

Catalog Description

Freshman Experience Program Mission

The Freshman Experience Program supports student success through exciting, interest-based course clusters. The program provides students with a common first-year experience, a cohort of peers with similar interests, supportive faculty trained in best teaching practices, an upperclassman dedicated to helping ease the transition to college, connections to university services, and a course focused on interdisciplinary elements of success. The goal is to support the development of academic strategies and social integration skills required for a successful college experience.

Learning Communities are the essential element of the Freshman Experience Program. A learning community (LC) is a group of no more than 30 students who enroll in classes together to explore a common interest. The instructors work together to address the community theme from different perspectives and create a collaborative learning environment, helping students make connections and learn on a deeper level. The Freshman Forum class is the LC cornerstone. This course focuses on the interdisciplinary elements of success, and students apply the principles learned in this course to the content of their other LC courses. All first-time freshmen will choose a learning community that fits their interests and develop important relationships with their instructors, their peers, and upperclassmen serving as mentors.

Freshman Forum (1) focuses on interdisciplinary elements of success. While forming their own definition of success, students explore research in the psychology of learning, cognition, memory, motivation, and stress, while also exploring the history and culture of higher education. Students use the models, along with self-assessments, a variety of other resources, and reflective writing to create academic and life plans. Students will have the opportunity to apply the principles learned in this course to the content of their other courses, and they are ultimately expected to integrate and apply these topics across their own academic programs and become effective and efficient learners.