Department Name: <u>First Year Experience (FYE)</u>

Departmental Goals for 2013-2014

1. Collaborate with Academic Affairs to establish a First Year Task Force focused on developing and sustaining high-impact initiatives for first-year students.

2. Continue to update the NetConnect, CampusConnect, and QuickConnect presentations, and through them, disseminate first-year experience (FYE) materials relevant to the needs of new students.

3. Create a First Year Experience website.

4. Develop and implement the Bridge 2014 Program.

5. Collaborate with the departments reporting to the AVP for Student Planning and Support to support the retention and growth of students in academic probation.

Project Title: <u>2013-2014 Analyzing the Effectiveness of New Student Orientation Dates</u>

College Priority & Objective II – Improve student access and success

Methodology
This assessment project will seek to answer the question: does the date when you complete a new student orientation program influence new students' successful transition and success in college? In answering this question, FYE staff will review and cross-reference pre-existing data for all three types of orientations occurring in the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 academic years. A sample of students whose orientation completion dates range from very early to very late in the admission process will be used to determine enrollment, satisfaction, and persistence trends.

Plan/Timeline
FYE staff identified the data sources, and the sample of students that was mined for information by the beginning of the fall 2013 semester. The data collected on the different student samples was analyzed in the beginning of the spring 2014 semester and recommendations were drafted soon thereafter. Given the amount of data found in our initial review of students, the project's scope was narrowed to only analyze data for QuickConnect Programs.

Results/Findings
COGNOS and the Orientation Database powered by SharePoint proved useless in providing us with a sample of students to mine. The first program did not record the date in which students completed a new student orientation program, and the latter did not have sufficient memory to keep students records beyond 500 students.

In light of this problem, the FYE team used manual records of attendance dating back four semesters (Spring 2012, Fall 2012, Spring 2013, Fall 2013) to collect a sample of students to analyze. A total of

6,084 students were identified as having completed an orientation during this timeframe. Once students were identified, student groups were created using registration dates as parameters. For each given semester, three distinct groups were created: 1) students who completed an orientation prior to the new student registration date (with orientation); 2) students who completed an orientation after the new student registration date had passed; and 3) students who completed an orientation four weeks prior to the start of the semester.

The students in the second and third groups were the largest of the three groups. With the third group being the largest of the three (n=2,919 or 48%), followed by the second group (n=2,321 or 38%), and finally, the first group (n=844 or 14%). We used an EXCEL formula to randomly select 300 students from each list. In order for a student to be selected, the only condition they had to meet was to have a Student Number at the time they completed an orientation. Once students were selected two reports were run in COGNOS. First a report to determine if students registered for classes after completing an Orientation. Of those that did register for classes, the second report determined their current status in the college.

Overall, students who completed orientation prior to their registration date did not enroll in classes in the same quantity as students in the other two groups. Only 39 students or 13% of students in this first group registered for classes. Students who completed an orientation during their registration dates or prior to the beginning of the semester were more likely to enroll in classes with 74% (n=222) and 76% (n=228) enrolling in classes. We tried pulling data on the current status of those who enrolled into classes through COGNOS, but we ran into several challenges in reporting on this trend. Primarily, no student data whatsoever was being pulled on each of the three groups.

Actions Taken (Use of Results/Improvements)
The undertaking of this project led to several improvements in the way we handle student data and administer new student orientations. A new database was created from which we could easily draw reports and statistics. Similarly, the process revealed confusion as to when a student should complete an orientation, with various students being able to complete an orientation for spring semesters as early as July, and for fall semesters as early as January. Overall, the data revealed that students who completed an orientation closer to the start of the semester, or after the start of their registration period were more likely to register for classes than those who did it prior to their registration date.

Given these initial findings, our QuickConnect reservations now ask students to declare the semester in which they intent to take classes, once a student selects their semester, a list of orientation dates populate. These dates are scheduled throughout a student's registration period for the semester they intent to matriculate. A similar project with NetConnect data is being planned for the future.

Project Title: 2013-2014 Imbed Critical Thinking Elements in Advising Session for Campus Connect (Spring Semester)

College Priority & Objective II.D – Empower students to be more intentional in planning and achieving academic and career goals
Student Services Learning Outcome 1.A – Think reflectively and critically
Student Services Learning Outcome 3.F – Engage in the college experience to achieve personal and academic success; use college resources, processes and systems; develop goal setting, decision making and planning skills, and adapt to change

Methodology

In alignment with institutional wide assessment goals, the FYE office will create a pilot workshop designed to develop students' critical thinking skills. This session will be part of the spring semester CampusConnect orientation. The focus of this workshop will be on academic and degree planning and it will ask students to construct and evaluate their academic plans. Peer reviewing techniques will be used during the session and a rubric will be created and used to collect data and assess critical thinking skills.

Plan/Timeline

Planning for the Spring 2014 CampusConnect occurred early in the fall 2013 semester. It was decided that we would pilot this project in the general education advising sessions of the Spring CampusConnect programs. The accompanying rubric was developed by the beginning of November 2013. Data collection happened during the CampusConnect programs and the data analysis ensued thereafter.

Results/Findings

For two consecutive sessions, students in the General Advising session received a brief presentation on degree planning and completion requirements. Students were then asked to use the knowledge they learned to create an academic plan for two or three semesters. In either pairs or by themselves students used some of the given prompts to discuss their plans. Finally, students used the given rubric to evaluate their plans. The rubrics asked students to evaluate their plan using five different dimensions: a) Degree Prerequisites; b) Degree Requirements; c) Course Flexibility and Availability; d) Course Load; and e) Work School and Life Balance. These dimensions were organized within three different criteria: a) "My plan still needs more work;" b) "My plan will benefit from revising;" and c) "I have a plan to graduate." A copy of the rubric can be found below. At the end of the programs, rubrics were collected and analyzed for trends.

A total of 24 rubrics were collected. Of all the rubrics collected 19 (or 79%) evaluated their plan as needing more work, or benefitting from revising. A total of 7 people rated all dimensions of their plans as "needing more work" and a total of 5 people rated all dimensions of their plans as "I have a plan to graduate." Dimensions that were consistently rated low included, "Degree Prerequisites" and Degree Requirements."

Actions Taken (Use of Results/Improvements)

The trends gathered from this project helped our office understand challenging areas for students to think through as they begin the process of construction degree completion plans. The use of peer reviewing and prompts seemed to be an effective method for teaching degree planning. Many students visually struggled with the assignment as it challenged students to use the tools they were given to plan their academic goals. The areas highlighted in the results will help the FYE office plan new programming and/or update existing programming to support students through the challenges of creating a degree plan.

Other

CampusConnect Handout and Rubric:

QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU EVALUATE YOUR COURSE PLAN

Degree Prerequisites:

- Am I taking the necessary prerequisites (e.g., Math and Reading/Writing classes) for my degree?

- Will the courses I'm taking help me complete more challenging courses in the future?

- Am I taking my prerequisite courses towards the beginning of my college career and not the end?

Degree Requirements:

- Am I taking classes that will fulfill the various requirements of my degree (or letter of completion)? [Requirements are outlined in the catalog]

Course Flexibility and Availability:

- Do I have a list of classes I can use as substitutes in the event the courses I want are full for any given semester?

- Are the classes I listed in my course plan offered in the semester I plan on taking them?

Course Load:

- By what date do I want to graduate/transfer from SLCC?

- Am I taking the right amount of classes each semester to graduate/transfer from this college in the timeframe I desire?

- Knowing I have to spend two hours studying for every one-credit-hour I take, do I have enough time in my day to commit to my classes?

Work, School, and Life Balance:

- With the schedule that I have every semester, will I be able to balance my school commitments alongside my personal, and work commitments?

EVALUATING YOUR COURSE PLAN

	My plan still needs more work	**My plan will benefit from revising**	**I have a plan to graduate!**	**Comments**
Degree Prerequisites	I don't know what a prerequisite is, or what prerequisites I need for my degree.	I know some of the prerequisites I need for my degree but not all of them. I need some help knowing what semester I would be taking my prerequisites.	I know all the prerequisites I need for my degree and I have appropriately scheduled them in my course plan.	

Degree Requirements	I don't know what classes I need to take to obtain my degree.	I have reviewed the catalog page for my degree, but I need help understanding what my general and program requirements are. I don't know how to schedule my courses beyond the first semester.	I have reviewed the catalog page for my degree, and know what my general and/or program requirements are. I have appropriately scheduled them throughout my course plan.	
Course Flexibility and Availability	If the classes I choose were full, or do not work with my schedule, I wouldn't know what else to take this or any other semester.	I have a list of suitable classes I can use if the classes I want are full or do not work with my schedule, BUT I don't know what semester my courses are offered.	I have a list of suitable classes I can use if the classes I want are full or do not work with my schedule AND I have listed all the classes in my course plan in the semester they are offered	
Course Load	I don't know what courses to take my first semester, much less my second or third semesters in college. I don't know if I'm taking too many or too little courses each semester.	I know what courses I need to take and when to take them in order to graduate by my desired date, BUT I am afraid the load each semester will be too much (or too little).	I know what courses I need to take and when to take them in order to graduate by my desired date. The course load each semester is suitable for me.	
Work, School, and Life Balance	My schedule will interfere with my personal and/or work commitments.	I think I might struggle balancing my personal and/or work commitments with my course schedule.	The schedule I have each semester will allow me to effectively balance my personal and/or work commitments.	

If your course plan needs more work, or if your plan needs revising, and you would like a First Year Experience Advisor to help you, please write your S number and we will contact you:

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