literacy skills such as fact-checking and evaluating credibility. This session will discuss the process of developing foundational generative AI instruction for first year students and collaborating with groups across campus to align objectives and messaging.

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. CST
Featured Session

FS - Review of the 2023 National Survey on the First-Year Experience

Room: Bolden 6; Level Two

Jamil D. Johnson
Kevin Wenger
Kate Lehman
University of South Carolina

Masha Krsmanovic
University of Southern Mississippi

Join us to review the initial findings of the 2023 National Survey on the First-Year Experience. 334 institutions representing four-year, two-year, non-profit, for-profit, and various institutional types including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and

Predominately White Institutions (PWIs). Participate in an engaging critical discussion with colleagues on topics including: First-year seminars, Pre-term orientation, First-year academic advising, First-year learning communities, Residential programs or initiatives, Early alert/ academic warning systems, and Common reading programs. Be among the first to learn what institutions are doing to support students in the first-year experience.

2:45 p.m. - 3:45 p.m. CST

CT - Empower Your Students with Strategies for Mental and Physical Wellbeing

Room: Foster 2; Level Two

Marsha Fralick
Cuyamaca College

Since current research shows that about 65% of college students have reported a need for mental health services, colleges are working to enhance these services. The first-year experience course can become part of a college culture of wellness by including wellness topics in the curriculum. An outline of wellness topics will be presented along with practical exercises for the first-year experience classroom. Topics include exploring personal strengths, practicing fundamental cognitive behavioral therapy principles, increasing resilience, managing stress, relaxing, improving exercise and nutrition, getting enough sleep, taking steps to increase happiness, and reflecting on life purpose.

CR - The Canadian FYE Monograph 25 Years Later: Assessing Best Practice

Room: Strand 1; Level Two

Steven Smith
Tom Brophy
Saint Mary's University

John Gardner
Gardner Institute
University of South Carolina

Over 25 years ago John Gardner and his colleagues (Gilbert et al., 1997) published a monograph describing FYE programs across Canada. We have conducted a new national survey of FYE and SIT programming in Canada, as well as collected descriptions from student affairs professionals on best practice programs (e.g., Indigenous, Black, 2SLGBTQIA+ programming). We will explore the innovative (and inclusive) nature of these programs and help attendees assess their institutional readiness to initiate or enhance their own programming.

CT - First-Year Curriculum Map: Creating a Cohesive First-Year Experience

Room: Strand 2; Level Two

Emily Morran
Shari Obrentz
Emory University

Distinct teams across different units often plan the communication and programs for first-year students. The siloed nature of this work- common at many universities- can have unintended negative impacts for all stakeholders. Lack of coordinated planning can lead to redundancies or gaps in key information for first-year students. To address this, the presenters formed a university-wide First-Year Curriculum Map committee tasked to map all first-year content from summer communications through first-year required courses. In this session, participants will explore the committee's work and discuss strategies for creating dynamic partnerships to ensure a cohesive first-year experience at their own institutions.

CR - Hope and Grit: Implications for Academic Success with STEM Students

Room: Strand 3; Level Two

Monica Schauss
Hofstra University

This proposed session will utilize the authors' doctoral R. The Rer strived to understand if grit and hope scores are correlated with higher GPAs and persistence rates. First-year STEM students were given the Grit-S Scale and the Adult Hope Scale to measure both grit and hope. Results included, hope and grit were significantly correlated with one another. Agency (motivation) was found to be a significant predictor as well as the highest predictor of first semester GPA with this population of students. Additionally, students who exhibited high hope earned significantly higher first semester GPAs than their low hope peers.

CI - Success Infusion: Large Core Courses and Books as FYE Vehicles

Room: Strand 4; Level Two

Tom Carskadon
Mississippi State University

CANCELED

To our chagrin, [illegible] University [illegible] FYE/Student Success produc[illegible] course-based FYE product that [illegible] student success was two large sections of a [illegible] year Core Curriculum course employing the "infusion m[illegible] where all the regular academic content of the discipline was covered, supplemented by FYE content and teaching methods, resulting in two objectives being met in a single course. What was the "secret sauce"? We are eager to share the recipe! We will also share student ratings of 150+ books that may be used in FYE and Common Reading programs.

CI - Spotlight on the 360 Institute

Room: Strand 5; Level Two

Michele Colletti
Amber Morgan
Antionette Miles
Greenville Technical College

The 360 Institute at Greenville Technical College provides students with a Freshman Seminar instructor who also serves as their advisor. With a focus on career readiness, professional development, and access to financial coaching, 360 Scholars are better prepared to enter the workforce. In this session, presenters will share data on how the 360 Institute program model has increased persistence, retention, and

higher graduation rates for first year students compared to the general student population. The team will promote an interactive discussion that will leave attendees thinking about how to implement components of the 360 Institute at their institutions.

CT- Finding Deep Meaning and Authentic Relationships in First-Year Experience Programs

Room: Strand 7; Level Two

Jean Henscheid
National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition

JuliA Metzker
The Evergreen State College

Phyllis Worthy Dawkins
Clark Atlanta University

Jillian Kinzie
Indiana University, National Survey of Student Engagement

When students are challenged to integrate and apply concepts across academic disciplines and co-curricular activities they can experience the point of learning beyond memorizing facts. This purpose-driven learning is the hallmark of many well-designed first-year experience programs. It is the kind of learning facilitated by friendships with other students and authentic and trusting relationships with instructors. What happens to students in these programs replicates the intellectual sophistication and social intelligence students need throughout and beyond college. Participants in this session will examine how integrative learning and creating a sense of belonging can transform students in the first college year.

V - Supporting First-Generation Success: Digital Tools for Students and Families

Room: Strand 8; Level Two

Fred Scott
Innovative Educators

How can first-year experience programs effectively engage first-generation students and their families? Join us for a panel discussion with FYE administrators at two and four-year institutions as we explore innovative approaches to developing online onboarding programming for first-generation learners! Our panelists will share digital tools that foster success and boost retention. This session is a must-attend for those looking to enhance their institution's support systems and improve outcomes for underserved students and families.

CP - Visibility Matters: Reimagining Peer Leadership for the 21st Century Classroom

Room: Strand 10A; Level Two

Yesenia Talavera
Ramon Varela
University of Texas at El Paso

The Peer Leader program is aligned with the first-year seminar course at the University of Texas at El Paso and has been part of the department since the early 2000s. Due to student concerns about the management of the program, a departmental committee of staff, faculty, and students began reimagining the structure of the program. This session will review the new vision that emerged, rooting departmental practices on theoretical frameworks of the first-year seminar course itself, validating student interests and utilizing an asset-based approach to give student employees the space to make the program uniquely their own.

CT - Fostering Stronger Partnerships Between Academic and Student Affairs

Room: Strand 10B; Level Two

Nicole Juersivich
Kim Harvey
Nazareth University

This session will explore Nazareth University's innovative approach to integrating holistic well-being into the first-year seminar by bridging the gap between academic and student affairs. Presenters will share the development of the Well-Being Collective and the implementation of the "Campus Involvement Challenge," designed to combat loneliness and experiential avoidance among first-year students. Attendees will learn about the collaborative process, data, and reflections gathered from students, offering practical ideas and tools to enhance student engagement and well-being on their campuses.

CT - From Classroom to Canvas: Adapting FYE Seminars for Online Learning

Room: Strand 11A; Level Two

Mackenzie Kegley
Karis Sustar
University of North Carolina, Greensboro

At UNCG, all first-year students are encouraged to participate in a face-to-face first-year seminar designed to support students' sense of belonging, academic success, and personal growth. With an increasing online student population, the FYE Office sought to adapt this course for online learners. This transition presented unique challenges, as online students often have diverse backgrounds and face different barriers to developing a sense of community. This presentation highlights a collaborative effort between an instructor and a Peer Academic Leader (current UNCG student) to modify the FYE course for online students, sharing the pitfalls and successes experienced along the way.

CT - Bridging Generational Gaps between Gen Z and the Professor

Room: Strand 11B; Level Two

Lisa Sparks
South Carolina State University

The progression of society has caused a shift in the dynamics of higher education between first year students and college professors. Freshmen students are entering college technological savvy, struggling with life challenges, and instant communication. The 2024 freshmen are known as Generation Z or Gen Z. The generation gap can significantly impact student success and retention for first year students. To bridge the gap between first year students and professors, universities should take a closer look at preparing professors to deliver clear instruction using

various learning styles and up to date technology and provide mental health seminars.

CT - Critical Thinking: The What, Why, & How of It

Room: Strand 12A; Level Two

Joseph Cuseo
Marymount California University

Critical thinking is the most-of-cited goal of a college education, but how it's defined varies across scholars in different disciplines, some of whom prefer the term higher-order thinking skills (HOTs). This session offers a definition of critical thinking that aligns most closely with the scholarly consensus and intersects with HOTS, and will make the case for why including it in the first year both enhances student success and elevates the perceived rigor of first-year experience programs. Specific strategies are supplied for stimulating deep thinking via intentional questioning, writing prompts, and strategies for critically evaluating (and ignoring) deceptive web-based misinformation.

FD - Incorporating Student Feedback into Assessment: Reflective Pedagogy in FYS

Room: Strand 12B; Level Two

Stevie White
Arishna Agarwal
Angela Vaughan
University of Northern Colorado

This session will explore how feedback, particularly from students, can be incorporated into assessment practices in an FYS course. Participants will discuss reflective pedagogy and how it supports the integration of feedback while maintaining academic standards. The session will also examine how considerations of accessibility, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) shape feedback processes and assessment structures. Through reflective and reflexive pedagogical practices, educators can engage in metacognition to continuously improve their instruction and program curriculum. This session aims to offer participants strategies to meaningfully include student feedback in assessment and align these practices with DEI initiatives.

CT - Coach More: Training Peer Mentors as Coaches

Room: Strand 13A; Level Two

Joshua Sipe
Randolph Macon College

Peer mentoring, a high-impact strategy that supports student success, can be further enhanced by incorporating the practice of coaching. Randolph-Macon College's New Student Transition Captain Program (year-long support to new students staffed by a hybrid orientation leader/peer mentor position) has infused coaching theory and practice into its employee training. This session will provide an in-depth look at their training model and explore the impact of training peer mentors to serve as coaches.

CT - Boosting Retention and Success through Open Educational Resources (OER)

Room: Strand 13B; Level Two

Dana Tribble
Aubrey Holt
Arkansas Tech University

This presentation explores the transformative impact of Open Educational Resources (OER) on student retention and success in higher education. By eliminating textbook costs, OER enhances accessibility and equity, allowing all students to engage fully with course materials. Drawing on data from first-year courses at one institution that has adopted OER, the session will highlight the positive correlation between OER use and improved academic outcomes, including increased retention rates and student performance. Participants will gain insights into the benefits of OER, practical strategies for implementation, and how this approach can foster long-term student success in diverse educational settings.

CP - Themed English 101 Sections: Connecting Student and Faculty Engagement

Room: Bolden 1; Level Two

James Jacocks
University of South Carolina

What does it take to improve student learning in a first-year English seminar? James Jacocks, a Program Lead for the Capstone Scholars Program at the University of South Carolina, discusses the opportunities for improved student experience within the context of themed English sections. The Capstone Scholars Program is a living-learning community for high achieving first and second year students, and works with the English department at USC to offer exclusive English 101 themed sections. This session will explore the impact that themed sections have on students' learning experience by comparing student feedback from themed and standard sections.

CP - Unifying the First-Year Experience: Collaborating Across Disciplines for Student Success

Room: Bolden 2; Level Two

Timothy Lewis
Jillian Alexander
East Tennessee State University

Our institution's recent introduction of first-year experience (FYE) courses led to a decentralized model with discipline-specific courses. Recognizing the need for consistency across courses, we initiated a collaborative effort across academic units and divisions, creating a cohesive FYE experience that benefits all students. This presentation will detail our approach, focusing on interdepartmental collaboration, standardized course components, and unique elements tailored to specific courses. We will also discuss the impact of our collaborative training conference and data-driven insights, concluding with an interactive activity to help attendees strengthen their collaboration efforts within their own FYE programs.

V - Upskilling Relationships: Tools to Foster Bell-Being and Hold Conflict

Room: Bolden 3; Level Two

Jabari Car
Michael Brown
Elika Dadsetan
VISIONS Inc.

VISIONS Inc. builds bridges across differences to foster well-being and create cultures of inclusion for students, staff, and faculty. Drawing on our extensive experience working with students and across a wide variety of higher ed institutions in the United States and internationally, our approach focuses first on knowing one's self to connect with others. We then use that stable foundation as a launching point to build relationships, create a shared language, hold conflict (which is inevitable) skillfully, and address and repair harm within communities. In this session, we highlight lessons learned from our partnerships with Tulane University and the Taylor Center for Design Thinking and Social Innovation, discussing how we have integrated a trauma-informed lens into departments and classrooms, and share innovative approaches to service-learning and community service initiatives that challenge conventional power dynamics.

CP - Creating & Maintaining High-Quality Curricular Resources

Room: Bolden 4; Level Two

Callyn Fahey
Katie Hopkins
University of South Carolina

At the University of South Carolina, first-year seminar instructors are charged with meeting a common set of learning outcomes but have flexibility in how they do so. By providing a wide variety of high-quality, assessment-based curricular resources, University 101 Programs aims to prepare instructors to teach effectively through shared teaching strategies, classroom activities, and sample assignments. This session will provide an overview of the various resources and the purposes they each serve in the annual faculty development model. Additionally, presenters will share processes for creating new resources and updating and assessing existing resources.

CT - Transform Your Teaching, Transform Your Class

Room: Bolden 5; Level Two

Herbert Bruce
Virginia Tech

Do your students often say their FYE class is just busy work? Are your evaluations just average? Let's transform your class. Two issues facing instructors are they do not understand what students value in the classroom, and they often do not deliver student-perceived valuable information that will help them in college. In this session, we will cover the aspects of what students value in their class. This information will be directly related to FYE, discussing how to transform the course into the most valuable class students will take in college.

CT - Making the First-Year Matter for Transfer Students

Room: Bolden 6; Level Two

Paul Humbert-Fisk
Jill Bavetta
Josie Hahn
University of Utah

This proposal addresses ways four-year universities can work to address transfer shock through innovative and student-centered practices for first-year transfer students. An example of the creation of a student led transfer student honor society to meet the needs of first-year transfer students will be discussed. The transfer honor society was created with a great deal of feedback from transfer students, and is a student led organization. Quantitative and qualitative data will be shared showing the success of the honor society and related programs such workshops for first-year transfer students along with experiences of students.

REFRESHMENT BREAK | 3:45 PM – 4:15 PM CST
Celestin Foyer; Level Three

4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. CST

V - Celebrating Four Decades of Published Works for First-Year Students

Room: Strand 1; Level Two

John Gardner
Betsy Barefoot
Gardner Institute

Kimberly Koledoye
Houston Community College

In honor of the 40th anniversary of the Gardner/Barefoot textbooks for first-year student success, Macmillan Learning invites you to join us for information, insights and inspiration. This presentation will explore the evolution of the First-Year Experience movement, highlighting key milestones, present innovations, and future directions. Authors John N. Gardner and Betsy O. Barefoot will reflect on the profound impact of their pioneering works, and writing partner Kimberly Koledoye will offer insights into the opportunities on the horizon. Together, they will reflect on their collective journeys and address the emerging needs of present and future students.

CT - Reviewing the Use of Academic Journal Articles in First-year Classrooms

Room: Strand 2; Level Two

Adrienne Warner
Alyssa Russo
University of New Mexico

Instructors often require first-year students to include the use of academic journal articles in their research assignments. In fact, we may regard these as the gold standard of credible sources. But are they as useful to first-year students as we hope? In this session, two librarians critically assess the gap between instructor intentions and students' realities when it comes to reading and using academic journal articles. In addition to reviewing literature in the fields of reading and library science, which includes research done by the presenters, we offer suggestions for using alternative information formats and scaffolding research assignment instructions.

CI - Kickstarting the College Journey Early: The Navigate Summer Bridge Academy

Room: Strand 3; Level Two

Rita Sperry
Delylah Henry
Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi

This session will detail the planning and implementation of the Navigate Summer Bridge Academy at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and how programming allowed first-year students an early transition into college-level coursework and expectations. The discussion will also include the opportunities provided to students that helped them gain familiarity with TAMU-CC's campus, services, and resources, as well as events that fostered learning, independence, and belonging to the Islander and Corpus Christi communities. The session will conclude with results and feedback from students regarding their coursework and overall experience in the month-long summer bridge program.

CI - Leveraging Peer Mentors to Increase Sense of Belonging and Persistence

Room: Strand 5; Level Two

J.L. Vertin
Quint Geis
Blake Tobey
Doane University

Through the purposeful use of assorted peer mentorship roles, Doane University has strengthened the sense of belonging among first-year students, leading to higher retention rates. Peer mentors play a crucial role throughout the first year experience, including the summer bridge program, New Student Orientation, and required First Year Seminars. This session will showcase the coordinated use of peer mentors across programs to provide a comprehensive support structure for first-year students. They offer support in academic skills, emotional wellness, social engagement, and targeted interventions for at-risk students. Plans for streamlined training and expanded programming will also be discussed.

CT - Fostering Academic Excellence: Role of Holistic Academic Coaching at HBCUs

Room: Strand 7; Level Two

Amanda Williams
Florida A&M University

This study investigates Academic Coaching's role in enhancing student success at Florida A&M University (FAMU), a Historically Black College and University (HBCU). It highlights how Coaches help students develop critical thinking and positive behaviors through tailored, intrusive advising and holistic support. Coaches play a crucial role from enrollment to graduation, providing personalized guidance and facilitating access to campus and community resources. The inclusive nature of coaching at FAMU fosters engagement beyond traditional settings. Thus, embodying the "FAMULY" philosophy which emphasizes the importance of community, celebrating achievements, and fostering connections with alumni, contributing significantly to students' academic, professional, and personal development.

CT - Freshmen, Eat that Frog! College Persistence Through Creative Procrastination

Room: Strand 8; Level Two

Lynette Bleed
Purdue University

According to Kermit the Frog, it's not easy being green. "Green" can describe one who is inexperienced (such as a college freshman), however "green" also suggests new beginnings and growth. Early academic success is crucial for college persistence, yet students (like most humans) struggle with procrastination. "Eating that frog" for freshmen means choosing self-regulated learning, deciding which major to pursue, and turning procrastination into creative procrastination. Learning goals for this frog-themed session include: 1) Understanding college persistence, 2) Dissecting the perennial topic of procrastination (causes, solutions), and 3) Exchanging ideas for helping freshmen hunger for early academic success and perseverance.

V - Civic Preparedness/Engaging Across Differences: Essential Skills for First-Year Success

Room: Strand 9; Level Two

Abby Ferguson
Jessica Gortner
Unify America

Universities play a crucial role in preparing students to engage thoughtfully in today's politically polarized environment. Despite seeming divisions, Americans share many common goals. Higher education, especially through first-year programming, is pivotal in fostering the exchange of ideas and skill development necessary for civic engagement. In this session, we will explore how initiatives like the Unify Challenge College Bowl and our new Deep Dive program have equipped over 20,000 students across 40+ states to partake in meaningful dialogue and enhance civic participation, setting the stage for a lifetime of informed and respectful interaction in our democratic society.

CR - Hot Off the Press: A New Tool to Assess FYS

Room: Strand 10A; Level Two

Christine Harrington
Michael Sparrow
Morgan State University

With the support of grant funding, Rers conducted extensive literature reviews and gathered first-year seminar practitioner input via an iterative design thinking process to develop an open-access first-year seminar self-assessment tool. The tool includes almost 100 evidence-based teaching and institutional practices. First-year seminar directors and faculty can use this tool to determine areas of strength and improvement to better serve students from low-income backgrounds. Discover how first-year seminar professionals can use this tool to design or revise the first-year seminar course at their institution.

CT - First-Year Seminar Course Design with Holistic Curriculum - A Sample

Room: Strand 10B; Level Two

Aslihan Yildiz-Odeh
George Mason University

Research shows that the most effective first-year seminars are those that provide a holistic curriculum. Moreover, delivery of the material in collaboration with student support staff has been shown to be effective. George Mason University, where we are celebrating 35 years of our first-year seminar, has utilized both a holistic curriculum and collaborative delivery since its inception. This session will go over our curriculum and its delivery, including topics covered, course schedule and assignments. Colleges at the early stages of building their first-year seminars as well as those with established programs looking "to compare notes" might find this session beneficial.

CT - Life-rafts for Sinking Schools: 10 Tips for Keeping FYE Afloat

Room: Strand 11A; Level Two

Kama O'Connor
Julie Brown
Clatsop Community College

No Department Chair? No Dean? No Provost? When deep unexpected layoffs left their institution stranded with bare bones support staff and administration, first-year writing instructors Brown and O'Connor were committed to still providing an FYE program for their students. Using peer-reviewed data, best practices related to writing and first year instruction, and testimonials from other institutions, they created their own FYE program partially embedded in first-year composition without the help of institutional administration. Come hear our "Top 10 Tips" to use surveys, pre-existing programs, and research to build and implement effective FYE programs in severely under-resourced institutions.

CI - Mixed-Methods Evaluation of a First-Year Seminar's Impact on Student Success

Room: Strand 11B; Level Two

Joseph Barnett
Erica Chun
Dexter Asuncion
Hawaii Pacific University

Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) is a diverse four-year, non-profit, private college located in one of the planet's most geographically isolated metropolitan areas and attracting a majority of students from over 2,000 miles away. To intervene on exacerbated first-year adjustment challenges, the University Student Success Committee designed a team-taught first-year seminar with the purpose of helping students make a positive transition to HPU, facilitating a sense of belonging, and providing students support to succeed. Triangulating data from students, faculty, staff, and peer mentors with a mixed methods evaluation design, this presentation shares the impact of the first-year seminar model on students' success.

CI - Preparing Peer Mentors to Participate in First-Year Seminars

Room: Strand 12A; Level Two

Sandi Bennett
Emma Ward
Brigham Young University

The integration of peer mentors into first-year experience courses has been shown to significantly enhance student engagement, retention, and overall success for first-year students, but how can we best prepare and train peer mentors to fulfill their unique role? In this session, we will explore the value of having a peer mentor in a first-year experience course, share our experience with the daunting task of providing a well-prepared peer mentor for every section of a new GE First-Year Seminar course, including challenges and training/curriculum best practices we've discovered, and propose ideas to support faculty working with peer mentors.

FD - Infusing Prioritization, Decision-making, Advocacy, and Resiliency Throughout Curriculum

Room: Strand 12B; Level Two

Sadonia Garner
Breanna Rangel
University of Northern Colorado

This session will explore how instructors can address first-year students as they learn how to navigate successful prioritization, self-advocacy, and resiliency in their studies. This session will present in-class activities, successful classroom management strategies, communication techniques, and sample assignments to empower instructors to confidently support students who struggle to navigate the intersection between their lives and their academics appropriately. Presenters will share how to utilize student goals, cultural identities, and available community resources in conversations with first-year students to foster healthy, resilient young professionals.

CT - Digital Credentialing and UNIV: An Institutional Example

Room: Strand 13A; Level Two

Gavin Gilliland
Abby Hart
University of Maryland Baltimore County

The University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) currently offers a variety of Introduction to the University (UNIV) seminar courses with 50+ sections and 1200+ students enrolled. Each course has a Teaching Assistant (TA) that co-instructs the course and shares their own experience. New to the UNIV series are two digital badge opportunities to provide new opportunities for professional development. All TAs will complete a TA Paraprofessional Badge and all 301 (transfer) students will complete a professional development badge. We will dive into the creation of the digital badges including creating buy-in, badge development, and an overview of UMBC's UNIV courses.

CI - Implementing Customized, Multi-dimensional First Year Experience at an Ethnically-Diverse University

Room: Strand 13B; Level Two

Christina Moore
David Wierschem
Texas State University

At Texas State University (TXST), an ethnically-diverse institution serving 40 percent Hispanic/Latinx students, the McCoy College of Business has created a three-prong approach to increase student engagement, sense of belonging, and retention among first-year business students. Touchpoints include collaboration between curricular, co-curricular, and residential experiences. Join us to learn more about the strategies and practices that have led to success. Samples of resources developed will be shared, including course syllabi, roadmaps, calendars, and details of tracking, monitoring, and digital badging. Year-on-year comparison data also will be shared, which already show promising results.

CR - First-year Experience in STEM; Self-awareness and Academic Discoveries Matter

Room: Bolden 1; Level Two

Mehri Azizi
Florida international University

This study investigates STEM students' experiences regarding their academic and non- academics during the first semester of college. A total of 310 students who enrolled in introductory biology courses from three institutions provided self-reflections, which were coded using grounded theory. Latent class analysis (LCA) was used to link these emergent codes with demographic data and final grades. Findings show that students who demonstrated self-awareness and adopted new, efficient study strategies in the first semester were more likely to achieve higher grades. Conversely, students uncertain about their abilities and surprised by social challenges in the first semester tended to have lower grades.

CT - The Power of Why: A Student Engagement Activity

Room: Bolden 2; Level Two

Cynthia Lopez Guerrero
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

In this concurrent session, I tend to discuss the importance of having students in first year courses engage in conversations about why they are presently in the space and what motivations they can recognize that encourages them to care about the course material in ways that are deeper and richer than just fulfilling a degree requirement. I will then introduce "The Power of Why" activity and explain how I use it to have students name their "whys" for themselves in hopes that the work they will engage in will bear more meaning throughout the entire semester and beyond.

CT - You Become What You Do: How Service Scaffolds Career Development

Room: Bolden 3; Level Two

Andrea Leary
Nina Guise-Gerrity
Christinan Spearman
Loyola University Maryland

Are you having conversations with students about finding a major or career goals? Do you want to integrate service with your class? Using NACE's eight "Competencies for a Career-Ready Workforce," we will offer examples of service activities that strengthen our students' career readiness along with the research that supports how service scaffolds this process. We will offer details and plans (including assignments) for specific projects–from writing pen pal letters, to crafting storybooks, to hosting events—that you can put into action next semester. Above all, we wish to stress that service benefits everyone involved in so many ways.

CP - Elevating Instruction: Advanced Techniques for Enhancing the First-Year Experience

Room: Bolden 4; Level Two

Stephanie Caplan
Sasha Hines
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Looking to re-imagine how you're training and supporting instructors? As an instrumental piece to First-Year Seminars, this presentation delves into a series of advanced steps and supporting techniques designed to elevate the quality of instruction and engagement in First-Year Seminars. This session is tailored to those who seek to create a robust instructor experience, while implementing innovative strategies that support the enrichment of new students. During this session we will explore the role, training methods, and resources provided to support and advance the instructor experience at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

CT - Peer Teaching Unleashed: Creating Connections with First-Year Students

Room: Bolden 6; Level Two

Amy Goldstein
Courtney McDermott
Tufts University

"Explorations" is an innovative peer teaching program where juniors and seniors teach courses of their own design to incoming first-year students and serve as peer advisors. Unlike first-year seminars led by faculty, peer teachers are the sole drivers and instructors of the content and classroom activity. Recent courses include "The Campaign Trail"; "STEM on Stage: Science and Theater"; "Zoo Ethics"; and "Architecture in Fantasy Film." The program co-directors will explain the benefits of a student-driven peer teaching program, share in-class exercises created by students, and define steps attendees can take to implement similar programs in their own schools.

5:15 p.m. – 6:15 p.m. CST

CR - Competence-Based and AI-Assisted: Curricular Innovations for the First Year Students

Room: Foster 2; Level Two

Lydia Tseng
Lyan Chou
Lieh-Ting Shih
Giorgia Sfriso
Fu Jen Catholic University

This presentation reports a case study that examines the impact of curricular innovations centered on 21st century competencies and emerging technologies, particularly GenAI, on first-year language students. We explore how such innovations are implemented in three curricular strands, cultural remediation, core language skills, and social engagement, to enhance student learning. The main findings suggest that competence-based learning and GenAI-assisted learning can be mutually empowering for both teaching and learning, yet it is crucial to have teachers work with academic advisors for individualized instruction for supporting first-year language students in their transition, preparing them for a future shaped by GenAI advancements.

CP - Unlocking Potential: Integrating Federal Work-Study into the First Year Experience

Room: Strand 1; Level Two

Alice Clanton
Loyola University New Orleans

Federal work-study programs can be an integral part of a first-year student's college career. Using a case study at a small, private institution where federal work-study transitioned to career development three years ago, this session explores the ways Federal work-study programs can enhance first-year student success, support campus operations, and introduce career concepts to low-income students who may have limited access to professional development. Participants will learn how to leverage work-study programs to motivate students' academic potential, build essential skills, and ease the transition into college life. Attendees will leave with actionable insights based on feedback from students and supervisors.

CT - Beyond Icebreakers: Building Belonging and Connection Through Sociometry

Room: Strand 2; Level Two

Alivia Holkesvig
Kansas State University

Discover the power of sociometry in this dynamic and interactive workshop designed to build community, belonging, and connection with first-year students. Sociometric tools, such as spectrograms, locograms, and social atoms, actively engage students through visual mapping and measuring of peer relationships and shared experiences. Through hands-on practice and discussion, participants will learn how to adapt these creative methods to build deeper connections, promote inclusivity, and create a vibrant, supportive classroom. Explore how these tools can also serve as powerful assessments to identify and address barriers to connection.

CR - Career-Readiness in the FYE: Exploring Purpose and Career Education

Room: Strand 3; Level Two

Jillian Kinzie
Jim Cole
Indiana University, National Survey of Student Engagement

Career education is an emerging FYE concern, as the topic is a growing stressor for new students and is crucial to retention efforts. This session discusses career education in the first college year, including new evidence of entering students' expectations for career education and influences on their career plans, and then discusses actual first year career experiences. Findings reveal new students' career emphases, the value of early career preparation and course-based career experiences, and the potential for greater integration of career education in the first year. Join us to explore how these results can influence first-year student career-readiness.

V - TracCloud Software: Record, Connect, Report, Success

Room: Strand 5; Level Two

Luis Frias
TracCloud

TracCloud (formerly TutorTrac) is the most comprehensive, powerful, cloud-based software solution providing on-demand access to essential tools such as appointment scheduling, visits, demographics, and activity reports. Contacts, appointments, and schedules are managed on multiple criteria. Integration with campus information systems links course enrollments and other critical data. Our new Student Success Plans module increases student engagement and allows you to create and document success plans for each student. The SAGE module aids with student retention by creating early alerts.

CT - Building (and rebuilding) a First Year Experience Program

Room: Strand 7; Level Two

Ney Arias
Florida Gulf Coast University

After moving from Academic Affairs to Student Success & Enrollment Management, First-Year Experience needed to find its purpose in serving students at FGCU. Through trial and error, this program found a way to meaningfully connect first-year students by developing, redeveloping, and implementing courses to assist in the transition from high school to college, extended Summer Bridge, pre-semester Immersive Experiences, and a model of student-specific outreach. This session will share how we assess the needs of incoming students, understand the gaps in meeting these needs, develop programs that help to fill these gaps, and obtain buy-in from key campus partners.

V - Collaborative Discussion as a Community-Building Tool for Students in Transition

Room: Strand 9; Level Two

Stefanie Takacs
Touchstones Discussion Project

Collaborative discussion is a powerful tool to transform learning and interactions, and discussion has the power to support transitioning students in content learning and in building genuinely supportive communities. For discussion to lead to real collaboration and community, instructors and students need a process that supports everyone in developing their speaking and listening skills and in establishing shared leadership.This session engages participants in a model discussion with a developmental approach to inclusive dialogue. Participants learn to overcome barriers to participation to foster classroom and school cultures where everyone is an active learner, regardless of perceived ability or background.

CT - "Capstone" Experiences in the FIRST Year: Writing, Thinking, Speaking, DEISJ

Room: Strand 10A; Level Two

Sheila McIntyre
Christine Doran
Alan Hersker
State University of New York at Potsdam

Capstone experiences allow students to work closely with professors on the research subjects they have spent their careers writing about, but they are usually reserved for the final year of college. What would happen if we offered that opportunity in the FIRST year? In 2020, SUNY Potsdam launched its new General Education program built on three required first-year seminars: Critical Thinking, College Writing, and Talking about Diversity. These essential skills are now taught through the lens of the professor's deepest interests in classes of 20-25 students. Excited students and energized faculty followed, along with successful learning outcomes.

CT - Supporting Underprepared Students with Embedded Student Success in First-year Curriculum

Room: Strand 10B; Level Two

Meredith Michaud
Sarah Dougher
Portland State University

Portland State University is not alone in experiencing a trend of higher numbers of academically underprepared students in the first year general education classroom (e.g. Campoverdi, 2023; Hall, 2023). In order to support students and faculty, our general educational department, University Studies (UNST) has partnered with faculty and student support and success offices across campus to pilot a redesigned First Year Inquiry (FRINQ) course to center the needs of our first year students by offering equitable access to student support services within the general education curriculum, and leveraging peer-to-peer support through our curricular peer mentoring program.

CT - Earning a Badge while Exploring the Field

Room: Strand 11A; Level Two

Jessica Mills
Walters State Community College

This session focuses on the third initiative of Walters State Community College's Reimaging the Community College Experience Grant. The initiative focused on a redesign of the first-year experience course which included badging and connecting majors to careers. There was a lot that went well and there was a lot that did not. First Year Conference Participants are invited to come hear about this initiative and what the college will keep in the FYE and what will be used as a learning process.

CP - Empowering Students as Supervisors: Enhancing Staff Efficiency and Student Development

Room: Strand 12A; Level Two

Caiti Wendroth
Stacey Martin
Tori Visconti
University of Cincinnati

Peer Leaders are instrumental in serving first year students, but professional staff for first-year programming are limited. At the University of Cincinnati, we promote experienced Peer Leaders to the FYE Coordinator role, in which they supervise our 100+ Peer Leaders. FYE Coordinators also lead curricular, social, and professional development projects for the Learning Communities program. Using survey responses from Peer Leaders and exit interviews with FYE Coordinators, we will explore how this advanced leadership role supports Peer Leaders' personal and professional development, alleviates workload for professional staff, and prepares undergraduates for future professional roles.

FD - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion in the First Year Seminar and Beyond

Room: Strand 12B; Level Two

Sasha Biro
Patricia Tarantello
Marist College

Marist College is actively intensifying its commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) initiatives. Dr. Sasha Biro, DEIB Academic Coordinator, and Dr. Patricia Tarantello, FYS Director, have had the opportunity to create and apply several of these initiatives in the FYS Program. They have promoted DEIB-themed seminars and Common Reads, provided pedagogical resources for FYS instructors, designed and implemented a DEIB workshop, and offered DEIB co-curricular programming. They will lead a dialogue on the benefits and challenges of including DEIB in the FYS curriculum and brainstorm ways to carry these initiatives into other aspects of the students' educational experience.

CT - Utilizing Cross-Trained Peer Mentors to Support College Transitions

Room: Strand 13A; Level Two

Kendria Mason
Sarah Bechtel
Virginia Tech

Sense of belonging does not only impact the student experience, but retention as well. This interactive session will highlight how the implementation and cross-training of peer mentors supported the college transition of first year students entering STEM Majors. The intentional care and community that peer mentors provide support not only the vitality of the student experience, but the college's as well. The strategies and practices shared will be applicable across disciplines.

CR - Examining the Benefits of Comprehensive Support for First-Year First-generation Students

Room: Strand 13B; Level Two

Kristen Glasener
Kessler Scholars Collaborative

Ifeatu Oliobi
Ithaka S+R

In this session, we will present findings from a multi-institutional, mixed methods study that examines how participation in a comprehensive, cohort-based support program influences success outcomes for first-generation, limited-income (FGLI) students. We explore students' experiences in the Kessler Scholars Program, which supports FGLI college students at 16 institutions through financial aid and robust, evidence-informed programming. Drawing on surveys, focus groups, and semi-structured interviews with campus program leaders, this study explores the influence of pre-enrollment summer transition programs, peer mentoring, and first-year seminars on students' sense of belonging, feelings of mattering, and perceptions of preparedness in their first year of college.

CR - Shifting Culture Through Professional Learning Communities: Reimagining First-Year Student Support

Room: Bolden 1; Level Two

Liane Hypolite
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

Toni Hill
Aaron Estes
University of Nebraska, Kearney

In this qualitative, particularistic case study we describe how a public university's partnership with a private research institution established a cross-functional Professional Learning Community (PLC) co-led and facilitated by the authors of this piece. This research describes how the PLC was constructed to break down silos, influence and establish culture-changing projects, and spread their ideas to shift campus culture, with a particular focus on starting efforts to improve the first-year experience for at-promise students. The PLC used the concept of Ecological Validation (EV), a R-based educational approach, to align units across student and faculty affairs to center and validate students.

CT - Changing the Grade: Shifting the Focus from Numbers to Learning

Room: Bolden 2; Level Two

Heather Adams
Auburn University at Montgomery

As an institution, AUM is committed to serving our diverse student body and supporting their success through engaging, informative, and dynamic first-year seminars. In the first-year seminar, one section of students is focusing on implementing interventions to support students through academic procrastination and towards academic achievement using R-backed strategies.

V - Mental Health Literacy as a Foundation for Student Success

Room: Bolden 3; Level Two

Donna Volpitta
Jason Schofield
Annie Slease
The Mental Health Literacy Collaborative

What if Smokey Bear only taught us to put out forest fires, not how to prevent them? When it comes to student mental health, universities are spending a lot of time and energy putting out fires. But what if we gave students the tools and knowledge they need to prevent and address mental health challenges? In this interactive session, participants learn about how integrating mental health literacy (MHL) into first year experience programming offers a proactive, scalable solution that helps prepare all students for success.

CT - SDSU's Strategy for Student Success in the Age of GenAI

Room: Bolden 4; Level Two

Stephen Schellenberg
Rebeca Navarrete
Sean Hauze
James Frazee
San Diego State University

SDSU has developed a coordinated institutional approach to fostering student success in the emerging age of GenAI. In AY23/24, we launched a student survey (n=7,811), faculty micro-credential, and syllabus guidelines for GenAI. Findings from these efforts have informed our AY24/25 launch of an expanded student/faculty/staff survey, a student micro-credential, faculty development opportunities, and a "Future-Proofing your University Education" FYS session, where students connect metacognition, academic integrity, and GenAI. Session participants will learn about SDSU's approach and findings, discuss their individual and institutional approaches to GenAI, and develop a personal action plan in service to their students and institution.

CT - First-year Cultural Event Participation: Promoting, Facilitating, and Understanding its Impact

Room: Bolden 6; Level Two

Dayton Page
Rebekah Dayton
Deborah Hall
Brigham Young University

If participation in cultural activities can predict a student's sense of community (Stephenson, 2023), then how can universities promote, facilitate, and understand the impact of on-campus cultural events for first-year students? Today's undergraduates have numerous options when deciding where to spend their extracurricular time, so understanding why students choose to attend and what they get out of cultural events is crucial for any campus hoping to offer robust cultural opportunities to bolster campus belonging (Tuten, 2020). This session aims to explore the impact of on-campus cultural even

5:15 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. CST
Featured Sessions

FS - Mindfulness-Based Practices to Help Enhance Well-being and Increase Academic Performance

Room: Strand 4; Level Two

Thomas Rojo Aubrey
James Wilson
South Mountain Community College

Teaching mindfulness has the greatest potential to positively impact students' well-being and academic success. We will examine how students' unconscious minds unintendedly inhibit their ability to learn effectively in the classroom. We will learn how to support student success by teaching them skills to counteract unproductive tendencies of the unconscious mind while bolstering the activity of the higher brain to improve academic performance.

FS - Supporting Students Beyond the Traditional First Year

Room: Strand 8; Level Two

Kimberly Dressler
Liz Carmon
Amber Fallucca
University of South Carolina

This session will complete a deep dive into the sophomore, junior, and senior years of the college experience, including exploring how first-year experience programs can serve as a bridge to these successful middle and end years. The session will explore the literature and best practices related to the topical areas and highlight how one campus is supporting these populations through a mix of peer mentoring, programming, cross-collaborations, and intentional outreach. Additional emphasis will be placed on the positive impact of common technology platforms in fulfilling the goals for student support across the comprehensive student experience.

FS - Institutionalising a First-Year Experience Programme: A South African Case Study

Room: Strand 11B; Level Two

Ruth Hoskins
Sharmla Rama
University of KwaZulu-Natal

The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) in South Africa enrolls up to 10,000 first-year students across its four Colleges at its five campuses annually. The diversities within the student population produces unequal preparedness among first-year students. The institution-wide, compulsory, and holistic year-long non-credit-bearing co-curricular First-Year Experience Programme (FYEP) is crucial to student success and transition. In the session, we will share our approach to developing and facilitating the hyflex/blended mode of delivery, the four units' curriculum content, and the successes and opportunities of our FYEP within the national South African context.

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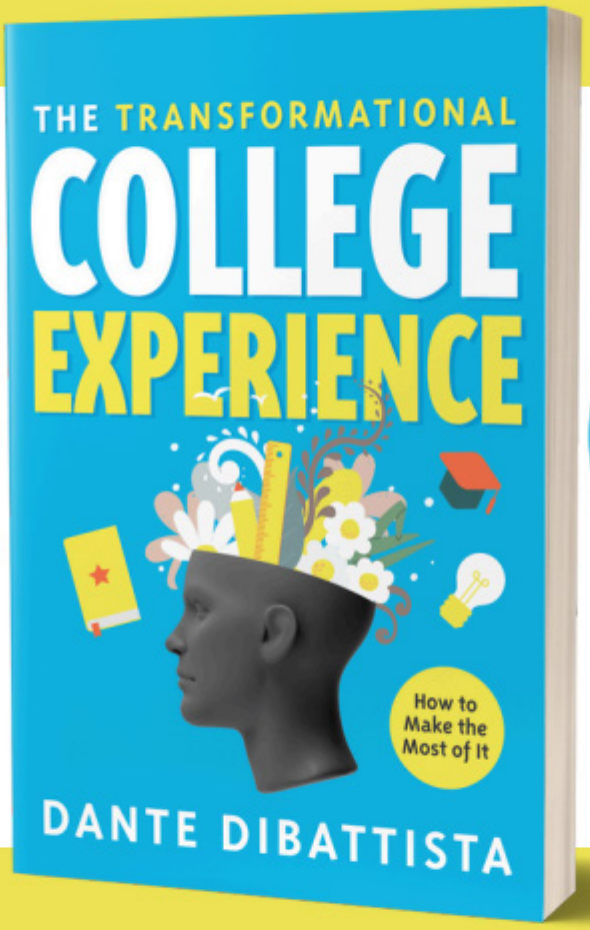

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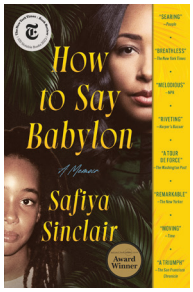

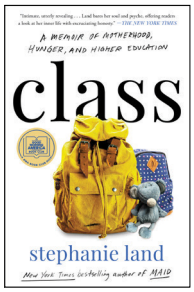

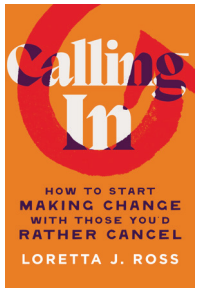

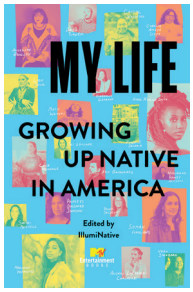

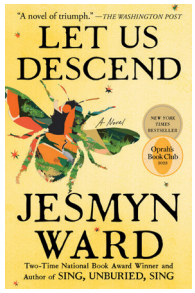

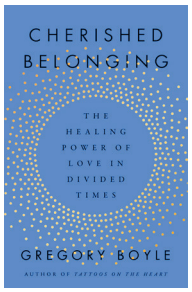

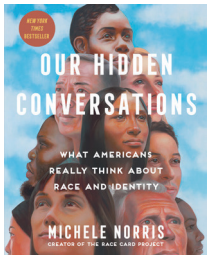

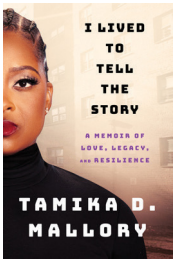

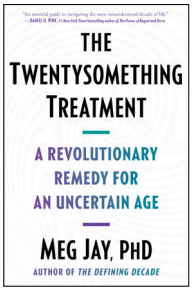

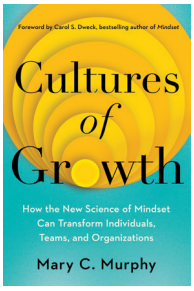

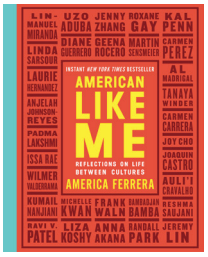

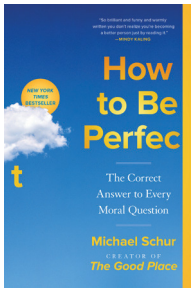

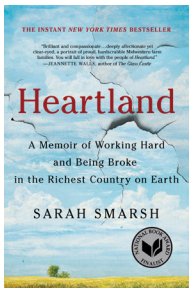

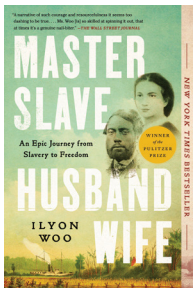

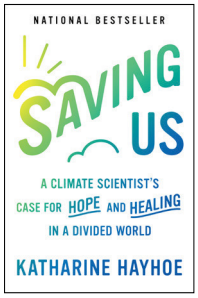

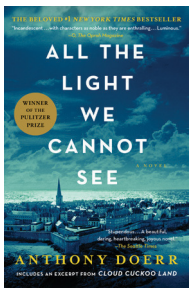

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Conference Check-In
7:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. CST
Elite Foyer; Level One

Continental Breakfast
7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. CST
Celestin Foyer; Level Three

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. CST

CR: Engaging Black Males in High-Impact Practices

Room: Foster 2; Level Two

Jamil D. Johnson
University of South Carolina

The research is clear: Engagement in high-impact practices (HIPs) promotes better student success outcomes and learning opportunities for the student (American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2023). However, when we examine the data of student participation, when disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender, it is often surprising to find that Black male engagement in HIPs is not comparable to their counterparts on campus. This session will overview the current research on HIPs, the challenges that Black Male students face regarding HIPs participation, and practices to increase their awareness.

CI - The Mentor Institute: Universal Training for Student Mentors at Tulane

Room: Strand 1; Level Two

Rachel Weber
Sam Bruce
Tulane University

Mentorship is one of the most meaningful and impactful experiences students may have during college, as both mentor and mentee. At Tulane University, the Mentor Institute provides a universal, asynchronous training for all student mentors. This presentation will provide an overview of the Institute's content, review the impact of the Institute within its first two and a half years, and discuss ways this model can be adapted to other campuses.

CI - UTEP Promote-How to Create and Operate a Summer Bridge Program

Room: Strand 2; Level Two

Sergio Contreras
Aaron Campbell
University of Texas at El Paso

In the present-day environment of higher education student retention and student success is an effort undertaken by many departments in a single university. The University of Texas at El Paso's Entering Student Program teamed up with various departments to create and execute a successful summer bridge program for first year students called UTEP Promote. This presentation will guide you through the process of creating an engaging summer bridge program and how it took a team of departments to make it happen. We will share our results with participants.

CR - Persisting Past the First Year: Attrition of Diverse Population of Adult-Learners

Room: Strand 3; Level Two

Danielle Courtemanche
Fairfield University

Online learning modalities continue to provide expansive options and vastly improve student access to completing an undergraduate program. With this growth, online degree programs experience attrition rates significantly higher than classroom-based programs. This session will present the experiences of adult learners who attempted an online undergraduate degree at one or more institutions and dropped out before the completion of their first year. The stories told by participants reveal diverse and expansive set of challenges encountered by online adult learners. The challenges presented in each student's life show the critical importance of focused institutional engagement and involvement in the student's journey.

CT - HYPE-on-Campus: Supporting Academic Persistence in Students with Mental Health Conditions

Room: Strand 4; Level Two

Michelle Mullen
Debbie Nicolellis
UMass Chan Medical School

College students with mental health conditions (MHC) are increasing in numbers, and their attrition rates are extremely high: approximately 86% drop out (e.g., Collins & Mowbray, 2005) - higher than any other group, including students with other disabilities and 3x the freshman attrition rate. Presenters will describe an on-campus support intervention that increases skill, resource, and accommodation use, including a 12-session coaching intervention, Focused Skill and Strategy Training (FSST). FSST strengthens executive functioning skills to manage competing first-year cognitive demands. Students who complete FSST are 6 times more likely to maintain enrollment and complete more courses and credits than non-completers.

V - Reframing FYE Programs: Leveraging FYEs for Institutional and Student Success

Room: Strand 8; Level Two

Peter McGovern
EdOdyssey

Shannon Fairly-Pittman
Northeastern University

Explore how First-Year Experience (FYE) programs can offer strategic advantages for both students and institutions in a changing higher education landscape. This session will demonstrate the impact of

FYEs on student engagement, retention, and institutional objectives, highlighting Northeastern University's Global Scholars Program as an example. With both domestic and international FYE models, we'll illustrate how these programs support student transitions, connect academics with real-world experiences, and build valuable networks for professional development. Attendees will gain insights into leveraging FYE programs to enhance student outcomes, institutional performance, and overall success.

CT - First-Year Student Academic Success Journey-Faculty PLC's Implemented with Fidelity

Room: Strand 9; Level Two

Kristi Young
Dionne Williams
Terence Vinson
Louisiana State University, Shreveport

Higher education institutions provide comprehensive student services to assist students throughout their academic journey. Generally, these services include a range of resources and programs, such as tutoring centers, writing centers, mental health services, and career counseling, which target students' personal and academic growth. More research is needed to indicate how colleges and universities enlist professional development for faculty as a form of student support. Therefore, this session will demonstrate how faculty development in the form of professional learning communities can reform instruction to function as a layer of support for students.

CT - Help Students Develop Psychological Resilience for Academic Success

Room: Strand 10A; Level Two

Thomas Rojo Aubrey
James Wilson
South Mountain Community College

Learn key elements to help students build the mental and emotional fortitude to succeed academically. You will learn about a groundbreaking six-point model to empower students with scientifically proven methods to enhance their quality of life and well-being. These six pillars of academic resiliency prepare students psychologically and emotionally for the demands they will face in school and in their personal lives. These elements will help foster students' growth of academic resilience, enhance well-being, and improve physical and mental health. Improving students' quality of life can contribute to increased persistence, perseverance, and completion rates.

CR - Strengthening Undergraduate Information Literacy Retention through Scaffolding and Reflection

Room: Strand 10B; Level Two

Dusty Ross
Appalachian State University

As both an Information Literacy Librarian for Social Sciences and a Rhetoric and Composition instructor at Appalachian State University, I integrated library resources into my courses to enhance first-year students' research skills. This integration includes embedding a comprehensive research guide into their online classes, incorporating discussion forum prompts, having students reflect on their research processes, and providing tutorials created by fellow librarians. I collected students' writing to use as evidence which revealed that this approach significantly enhances students' research competencies and writing, highlighting the effectiveness of combining traditional instruction with integrated, reflective, scaffolded support for solid information literacy retention.

CT - Building Community and Finding Purpose: Foundations for Retention and Success

Room: Strand 11B; Level Two

Chiara Bacigalupa
Sonoma State University

Antonia Bacigalupa Albaum
Indiana University

It's hard to develop academic and coping skills in students who aren't ready to focus on this curriculum because they are urgently interested in finding community, and worrying about whether they belong at college. But students who feel supported by a community and who deeply understand why they are at college do not just stay; they thrive. Meeting these basic emotional needs is a precondition for successful college transitions. Learn techniques to strengthen classroom communities and help students be confident in their personal college mission, based on experience from more than a decade of FYE at SSU.

CT - Rev's Reserve: Meeting Students' Needs

Room: Strand 12A; Level Two

Shelby Wallace
Ashley Corn
Texas A&M University

Many colleges and universities have food pantries available at a macro level, but Texas A&M University has taken it further to create Pocket Pantries at a micro level. The Department of Economics Academic Advising Team created Rev's Reserve Food and Resource Pantry to meet the needs of our students. Housed within the advising center, students can easily find what they need. Additionally, the center has a Pocket Career Closet for students to rent business professional clothing. This session will describe how we got started and how we operate.

FD - Building Connections for Commuter Students: Overcoming Barriers for First-Year Success

Room: Strand 12B; Level Two

Elan Sandler
Alex Valencia
North Carolina State University

Engaging commuter students and helping them forge meaningful connections can be a significant challenge, especially for first-year students who are navigating their way through academic and social transitions. This facilitated dialogue will focus on sharing proven strategies and brainstorming innovative approaches, to support and

engage first-year commuter students. Participants will explore unique barriers these students face, including time constraints and feelings of isolation, and discuss practical outreach methods to foster community. Together, we'll develop actionable insights that participants can implement to ensure commuter students have access to impactful experiences that strengthen their sense of belonging and improve their overall wellbeing.

CT - Wing Leaders: Relationship-Rich Peer Mentoring in the First Year

Room: Strand 13A; Level Two

Franklin Ard
Ellie Thomson
Sherrill Hayes
Kennesaw State University

The Wing Leaders program at Kennesaw State University is designed to enhance the academic and personal success of first-year students through peer mentorship. Trained to boost student engagement, Wing Leaders guide students in accessing campus resources, promoting academic achievement, and fostering social connections to strengthen sense of belonging. Wing Leaders are integrated into first-semester course blocks, where they collaborate with professors and regularly engage with mentees outside of class. This presentation will explore the program's structure, including the recruitment, training, and ongoing development, and provide an evaluation of the program's impact on first-year students and the inaugural cohort of mentors.

CP - Fostering Belonging through a Peer-led Program in FYE

Room: Strand 13B; Level Two

Tara Hupton
Kathy Glampe
St. Olaf College

St. Olaf Orientation to Academics and Resources (SOAR) is a peer-led extended orientation that is required, but not credit bearing, for all students as part of a two-course First-Year Experience. SOAR cultivates a sense of belonging for students while uncovering the "hidden curriculum" of college. SOAR is facilitated in small groups throughout the academic year. First-year students also meet individually twice a year with their SOAR peer leader. We will describe the SOAR program and curriculum, our approach to recruiting and training peer leaders, program assessment, and the integration of professional Success Coaches.

CP - Expertise in Action: Building a Peer Mentor Curriculum

Room: Bolden 1; Level Two

Emily Navarro
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Peer Mentors are real-life experts in navigating college life. Drawing from their personal experiences, they offer first-year students valuable insights into campus resources, student involvement, and how to succeed at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. We have developed a unique Peer Mentor-led curriculum to enhance the first-year experience course called Life @ UT. During this session, we will cover key aspects of the UTK Peer Mentor program, including recruitment, selection, and training plans. Additionally, we will explore the data that has shaped Life @ UT, giving insight into the first-year student experience and how it informs program development.

CI - The Happiness Project: Validating First-Year Student Experience & Promoting Well-Being

Room: Bolden 2; Level Two

Michael Graham
Jakiara Edwards
Lou Lou Gilstrap
Lander University

As newly welcomed members of university communities, first-year students embark on an educational journey toward their aspirations. Yet, do we really know what makes first-year students happy about being members of our university communities? This presentation will provide attendees with an overview of a newly implemented initiative designed to validate student voices and promote well-being. The presenters will provide attendees with relevant literature to frame this initiative. Results from this initiative include both quantitative and qualitative data highlighting avenues for increasing happiness potentials. The presenters will engage in dialogue with attendees throughout the presentation to enhance personal takeaways.

CT - Navigating Coping Strategies and Nutrition Trends Among First-Year College Students

Room: Bolden 3; Level Two

Yazmine Koster
Vanessa Lo'amanu
Southern Utah University

First-year college students are constantly undergoing change, new academic pressures are introduced and social environments are transforming, affecting their well-being. Coping strategies such as exercising, communicating with peers, and working on building healthy habits are essential when facilitating change. Eating habits in particular, shift as they begin to adjust to new nutrition choices such as campus dining options, budget-related barriers, and schedule complications. Irregular meals due to stress and busy schedules often lead to mental health challenges. Promoting coping mechanisms with the goal of effective self-care, balancing nutrition and mindfulness can help students to manage these changes productively.

CT - No FTE's? No Problem: Leveraging Student Peer Mentor Supervisors

Room: Bolden 5; Level Two

Lindsey Blau
Emma Ward
Lenna Wilcox
Brigham Young University

As BYU prepared to launch a new first-year experience course requiring 275 sections by Fall 2024, our First-Year Experience Office faced a major challenge: ensuring each section had a thoroughly trained peer mentor despite limited resources. Maintaining our training model was crucial for both mentor and student success. With no option to hire additional professional staff, we needed lead student employees prepared to supervise our growing group of peer mentors. We revamped our student leadership model to better leverage student supervisors as leaders in order to work through resource constraints. This presentation will outline our enhanced program structure and outcomes.

CT - Tying Resilience to Academic and Mental Wellbeing in First-Year Students

Room: Bolden 6; Level Two

Jessica Clark
North Carolina State University

How does one implement proactive mental wellbeing training into a first-year, undecided student program? Through this session, attendees will gain an overview of the planning, logistics, implementation and reflections of a successful Resilience and Wellbeing Certificate program implemented in Spring 2024 for 20 first-year, exploratory studies students. Attendees will be asked to explore how to translate this program to their own unique populations while practicing skills that can benefit both themselves and their students.

9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. CST

CT - Decolonizing FYE: Centering Rural, First-Gen, and Pacific Islander Student Success

Room: Strand 1; Level Two

Cori Brewster
Bennie Moses-Mesubed
Madelynn Sturm
Hartleen Kloulubak
Eastern Oregon University

This session engages ongoing calls to decolonize first-year curriculum and programming, using one university's example as a springboard into wider audience discussion. Panelists will begin by sharing the history and philosophy of the Kickstart Summer Bridge program at EOU, considering how it challenges traditional practices and works to center rural, first-generation, and Pacific Islander students' knowledge and lived experiences. Student mentors, faculty, and administrators will then share both successes and challenges encountered in attempting to extend this relational model throughout the academic year. The session will close with audience discussion of related approaches, successes, and challenges in their institutional contexts.

CP - Persisting Barriers to First Year Student Retention Post Pandemic

Room: Strand 2; Level Two

Frank Ridzi,
Le Moyne College

We have seen an increase in popularity of free college for historically underrepresented students. However, the question remains as to whether providing free education is enough for students with the greatest challenge to matriculate and remain in college. In this presentation we review the case of Say Yes to Education in Syracuse, New York to examine not only how this has affected high school graduation but also trends in college enrollment and retention. We draw on qualitative student feedback to highlight what barriers persist for retention even after providing free tuition.

CI - Contextual Factors of Belongingness

Room: Strand 3; Level Two

Catherine Thomas
Georgia Institute of Technology

This session shares assessment findings around student sense of belonging in our current GT 1000 First-Year Seminar. At last year's FYE, we presented on our intentional infusion of belonging-building practices throughout the program. This session continues that work by investigating how belonging manifests across seminar offerings. How does students' perception of sense of belonging differ between types of first-year seminar sections and different semesters? Do we see a "belonging bonus" to layering HIPs? What are the attendant equity dimensions? Better understanding the contextual factors of belongingness allows us to shape our program to better support our students' holistic success.

CT - First-Year Research and Artistry Experience (FYRE)

Room: Strand 5; Level Two

Andrew Parzyck
Dyan Robinson
Benjamin McNamee
Rhian Alsgaard
Southern Connecticut State University

This session will explore the development of the First-Year Research and Artistry Experience (FYRE) at Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU), now in its 10th year. We'll focus on bridging the gap between students' sense of social belonging and their intellectual integration. FYRE engages instructors, staff, and peer mentors in guiding students to build confidence in research and artistry, emphasizing intellectual belonging over perfection. We will address concerns about first-year students' research readiness, emphasizing the program's focus of fostering intellectual growth. This session will also highlight FYRE's presentation week and celebratory events, designed to deepen students' connections to the academic community.

CT - Paying Attention to the Important Stuff: Durable Skills in FYE

Room: Strand 7; Level Two

Candyce Reynolds
Stephanie Cox
Boise State University

Durable skills, such as communication and critical thinking, are essential for student success both academically and professionally. This session will provide an overview of the concept of durable skills (also known as transferable skills or soft skills). Transparent inclusion of these skills in FYE courses is vital to student success in college and beyond. Strategies for inclusion of durable skills will be shared and participants will have the opportunity to consider how they can highlight the development and growth of these important skills in their programs and courses.

CR - Creating Space: Focus Groups Addressing Racialized Undergraduate Opportunity Gaps

Room: Strand 8; Level Two

Kiara Lee
Virginia Commonwealth University

Racialized educational disparities and equity gaps persist for Black & Latino male students upon their start at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) and throughout their VCU academic careers; research shows these disparities contribute to lower retention, higher dropout rates and more. The study intended to obtain insight from the students themselves, centering students as experts. In a focus group, students will interpret data & discuss their first year experiences. The study results can inform equity-driven institutional change to better serve historically marginalized first year students. Attend this session to learn about the study & research as empowerment for first-year students.

CT - Integrate to Align: GSW's QEP and FYE

Room: Strand 9; Level Two

David Jenkins
Rachel Abbott
Paul Dahlgren
Jennifer Ryer
Jill Drake
Courtney Ellis
Georgia Southwestern State University

This presentation describes how Georgia Southwestern State University (GSW) has integrated our Quality Enhancement Plan into First-Year Experience for our students. HAIL: High-impact Approach to Integrative Learning aims to help students meaningfully connect their learning across their courses, in their communities, and throughout their lives. For first year students, this has meant enrolling many in innovative course blocks as well as new experiences in their first-year seminar designed to foster a sense of belonging and encourage integrative learning. For GSW, this has meant developing a new culture of cooperation between the offices of first-year experience and academic affairs.

CR - Empowering First-Year Students with Metacognitive Skills for Academic Success

Room: Strand 10A; Level Two

Tia Caster
Houston Christian University

Leonard Geddes
The LearnWell Projects

First-year students face critical adjustments in navigating academic expectations. Developing metacognitive skills bridges the gap between passive learning and strategic thinking, promoting academic success. In this workshop, Leonard Geddes and Dr. Tia Caster will demonstrate evidence-based strategies to integrate the ThinkWell-LearnWell framework and ABCs of Academic Work into First-Year Seminar courses. Participants will explore how these tools foster key metacognitive skills like distinguishing thinking skills, aligning notes, and making connections between concepts and outcomes. Findings from a semester-long study, including peer mentor assessments and correlations between self-assessments and GPA, will be shared.

CI - It's in the Training Modules: Implementing a New Faculty-Training Structure

Room: Strand 10B; Level Two

Tara Sewell-Lasater
Emily Keller
Montana State University

In Fall 2024 the First Year Seminar program at Montana State University implemented a new faculty training structure. This presentation will overview the Seminar program at MSU, the previous training structure, the new training structure, and the outcome of the implementation. We will describe the reasons we decided to restructure our training program, both as a result of changes in faculty expectations and to adjust to emerging student needs and trends in this post-Covid period. Finally, we will also address ways we plan to continue building this training structure, while taking into consideration our post-training assessment and faculty feedback.

CI - CCSJ's FYE Transformation: From Survival to Holistic Engagement

Room: Strand 11A; Level Two

Tracy Stone
Carrie Hutton
Amanda Copeland
Calumet College of St. Joseph

Calumet College of St. Joseph (CCSJ) revolutionized its First Year Experience (FYE) course to transition from a traditional survival-centric model to a holistic approach emphasizing academic, emotional, and social integration. Named "The CCSJ Experience," the program was redesigned in 2021 to foster deeper student engagement and success. Through strategic curriculum enhancements, including the integration of campus resources and reflective personal development assignments, the program significantly improved academic outcomes and student retention. By employing targeted interventions and robust assessments, CCSJ has successfully crafted a model that not

only supports but also celebrates the diverse journeys of its first-year students.

V - 1st-Gen Success: Building Social & Cultural Capital Through Cognitive Strategies

Room: Strand 11B; Level Two

Erin Wheeler
Holistic Higher Education Solutions

Despite various programs for first-generation students, many fall short in translating immediate support into graduation and economic mobility. While these initiatives offer valuable academic and social support, they often fail to equip students with the social and cultural capital needed for long-term success. Wealthier students benefit from an inherent understanding of institutional dynamics and networks developed through family connections. First-generation students may lack these advantages, making it difficult to convert a degree into meaningful opportunities. This session presents a holistic approach, integrating cognitive science strategies learning to help students leverage their capital effectively, navigating college and the world as insiders.

CI - The Scholar's Compass: Navigating First-Year Student Success through Library Engagement

Room: Strand 12A; Level Two

Gina Nigro
Austin Peay State University

This session highlights innovative library programming that promotes first-year student engagement using traditional and nontraditional teaching and learning methods. With the Scholar's Compass series, librarians at Austin Peay State University's Felix G. Woodward Library have created high-impact practices (HIPs) that emphasize a community of learning, collaboration, and engagement in unique, interactive settings where students can thrive. Through the success of these programs, participants will explore strategies to foster intellectual growth, faculty-student interactions, and a sense of belonging beyond the classroom. Emphasis will be placed on creating inclusive workshops that engage first-year students and assessing the effectiveness of these initiatives.

FD - Strengthening Student Success: Sustaining a More Student-Centered Approach to Learning

Room: Strand 12B; Level Two

Maria Puppolo
University of Massachusetts

My proposed session focuses on ways that we, as educators, can foster a more positive learning environment for all students, especially FYE and First-Generation Students. Research has shown that by shifting to a more student-centered approach to learning, rather than the more traditional instructor-centered learning environment, improvements in student outcomes, confidence-building, classroom participation and attendance can result. This workshop aims to highlight the importance of listening to our students and encouraging their dialogue and feedback. Instead of us being the "sage on the stage" we can develop ways to be the "guide on the side" instead.

CT - Back to Nature Learning Community: Reflect, Connect, Engage

Room: Strand 13A; Level Two

Darien Ripple
Grand Valley State University

This session will provide a preliminary overview of an IRB approved research study to better understand the learning process of students engaged in experiential education by observing their comments and actions while interacting in nature-based learning in the Back to Nature Learning Community (BNLC) at Grand Valley State University. BNLC is a first-year learning community linking INT100 – Reflect, Connect, Engage with WRT150 – Strategies in Writing. BNLC is designed to engage students in experiential learning that focuses on the natural world in order to enhance their understanding of sustainability and ecological literacy, while creating a sense of place.

CI - Jump Start Success: Bridging to Sophomore Year

Room: Strand 13B; Level Two

Tasha Thomas
Susannah Waldrop
Sherrie Grant
Kim Purdy
University of South Carolina, Upstate

Are you still addressing learning loss stemming from the pandemic? Join us to learn more about our summer program which helped students build a better bridge to sophomore year. Students establish a foundation of writing, research and math skills, earn transferable course credit and improve non-cognitive academic competencies such as time management, study skills, and support strategies. We will share concrete examples of how we help students experience success in English and Math courses, equipping them to feel more in control of their education. Topics include accelerated workshop classes, peer tutoring, teaching strategies and fostering a sense of belonging.

CI - Impact and Insights: Evolution of Cottey College First-Year Experiences

Room: Bolden 1; Level Two

Denise Carrick Hedges
Sarah Polo
Heather English
Cottey College

This presentation describes the implementation of two first-year programs at Cottey College: the First-Year Writing Seminar and Step Into Cottey. Together, they provide students with a foundational and meaningful first-year experience grounded in the College's specific mission. Presenters will provide brief institutional context before discussing each program in depth, including outcomes, implementation, and assessment over recent history. The presentation will highlight each program's successes, including impact on students, faculty involvement, and benefits to the larger Cottey community. It will equally make recommendations for improvement and implementation for other comparative colleges who might want to adapt similar programs at their institutions.

CT - iFreshmen: Emerging Practices for Cultivating a Sense of Belonging

Room: Bolden 2; Level Two

Taneshia Drake
Southeastern Louisiana University

The purpose of this research was to explore the first-year practices for cultivating a sense of belonging amongst Generation Z students and beyond within higher education as well as identify specific first-year practices aimed at students of various socioeconomic and demographic backgrounds. Five emerging themes were identified as a result of the data collected. Those themes included campus culture, campus events, social media, the impact of COVID-19, and faculty and staff relationships. This research provides insight regarding the effectiveness of current first-year practices in motivating Gen Z students' sense of belonging and insight regarding its correlation to academic persistence.

CT - Extending the Bridge: Redesigning a First Year Summer Bridge Program

Room: Bolden 3; Level Two

Niesha Radovanic
Autumn Bradley
Maggie Hohne
Florida Gulf Coast University

Summer Bridge programs are a widely used high-impact practice to help prepare recently graduated high school students to be academically successful college students. Traditionally held over a 6-week summer term, the Summer Bridge program at Florida Gulf Coast University was redesigned to be a year-long bridge program in which students would be grouped and enrolled in a common hour during the summer, fall and spring of their first year. Through intentional lessons and assignments, campus partner integration, and peer mentor relationships, the students that are a part of this program are given the opportunity to succeed and thrive at FGCU.

CT - Launching and Scaling a Compass Course in One Year

Room: Bolden 4; Level Two

Jennifer Roth-Burnette
Sarah Burcher
Chapman Greer
Anne Franklin Lamar
The University of Alabama

Over the past year, our institution launched a first-year compass course (FYCC) for over 8000 students, requiring strategic planning and stakeholder engagement. Key strategies included senior administrative support, collaborative leadership, robust design, staff development, and visible action. Faculty focus groups provided essential feedback, ensuring the course met academic standards. Early adopters among faculty helped refine the course proposal process. A flexible program plan and comprehensive data plan were crucial for measuring success and making adjustments. Understanding the campus-wide course development timeline allowed us to meet deadlines without compromising quality. Our experience offers valuable insights for other institutions facing similar challenges.

CI - First-Generation Success Hub: Empowering Students with Online Resources and Support

Room: Bolden 5; Level Two

Lee Williams
Texarkana College

The presenter will explore innovative strategies employed by Texarkana College to support first-generation students in the online learning landscape. The presenter will delve into the development of a virtual resources hub that enhances academic achievement, retention, and crucial life skills. Join us as we discuss practical approaches applicable to various learning environments, on-campus, fully online, or in a hybrid setting, empowering first-generation students for success.

CT - Coaching for Authenticity and Agency: The Powerful Questions Framework

Room: Bolden 6; Level Two

Mary Jordan
Brown University

In this interactive session, participants will explore the powerful questions coaching framework, and its transformative potential in FYE efforts. Powerful questions are open-ended, agenda-free inquiries that foster self-reflection and personal growth. This session will delve into the characteristics of powerful questions, provide practical examples, and demonstrate how they can be utilized in coaching conversations to empower students to set their own goals and develop their own solutions.

CT - The Success Equation: Mastering Social-Emotional Learning and Executive Functioning Skills

Room: Foster 2; Level Two

Laurie Hazard
New England Institute of Technology

Researchers argue that the ability to self-regulate contributes to college success. Unfortunately, many undergraduates enter our institutions without having developed the social and emotional skills necessary to understand and manage their emotions, and the executive functioning skills to achieve positive goals. These self-regulation skills are a key part of the equation for fostering college success. The inability to master these affective, behavioral, and cognitive skill sets contributes to negative outcomes ranging from compromised immune systems to damaged relationships to impeded academic performance. This presentation analyzes the challenges of teaching self-regulation and offers practical pedagogical strategies to address those challenges

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19

Closing Session

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. CST | Celestin Ballroom; Level Three

Annie Kelly
Assistant Professor, Editor of *Insights for College Transitions*
University of Cincinnati

Bringing it Home: Implementing Conference Insights at your Institution

This reflective and interactive closing session serves as the capstone to the Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience. Join a round table discussion with other conference attendees to identify conference learning moments, discuss and prioritize next steps, and create an implementation plan for your institution.

Dr. Annie Kelly, *Insights for College Transitions* Editor and Assistant Professor/First-Year Seminar Course Director in the College of Cooperative Education and Professional Studies at University of Cincinnati, will facilitate this theory-to-practice session and support participants in leaving the conference with renewed purpose and actionable takeaways.

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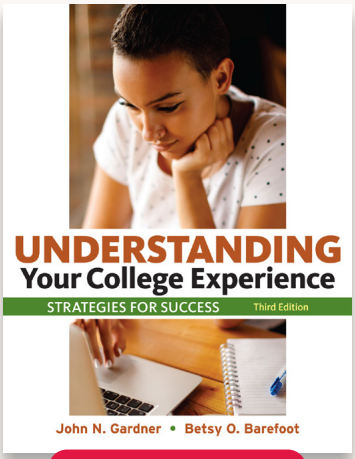

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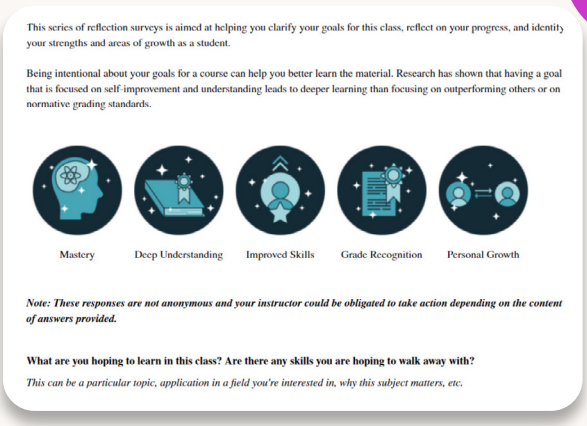
This series of reflection surveys is aimed at helping you clarify your goals for this class, reflect on your progress, and identify your strengths and areas of growth as a student.

Being intentional about your goals for a course can help you better learn the material. Research has shown that having a goal that is focused on self-improvement and understanding leads to deeper learning than focusing on outperforming others or on normative grading standards.

Mastery | Deep Understanding | Improved Skills | Grade Recognition | Personal Growth

Note: These responses are not anonymous and your instructor could be obligated to take action depending on the content of answers provided.

What are you hoping to learn in this class? Are there any skills you are hoping to walk away with?

This can be a particular topic, application in a field you're interested in, why this subject matters, etc.

From John Gardner, Betsy Barefoot , and new co-author Kimberly A. Koledoye, **Understanding Your College Experience 2024 Digtal Update** features the latest research and expanded coverage—plus new activities on learning science, mental health, and test-taking strategies and tools.

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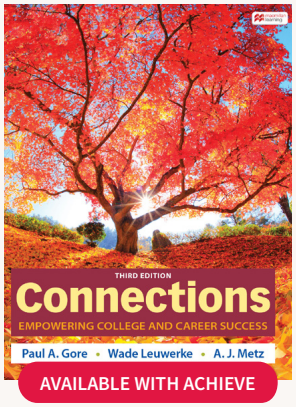

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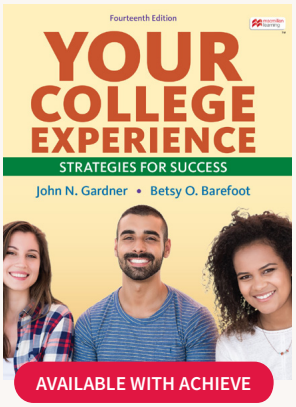

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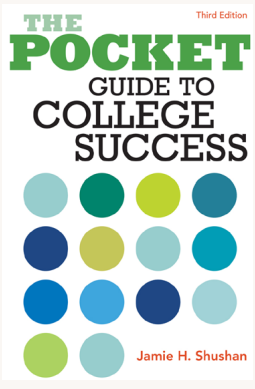

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AWARDS & RECOGNITION

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Outstanding First-Year Student Advocates

Penguin Random House EDUCATION

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FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

With the support and co-sponsorship of Penguin Random House, the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition is pleased to recognize individuals on the nation's campuses who are Outstanding First-Year Student Advocates involved in high-impact practices for first-year student success. Two award recipients are chosen in each of the following institutional categories:

- Two-Year Colleges
- Four-Year Colleges & Universities with less than 2,000 students
- Four-Year Colleges & Universities with 2,000 to 7,000 students
- Four-Year Colleges & Universities with 7,001 to 15,000 students
- Four-Year Colleges & Universities with more than 15,000 students

Award Recipients

Tonya Doane, *Bennett College*
Tonya Doane is a dynamic and dedicated leader at Bennett College, where she excels as the Director of Student Success and Co-Responder for Retention, as well as an Adjunct Instructor in English and Women's Studies. Her commitment to empowering students from diverse backgrounds is evident in her holistic approach, which focuses on equipping them with essential skills and addressing their comprehensive needs. She has significantly contributed to initiatives like Tutoring Services, Transfer Tuesdays, and the Emerging Scholars Peer Mentoring Program for first year students. She also co-developed the College's Success Coaching Model, a personalized wrap-around service that underscores her commitment to student support. Her passion for fostering a collaborative environment is central to her work, as she strives to build a strong sense of community and belonging. Through her efforts, Tonya Doane aims to enhance academic success, retention, persistence, and graduation rates, ensuring every student has the opportunity to thrive.

Lorrie Frederick, *Community College of Baltimore County*
Lorrie Frederick is the Assistant Director of Student Engagement for First-Year Experience (FYE) at the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC). In her role at CCBC, Lorrie oversees co-curricular FYE initiatives designed to welcome students to the college community, provide new students resources to be successful, and offer students avenues to build connections and support systems. Her core programs include a summer bridge program, new student orientation, a peer mentor program, and a second-year transition program.
Lorrie earned her Doctor of Education in Community College Leadership from Morgan State University and her Master of Science in counseling with a concentration in college student personnel services from Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania. She was a first-year student at Stevenson University in Baltimore, Maryland. She was an involved student leader and student-athlete who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature and a Bachelor of Science in human services.

Hal W. Fulmer, *Troy University*
Dr. Hal Fulmer is the Associate Provost and Dean of Undergraduate and First Year Studies at Troy University, serving from 2004 until his retirement in the Fall 2024. Since 2011, he has served as the Director of the John W. Schmidt Center for Student Success, leading 30 professional staff in support of all areas of retention and degree completion. He was a member of the team that designed the Center and led the efforts to redesign the University's General Studies Program in 2015. He holds the rank of Professor with tenure in the Hall School of Journalism and Communication. He served in faculty and administrative roles at Georgia Southern University and began his professional career at Mississippi State as a faculty member. His graduate work was earned at the University of Georgia and Louisiana State University. At retirement, Dr. Fulmer has over 40 years of higher education teaching and service.

Martine Howard, *Camden County College*

Dr. Martine Howard is a professor and Chairperson of the Languages and Communications Department at Camden County College in New Jersey, where she has served for 30 years. An alumna of Camden County College, she holds degrees from Rowan University, the University of Delaware, and New Jersey City University. Dr. Howard was honored with the Lindback Distinguished Teaching Award in 2013 for her exceptional student-focused teaching of French and Spanish. She earned her Ed.D. with a dissertation on a 15-credit completion initiative that won the Dissertation in Practice Award. The 15 to Finish campaign she launched helped first-year students enroll in 15 credits per semester, to graduate on time. Her dedication to first-year students was further evidenced by her leadership in organizing a task force in 2023 to implement a First Year Experience Course and create discussions with faculty and administration on how to best enforce it college-wide.

Robert Jacks, *Virginia Tech*

Robert Jacks serves as the Director for Academic Advising in the College of Architecture, Arts, and Design at Virginia Tech. In this role he supervises a team of six professional academic advisors and oversees the undergraduate student journey from the time students first think about joining VT to orientation and graduation. During the past 11 years at VT, Rob has taught three different First-Year Experience classes and helped create several others. Rob is passionate about advocating for students, removing barriers to both entry and graduation, and creating programs that enhance undergraduate student retention.

Rob graduated from Virginia Tech with a BS in Business and a MAEd in Curriculum and Instruction. In 2017 he received Virginia Tech's highest advising honor, the Provost's Award for Excellence in Academic Advising and in 2023 he was the inaugural recipient of the College of Architecture, Arts, and Design's Outstanding Administrative/Professional Faculty Award.

Kasey Karen, *Georgia College & State University*

Kasey Karen, Ph.D. is a Professor at Georgia College & State University in the Department of Biological & Environmental Sciences. In 2022, when GCSU provided the opportunity for faculty to teach the first-year academic seminar courses, Dr. Karen eagerly volunteered and spent some time working on the course design in a Summer HIPs Institute. In her role as the Undergraduate Biology Program Coordinator, she also worked on developing a Freshman Engagement Series for the whole department to create more opportunities for first-year students to meet other biology majors, the department faculty and staff, and learn more about the major itself.

Karen earned a doctorate in molecular genetics and microbiology at Stony Brook University and a bachelor's degree in microbiology from the University of New Hampshire. She loves to foster and rescue cats and dogs, crochet, and bake, especially pies.

Leo Lachut, *University of Connecticut*

Leo Lachut currently serves as the Interim Director of First-Year Programs (FYP) and Learning Communities (LC) at the University of Connecticut (UConn). With over 25 years of experience teaching First-Year Experience (FYE) courses, Leo is deeply committed to student success, particularly in supporting first-generation students.

In his role, Leo oversees initiatives that help first-year students transition into university life. He collaborates with faculty, staff, and student leaders to create inclusive environments that foster belonging and academic achievement.

As a first-generation college student himself, Leo has been instrumental in developing programs that address the unique challenges faced by first-generation students, contributing to higher retention rates and improved academic outcomes. His dedication ensures that UConn remains a welcoming and supportive institution.

With a background in counseling psychology, educational leadership, and a strong track record of student advocacy, Leo continues to lead UConn's FYP and LC programs while adapting to the evolving needs of students.

Lance Vanderburg, *Taylor University*

Dr. Lance Vanderberg is the Coordinator of Academic Success at Taylor University. He teaches applied learning courses, works with students as an academic coach, and provides leadership for university retention efforts. Lance also leads the Transition to College Program for provisionally accepted freshmen. He got his start in higher education through coaching cross country and track at Taylor for 13 years.

Lance received his undergraduate degree in social studies education and his master's degree in higher education. Both degrees are from Taylor. He also recently completed the PhD in Higher Education program at Indiana University, with a minor in learning sciences. Lance greatly enjoys working with students and looks forward to continuing his work in the Academic Enrichment Center at Taylor. He is married to his wife, Amy, and the couple has two children.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Adam Wasilko, *Duquesne University*

Adam T. Wasilko is the Dean of Students and Associate Vice President for Student Life at Duquesne University. He is a key figure in students' out of the classroom experience. Dr. Wasilko also oversees the Center for Student Involvement, which includes: Food Pantry, Commuter Affairs, Disability Services, Freshman Development, Greek Life, Orientation, Parent Relations, Programs, Leadership, Assessment, Student Organizations, Union Operations, Summer Leadership Academy, Student Government, and Orientation program.

He serves on the University's executive retention committee, Conduct Board, Core committee, President's Diversity Advisory Board, Support Council, and First-Generation Students committee, among others. He serves as an assistant editor of the International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education. Dr. Wasilko also teaches a General Chemistry Laboratory class and the occasional cycling class on campus.

Dr. Wasilko is passionate about the University mission. You can often find him presenting on the mission at orientations or campus programs. He runs a co-curricular trip to Tanzania to support and visit the Spiritan missions in East Africa.

Semifinalists

Brett Bruner
Wichita State University

Veronica Gerosimo
Hudson County Community College

Briana Maturi
Loyola Marymount University

Chris Satterfield
Greenville Technical College

Kelley Shepherd
Providence College

Nominees

Desiree Alva
The University of Texas at Austin

Sarah Bechtel
Virginia Tech

Kimberly Bligh
Bakersfield College, Kern Community College District

Amy Cromer
Tri-County Technical College

Noelle L. Cutter
Molloy University

Laura Delgado
Lipscomb University

Tricia England
Des Moines Area Community College

Tyler Fagan
Elmhurst University

Morgan Flagg-Detwiler
Northampton Community College

Malik Howard
Rowan College at Burlington County

Dawn Hundley
University of Cincinnati Clermont College

John Montemayor
University of South Carolina Upstate

Andria Morse
University of Wisconsin-Stout

Miguel Murphy
Miami Dade College

Christina Reich
Shepherd University

Todd Shealy
The Citadel

Tiffany Tullis
Georgia State University

Excellence in Teaching First-Year Seminars

Sponsored by The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, University of South Carolina, the award is given to an instructor who has achieved great success in teaching first-year seminars and who inspires student learning, development, and success. Universities were asked to submit one representative for their campus to be nominated for this award.

Award Recipient

Jane Robertson Evia, *Virginia Tech*
Jane Robertson Evia is a Collegiate Associate Professor in the Department of Statistics at Virginia Tech. She is passionate about supporting students as they learn and grow throughout their undergraduate experience. Dr. Robertson Evia developed and has taught the First-Year Experience course for statistics majors at Virginia Tech for 13 years. In addition to her love of working with first-year students during a time of great transition, her teaching and research interests include statistics education, science communication, and data visualization. When she isn't hanging out with students, Dr. Robertson Evia enjoys hiking, yoga, and spending time with her husband and their 10-year-old daughter, Sofia.

Semifinalists

Mitch Handelsman
University of Colorado Denver

Michael A. Smith
Newberry College

Nominees

Deborah Botker
Middlesex Community College

Shannon Halbedel
Michigan State University

Jordan Smith Undergraduate Fellowships

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

DIA
Higher Education Collaborators

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition and DIA Higher Education Collaborators awards five fellowships to undergraduate students for the Jordan Smith Undergraduate Fellowship. The purpose of the Fellowship Program is to advance the leadership skills and knowledge base of undergraduate students so that they may in turn use what they learn at the conference to enhance and encourage first-year student development on their respective campuses.

Fellowship Recipients

Chauncy Betts
Arkansas State University

Brock McHood
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

Grace Prince
Furman University

Karis Sustar
University of North Carolina, Greensboro

Kavitha Viswanadhan
George Mason University

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Paul P. Fidler
RESEARCH GRANT

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition invites applications for the 2025-2026 Paul P. Fidler Research Grant, which is designed to encourage the development and dissemination of knowledge that has the potential to make a national impact and improve the experiences of college students in transition. The Paul P. Fidler Research Grant award includes a cash stipend, travel to two national conferences, a presentation at a national conference, and priority consideration for publication.

Comprehensive Award Package

- Stipend of $5,000
- Registration to the 32nd National Conference on Students in Transition, October 2025, at which the award will be presented
- Travel to the 33rd National Conference on Students in Transition, 2026, at which the research findings will be reported
- Announcement on the National Resource Center webpage, listservs, and print publications
- Priority consideration for publication by the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition

Submission Deadline

Completed applications must be received by the National Resource Center by 11:59 p.m. Eastern, July 1, 2025.

Application Procedures

The application and proposal form can be found at www.sc.edu/fye/fidler. Application materials (proposal, curriculum vitae) must be submitted electronically by the deadline.
For more information, send an e-mail to nrcrsrch@mailbox.sc.edu.

Past Recipients

Ivan Valdovinos Gutierrez
Understanding the Role of Families in the Post-Transfer Pathways of Latinx Community College Students from San Diego County

Elizabeth Jach
Examining Social Support and Internalized Sexism among Sophomores on Women's Intercollegiate Athletic Teams

Robert "Jason" Lynch and Shawn A. Ricks
A Qualitative Examination of Trauma, Well-Being, and Success of First-Year Students at Historically Black Universities

Susana Hernandez, Gabriela Encinas, and Luis Fernando Macias
Navigating the Central Valley: Exploring Undocumented Students' Pursuits and Transitions into Higher Education

Brett Ranon Nachman
Piecing Together the Community College Puzzle: How Autistic Students Transition Into and Through Community College

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FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
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www.sc.edu/fye/fidler

Join us in congratulating . . .

2024-2025 Paul P. Fidler Research Grant Recipient

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FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Ivan Valdovinos Gutierrez
PhD Candidate, Department of Education Studies
University of California, San Diego

Project Director, TRIO Student Support Services
Wenatchee Valley College

Understanding the Role of Families in the Post-Transfer Pathways of Latinx Community College Students from San Diego County

Abstract: The California Community College system enrolls over 1 million Latinx students annually, yet only 2% transfer within two years. Scholars have proclaimed that developing a Transfer Receptive Culture (TRC) that centers the voices and experiences of Latinx students and their families can be the key to their transfer success. Utilizing platica methodology and familial testimonios, this study explores the post-transfer experiences of fifteen Latinx students, their families, and institutional transfer agents from community colleges in San Diego County. This study provides a foundation for studying Latinx transfer success through a critical, equity-minded, and family-centered approach.

The Paul P. Fidler Research Grant is designed to encourage the development and dissemination of knowledge that has the potential to improve the experiences of college students in transition. The grant is named in memory of Dr. Paul P. Fidler, a faculty member at the University of South Carolina, whose pioneering research on student learning and success had a vital impact on work being done to promote the success of all students in transition.

John N. Gardner Institutional Excellence for Students in Transition *Award*

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition is committed to setting the standard for excellence in supporting students at critical junctures in the educational pipeline beyond the first year. We also seek to promote intentional and integrative connections within and across institutions and educational sectors to enhance the student transition experience. The award will be presented annually to institutions that have designed and implemented outstanding collaborative initiatives enhancing the entire undergraduate experience. Award recipients will have demonstrated the effectiveness of the initiative in supporting student success, learning, and development at a variety of transition points and in responding to unique institutional needs.

Each award recipient will receive:

- Recognition at the 32nd National Conference on Students in Transition, including the presentation of a plaque during the conference, a half-page announcement in the conference program, and slide(s) highlighting award recipients in multimedia presentations during plenary sessions
- One complimentary registration to the 32nd National Conference on Students in Transition to include all conference sessions and preconference workshops (on a space-available basis).
- Presentation of a poster session during the conference featuring components of the award-winning initiative(s) and institution
- Recognition in a national higher education media outlet; in the National Resource Center's online newsletter (*Insights for College Transitions*); and on the Center's web page, listservs (i.e., SOPH List, SYE List, TYE, and GRAD List), and social media channels
- Distribution of press releases recognizing award recipients to national, regional, and institutional higher education media outlets

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More information regarding the award will be available at www.sc.edu/fye

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Adams, Heather	Auburn University at Montgomery
Agarwal, Arishna	University of Northern Colorado
Agnello, Armelinda	University of Liège
Alanson, Erin	University of Cincinnati
Alexander, Jillian	East Tennessee State University
Alexander, Liz	Emory University
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Anderson, Amber	Wichita State University
Andrews, Amanda	Northern Kentucky University
Angermeier, Lisa	Indiana University Indianapolis
Aramburo, Julieta	El Camino College
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Arias, Ney	Florida Gulf Coast University
Armélinda, Agnello	University of Liège
Ashman, Marinda	Utah Valley University
Asuncion, Dexter	Hawaii Pacific University
Atwal, Iqbal	California State University, Stanislaus
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Azizi, Mehri	Florida international University
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Bacigalupa Albaum, Antonia	Indiana University
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Ballet, Egypt	Tulane University
Barefoot, Betsy	Gardner Institute
Barnett, Joseph	Hawaii Pacific University
Bavetta, Jill	University of Utah
Bechara, Samuel	Colorado State University
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Bell, Mindy	West Kentucky Community and Technical College
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Boyken, Julie	University of South Carolina
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Brazier, Abby	Southern Utah University
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Brewster, Michael	West Virginia University
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Brock, Robyn	Florida State University
Brophy, Tom	Saint Mary's University
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Bruce, Herbert	Virginia Tech
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Bruner, Brett	Wichita State University
Bryant, Leah	DePaul University
Bryant, Taylor	University of West Georgia
Bunting, Bryce	Brigham Young University
Burcher, Sarah	University of Alabama
Burg, Steve	Shippensburg University
Burns, Samantha	University of Northern Colorado
Bush, Hannah	Tulane University
Campbell, Aaron	University of Texas at El Paso
Campbell, Julie	University of Nebraska, Kearney
Campbell, Rachel	Grand Valley State University
Campoverdi, Alejandra	Author, Hachette Book Group
Caplan, Stephanie	University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Cardenas, Justin	University of Texas at El Paso
Carmichael Brown, Jabari	VISIONS Inc.
Carrick Hedges, Denise	Cottey College
Carrier, Kirsten	Elon University
Carskadon, Tom	Mississippi State University
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Chu Burnette, Adrien	University of Wisconsin, Madison
Chun, Erica	Hawaii Pacific University
Clanton, Alice	Loyola University New Orleans
Clark, Jessica	North Carolina State University
Cleary, Sean	University of South Carolina
Clement, Michael	University of Guam
Cleveland, John Paul	New York University
Clossin, Emily	Indiana University, Indianapolis
Cole, James	Indiana University, National Survey of Student Engagement
Coleman, Tara	Kansas State University
Colletti, Michele	Greenville Technical College
Collins, Jennifer	Florida A&M University
Conary, Jennifer	DePaul University
Contreras, Sergio	University of Texas at El Paso
Copeland, Amanda	Calumet College of St. Joseph
Copeland, Daelynn	McLennan Community College
Copenhaver, Lisa	Hood College
Corbett, Meg	Boston College
Corbo, Vincent	Southern New Hampshire University
Corbridge, Tanner	Southern Utah University
Corn, Ashley	Texas A&M University
Coronado Castillo, Liz	St. Philip's College
Corwin, Zoe	University of Southern California
Courtemanche, Danielle	Fairfield University
Cox, Stephanie	Boise State University
Crandall, Sam	Phoenix College
Cristo, Jessica	Los Angeles Community College District
Cuseo, Joseph	Marymount California University
Daas, Karen	University of Texas at San Antonio
Dadsetan, Elika	VISIONS Inc.
Dahlgren, Paul	Georgia Southwestern State University
Dalton, Rachel	Virginia Tech
Darden, Amanda	Lander University
Das, Rajeeb	Texas A&M University
Davis, Alana R.	William & Mary
Davis, Caroline	San Antonio College
Davis, Carolyn	Praire View A&M University
Davis, Tony	Montgomery County Community College
Dawn, April	California State Polytechnic University, Pomona
Dayton, Rebekah	Brigham Young University
Deheck, Sarah	Concordia University, Wisconsin
DeJarnett, Rosemarie	Beacon College
Dela Cruz, Lisa	NODA-Association for Orientation, Transition, & Retention in Higher Education
Delaquito, Sonia	Pennsylvania State University, Berks
Denver, Leela	Arizona State University
Derr, Robert	Clark State College
Deschênes, Michelle	Université du Québec à Rimouski
Desmeules Thériault, Gabrielle	Université du Québec à Rimouski
Deutsch, Annika	University of Utah
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Doran, Christine	State University of New York at Potsdam
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Lo'amanu, Vanessa	Southern Utah University
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McLaughlin, Julie	Cincinnati State Technical and Community College
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Medina, Gianna Marie	Wake Forest University
Merb-Brown, Wendy	Ohio University
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Miller, Britta	University of Wisconsin, Stout
Miller De Rutté, Alyssia	Colorado State University
Mills, Jessica	Walters State Community College
Mitchell, Carlotta	Florida A&M University
Moise, Frantzley	Florida A&M University
Molnar, Kayla	University of Houston
Montalbano, Bryce	Tulane University
Moore, Christina	Texas State University
Moore, Maddie	North Carolina State University
Moran, Patricia	University of Texas at Austin
Morgado, Soray	Florida International University
Morgan, Amber	Greenville Technical College
Morran, Emily	Emory University
Morton, Katie	University of South Carolina
Moses-Mesubed, Bennie	Eastern Oregon University
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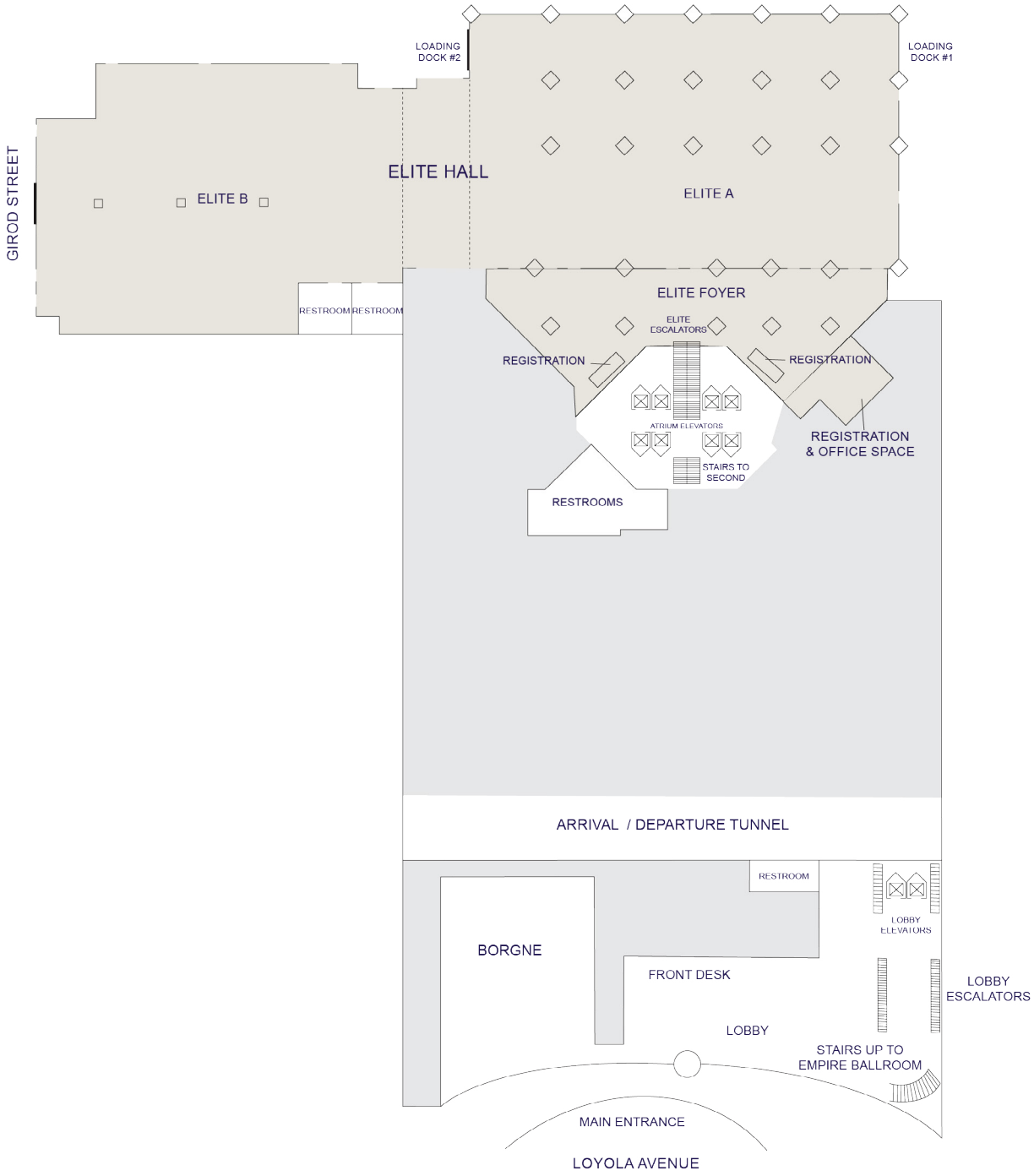

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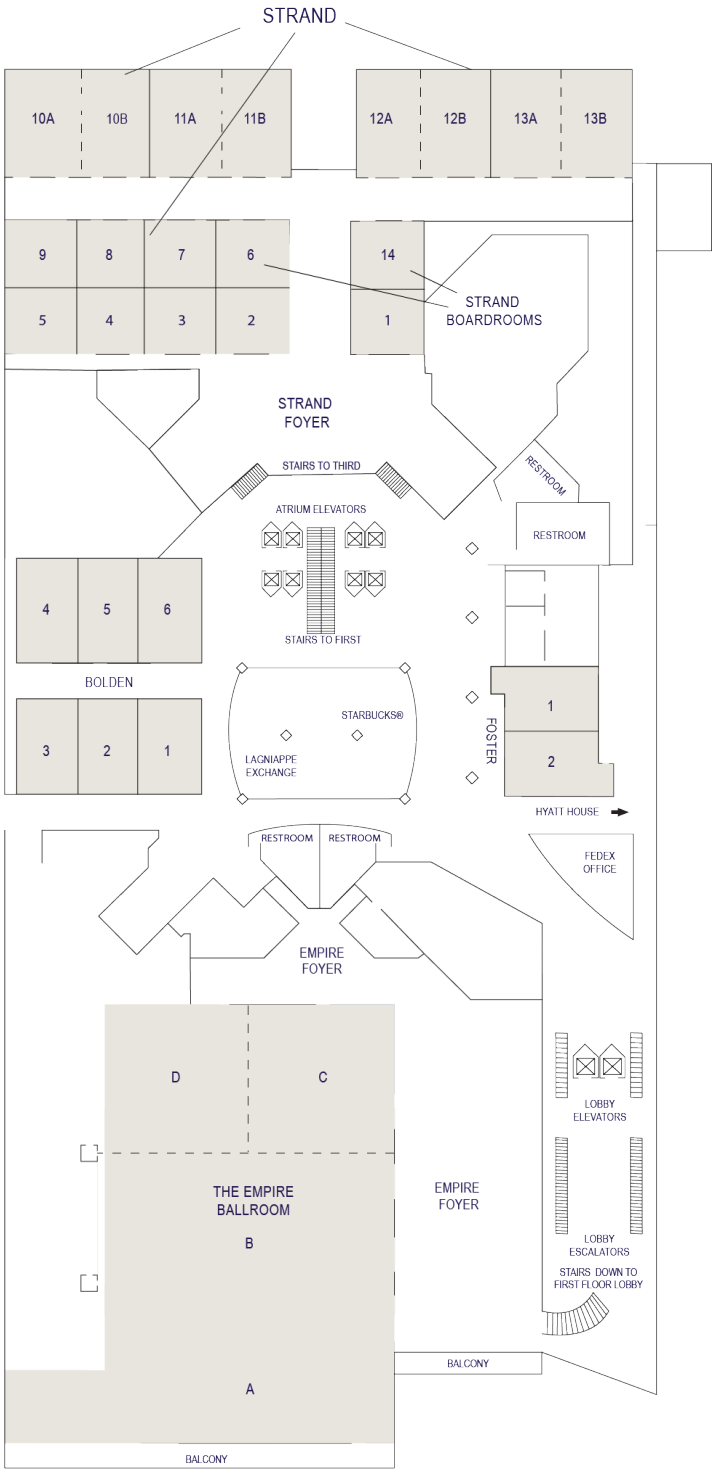

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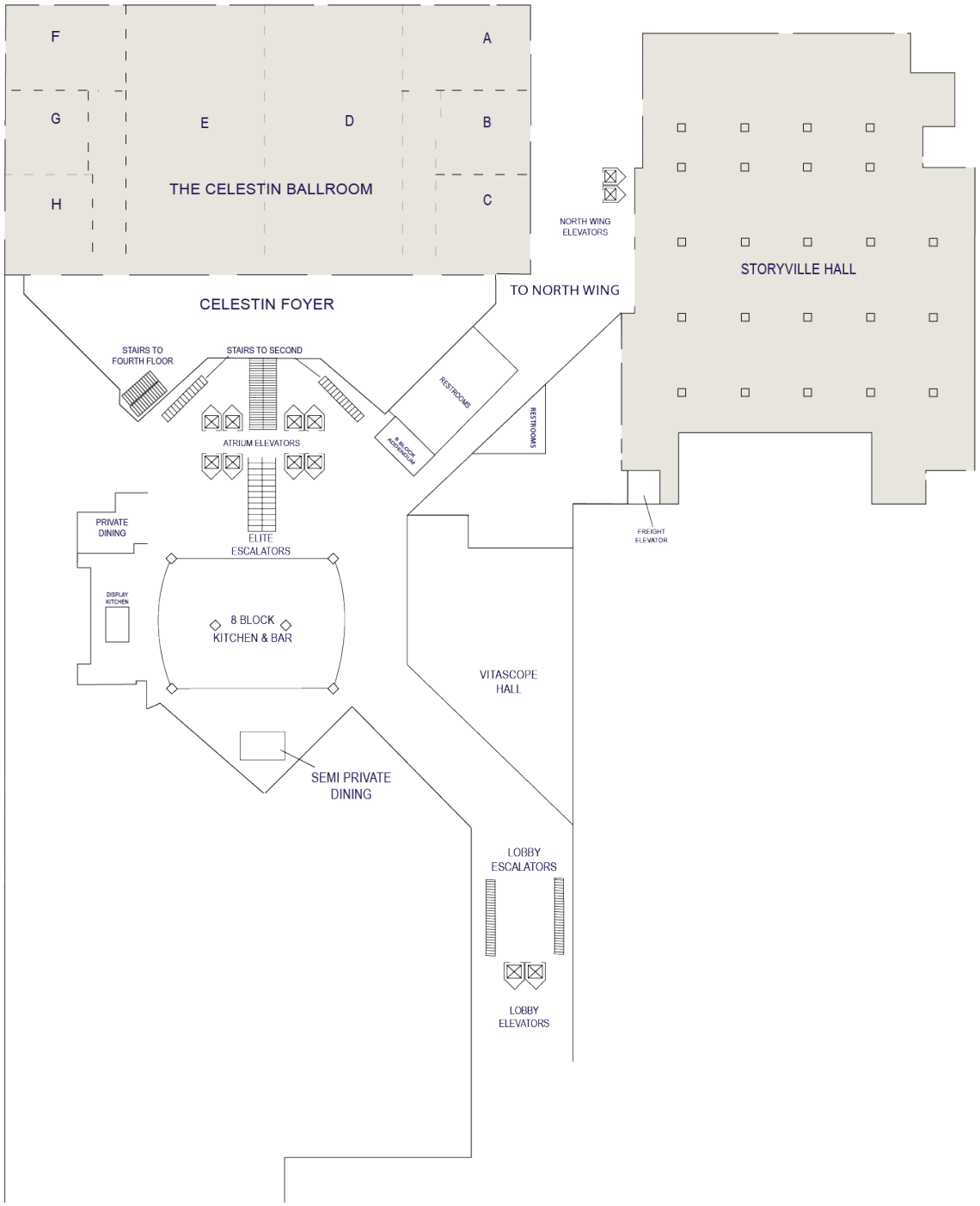

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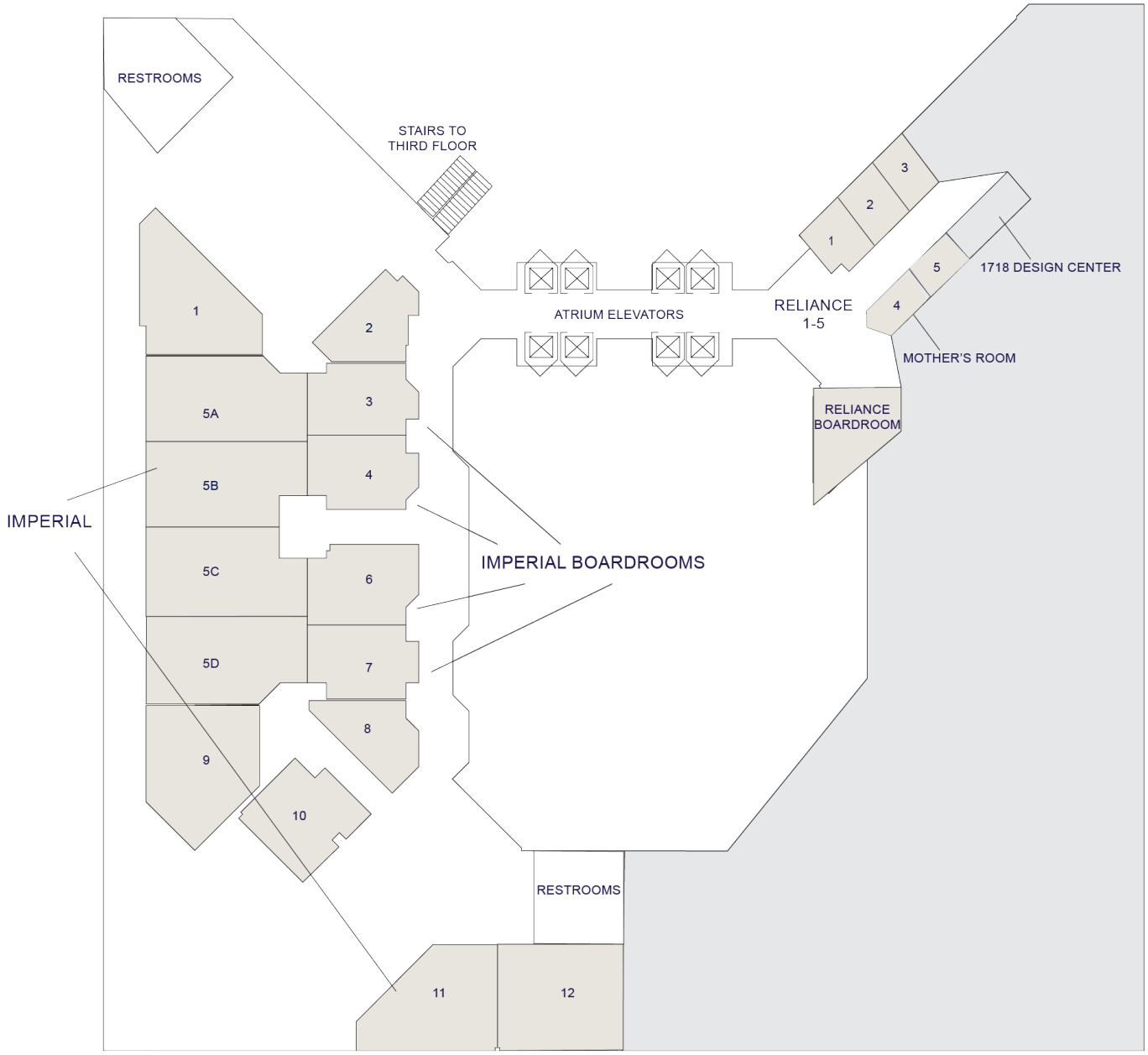
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