

First Year Experience Program Assessment

Following the 2007–2008 academic year, when the university purchased and underwent the Foundations of Excellence© process, the First Year Experience program has been overseen jointly by the Interdisciplinary Studies Department and some person appointed by the Provost's Office. Currently that person is designated the Faculty Fellow for the First Year Experience. During this period, the university's First Year Seminar course has had one core set of student learning outcomes but has been offered in three formats, each of which may add its own unique learning outcomes. The formats are (1) the passion course, which has a special topic chosen by its instructor, (2) the learning community, which is combined with two other courses around a common theme, and (3) the generic course, which may be based on a special topic or have a standard introduction-to-college design.

Learning outcomes

All First Year Seminar courses regardless of format have these six common student learning outcomes: (1) identify and apply the methods and concepts of the humanities and the social sciences as they relate to the course topic, (2) explain how and why a liberal arts education requires critical thinking and effective oral and written communication skills, (3) employ interdisciplinary scholarship and research methodologies, (4) collaborate in a team to accomplish a common goal, (5) locate and use undergraduate resources necessary for academic success, and (6) participate in academic advising, planning and mentoring. The department has on occasion surveyed select sections of First Year Seminar courses for students' attitudes, experiences, intentions, and familiarity with aspects of college life and the university campus. The department has done sampling around the issues of retention and satisfaction.