

Transition Pathways



An Instructor Resource
for
FYE Transition Courses

2016-17

First Year Experience
Western Carolina University
fye.wcu.edu



Transition Pathways

Transition Pathways: An instructor resource for FYE transition courses

2016-2017 --- Edition

Edited by:

Glenda Hensley: Director, First Year Experience

A resource mined from the creativity, expertise, and generosity of:

Every instructor of a first-year transition course

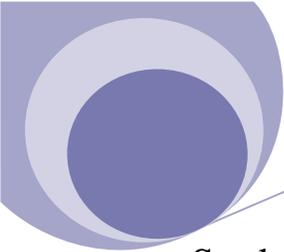
Every Director, Associate, or Assistant involved with WCU's Resource Offices and Departments

Every student with whom we have the honor to travel along the educational journey

With special recognition to Laura Cruz and Carol Burton

For the concept and permission to adapt content from the original *First-year Seminar Faculty Resource Guide*: a guide from which this guide was originally adapted and has since evolved.





Transition Pathways

Student Success: Your work matters.....

I am pleased to welcome you to the First Year Experience 2015-16 cohort! FYE Transition Pathways are integral to what WCU does to foster a successful transition to college life and learning and your role as an instructor of the FYE course is the key to that success!

What will your involvement in a first year transition course entail?

- You will engage new students in a meaningful dialogue about what it means to be in college and what it takes to succeed.
- You will have an opportunity to share your passion for learning and for the academy.
- You will enjoy many opportunities to collaborate with colleagues all across academic affairs, student affairs, and residential living.
- You will benefit from professional development opportunities designed to meet your needs as a first-year instructor and as a leader of first-year courses and programs.

You will discover the impact you make on our new students and their capacity for success -- and just how much your work matters!

The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) identified ten * [High Impact Practices](#) that contribute to successful student outcomes. One of those is a strong First Year Experience that delivers transitional knowledge and skills embedded in a dynamic learning experience – or FYE course. At WCU our students may choose from four types of FYE course, and we call them Transition Pathways. * <http://www.aacu.org/leap/hip.cfm>

FYE serves as a home-base for first-year students and aims to provide clarity and consistent messaging so that new students will be well-informed about all of their college choices. Operating from a holistic stance, we hope to impart to our students the integral nature of life and learning at WCU. My role is to serve our students and to serve you. I am eager to collaborate with you in an environment that promotes partnerships among disciplines and units across our campus, as we empower the creative force that emerges from teaching and learning together.

The primary intent of this guide is to provide easy access to the resources that may facilitate your process as you design, teach, and assess your transition course. I hope you will find this guide and its web-links useful (all are digitally linked for your convenience). Please let me know if you need additional resources or assistance.

My best to you for an outstanding year ahead!

Glenda Hensley, Director of First Year Experience

<http://fye.wcu.edu>

The Office of First Year Experience

Western Carolina University



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If you wish to have any resources in this guide as word documents, please ask!



The FYE Transition Course

1. What is a FYE transition course?

- FYE Transition courses are designed to introduce students to the academic, procedural, and social elements of their new community in order to maximize opportunities for a successful transition to college.
- Some courses are thematic-based and some are connected to residential components to form a living-learning community. Transition courses are not discipline specific, but may integrate elements of degree paths such as Leadership, within their overall design.
- WCU offers four types of transition courses. Please see [Chapter 4](#) for details about each.
- Transition courses are smaller than most classes, with the enrollment capped at 22-25.
- The use of a common text or theme provides students with an opportunity to see instructors modeling intellectual learning and collaborative practice. Not all courses use the same text. Some instructors also use a supplemental text. Course adoptions include:
 - USI 130 and COUN 140: *Your College Experience* by Gardner and Barefoot
 - LEAD LLCs: *Peak Performance* by Ferrett.
- Transition courses are 1-hour credit courses, except for LEAD LLCs, which are 2-hour credit courses to allow the additional focus on leadership principles and thematic topics. LEAD Transition courses also count for the Leadership minor – they do NOT count as a first-year seminar.

2. What is the difference between a first-year seminar (FYS) and a transition course?

Transition Course	First-year Seminar
<i>Taught by</i> qualified faculty and professional staff who have demonstrated their commitment to student success.	<i>Taught by</i> faculty from a variety of disciplines; they are core courses in the liberal studies program.
<i>The primary goal</i> is to introduce students to the academic, procedural, and social elements of their new community as aligned with the FYE learning outcomes.	<i>The primary goal</i> is to introduce students to intellectual life at the university level, focused on the development of academic rigor and intellectual dispositions.
A strongly encouraged elective promoted during Orientation to all new students.	A requirement for completion of the Liberal Studies Program.
<i>Grading</i> follows the standard A,B,C,D,F +/-	<i>Grading</i> is A, B, C, I, W, or U.
<i>Offered</i> primarily in the fall semester.	<i>Offered:</i> Students enroll in the fall or spring of their first year, alternately with English 101.

3. What are the University guidelines for a transition course?

- Although Transition courses vary in focus and instructional approach, all are guided by the *FYE Goals and Outcomes* as the basic course framework. A list of *Core Elements* provides for extended orientation themes from which courses may build upon to integrate thematic goals. Please see [Chapter 5](#) for more detailed information.
- Transition course credits may vary between 1-2 hours.
- Students may enroll in *only one* transition course, regardless of type. Example: students *may not* take both a USI and LEAD transition course, even if during different semesters.
- Transition courses are graded courses with a strongly enforced attendance policy.
- Transition courses meet for a final exam during finals week, the same as all courses. Instructors have used a variety of strategies to approach a final evaluation of the term.
- Administrative oversight and approval for all transition courses is maintained by the FYE office in Academic Affairs, with designated coordinators for each of the four course sets.

4. What is the grading schema for a transition course?

- Grading for all first year transitions courses follows the standard +/- scale: A, B, C, D, F plus I (incomplete) or W (withdrawal).

5. When are first-year transition courses offered?

- The first-year transition course may be taken in the summer or fall of the students' first year. Many are taught in common time blocks to facilitate greater opportunities for collaborative and integrative work.

6. How do students select their first-year transition courses?

- Incoming students select from a list of sections described in CatWalk, our online orientation. Advisors register students for the selection that matches their academic needs and area of interest as they build course schedules.
- The FYE Web-site offers rich descriptions and links to each of the Transition Pathways along with information about learning communities, to which some transition courses are attached.

7. Who takes a transition course?

- All first-year students are strongly encouraged to enroll in a transition experience during their Advising and Orientation session. We register approximately 75% of the freshman class each year in one of these courses.

8. What kind of students can I expect?

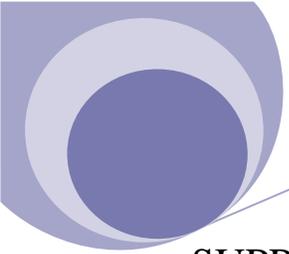
- Traditional first-year students today are *Digital Natives* referred to by a variety of generational identities including: *Millennial* or *Generation Y* and *Generation iY* or *Generation Z* – the last two referring to those born in 2004 and beyond. Confident and optimistic, they tend to be technologically savvy, socially oriented, and interested in community service. They have also been defined with dualistic characteristics that present challenges *and* opportunities in the educational setting.
- **First-generation** college students, (students who are the first in the family to attend college) comprise about 32% of the incoming class. For more information you may reference firstgen.wcu.edu.
- **Early College Student** enrollment continues to increase. Early college / high-school students, once enrolled, are eligible to participate in first-year programs and are classified (by federal, state and WCU regulations) as first-year students. Developmentally, these students are different from a traditional transfer student and a transition course is especially important for their success, regardless of credits transferred.

9. What is expected of me as a transition course instructor?

- Address the goals and learning outcomes for FYE and include learning outcomes defined as Transition Core Elements (CE). You may see more about these in [Chapter 4](#).
- Participate in professional development opportunities designated.
- Submit a completed syllabus and calendar to the FYE director in advance of the term.
- Participate in the FYE course pre-post student survey as a class activity.
- Include these common learning experiences:
 - Bookmark Success: *Discover campus resources and networks*
 - FOCUS: *First-year Opportunities for Community & University Service*
 - One Book 2015: *The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates*
 - Difference and Diversity
 - Financial Literacy: *Financial Aid Office*
 - Finish in Four: *Advising Center*
- Use your own creative and innovative approach to design course strategy and teaching techniques – your individuality will be the spark that makes this work!
- Be an advocate for our first-year students!

10. Why teach a first-year transition course and why is it important?

- Your course addresses the University mission for “*access and success.*”
- Your course will impart habits and skills that foster academic success and persistence.
- Your course will introduce the social and co-curricular connections that enrich learning.
- Your course will help students adjust to a college environment and resources available.
- You will impact a life and as such, the very future of the global community.



SUPPORT NETWORKS & COLLEAGUES

Chapter 2

FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE

Provides support and programming for students in transition.

- *Transition Pathways Blackboard Site* – open access site for instructors
- **FYE News Pages** - [keep up with FYE here!](#)

137 Killian Annex (828) 227-3017 <http://fye.wcu.edu>

ADVISING CENTER

Provides academic advising to all undeclared undergraduate students at WCU.

214 Killian Annex (828) 227-7753 <http://advising.wcu.edu>

CAREER SERVICES

Assists students to identify internships, choose a major; build a résumé.

Killian Annex 828-227-7133 <http://careers.wcu.edu>

CENTER FOR SERVICE LEARNING

Connects students, faculty, and staff with service opportunities in the region and supports the University's commitment to civic engagement.

273 Belk Building 828-227-7184 <http://servicelearning.wcu.edu>

COULTER FACULTY COMMONS

The Myron L. Coulter Faculty Commons for Excellence in Teaching and Learning offers services to faculty and graduate teaching assistants, both on campus and at a distance.

Hunter Library 828-227-7196 <http://cfc.wcu.edu>

DISABILITY SERVICES:

Collaborates with students, faculty, staff, and community members to determine/employ appropriate methods to create equal access for people with medical diagnoses.

144 Killian Annex (828) 227-3886 <http://disability.wcu.edu>

INTERCULTURAL AFFAIRS

3rd Floor of A.K. Hinds UC 828-227-2697

ONE STOP

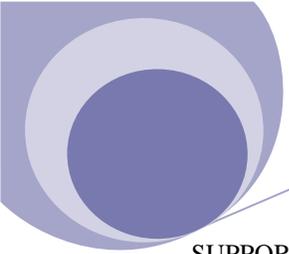
A centrally-located service center that makes it quick and convenient for students and parents to conduct university-related business involving financial aid, Cat Card activity, Registrar, cashiering, and general student services.

132 Killian Annex (828) 227-7170 <http://onestop.wcu.edu>

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Provides services, resources, and academic support to all program participants.

138 Killian Annex (828) 227-7127 <http://sss.wcu.edu>



MATHEMATICS TUTORING CENTER

Provides tutoring support in mathematics and other classes.

455 Stillwell Building

(828) 227-3830

<http://mathlab.wcu.edu>

MILITARY STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

138 Cordelia Camp Building

828-227-7397

<http://military@wcu.edu>

OFFICE OF LEADERSHIP AND STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

Home to Greek Life and Registered Student Organizations, the Freshman Leadership Institute and the Leadership Minor.

3rd Floor of A.K. Hinds UC

828-227-7450

TECHNOLOGY COMMONS

Provides technical and IT support to students, including workshops and tutorials on how to use a variety of technology-based programs to enhance academic goals.

Hunter Library, ground floor

828-227-2497

WRITING AND LEARNING COMMONS

Provides tutoring, academic skills consultations, workshops, and online learning resources.

207 Belk

(828) 227-2274

<http://walc.wcu.edu>

WESTERN CAROLINA PEAKS

Every first-year student living on campus at WCU will be part of a community called Western Carolina PEAKS. Residential Living welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with faculty and staff to integrate learning and living.

1 West Scott Hall

828-227-7303

<http://westerncarolinapeaks.wcu.edu>

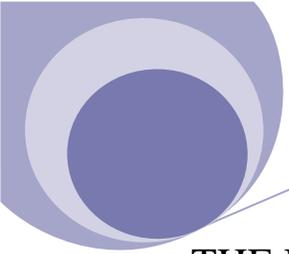
ACADEMIC INITIATIVES In Residential Living

Collaborates closely with FYE and the Academic Success Centers to reinforce positive academic habits, provide guidance, and empower holistic approaches to living and learning using a case-management approach to student success.

RED ZONE

Refers to the period of time early in the first and second year at college during which students are more at-risk for unwanted sexual experiences on college campuses. To combat this, throughout this period of time, departments across Western Carolina University sponsor programs to promote healthy relationships, and convey the message that WCU does not tolerate abuse in our campus community. The campaign encourages and empowers students, faculty and staff to develop an open dialogue on the dangers of sexual violence and to speak up when they see violent behavior happening.

Learn more at <http://redzone.wcu.edu>



What is FYE?

Mission The Office of First Year Experiences aims to foster opportunities that will empower students to not only succeed with their transition to college life, but to also discover a passion for learning as they become the co-creators of their collegiate experience. We will collaborate with the WCU community and with the regional community to enhance our students’ pride of place, civic responsibility, and sense of connectivity as they discover the intersections along their educational pathway. We aim to facilitate conversations and partnerships among faculty, staff, and students that engage productive conversations and challenge us to action with intentionality and purpose.

Goals

- Foster opportunities and environments for a successful and holistic college experience for our students.
- Facilitate collaboration and partnerships among faculty and staff that is inclusive of diverse perspectives.
- Focus students towards intentionality – in the classroom and beyond.
- Facilitate integrated and engaged initiatives aimed to enhance students’ ability to synthesize learning experiences.

FYE Cabinet

Vision: The First Year Cabinet aspires to assist first-year students in their transition into college life by encouraging their involvement, both on-campus and off-campus, in activities and experiences that will enrich personal growth and development and be sustained throughout a student's academic career. Learn more about the [FYE Cabinet](#) here.

Mission: Drawing from the experience and expertise of representatives from both Academic and Student Affairs and our FYE Student Council, the First Year Cabinet supports the mission of the Office of First Year Experiences by providing a framework of university collaborations for learning inside and outside of the classroom.

FYE Advocates--- an award nominated by students

"An advocate is someone who you know has your best interest in mind – someone who cares deeply about your success in and out of the classroom – someone you can count on to give you sound advice – someone you know will be in your corner."

2014-2015 FYE Advocate Awards to:

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| ▪ David Starnes | School of Music | Faculty Award |
| ▪ Tacquice Davis | Student Involvement & Leadership | Staff Award |
| ▪ Samantha Pranger | Department of Human Services | GA Award |

FYE Instructor Qualifications & Characteristics

Whether you have lots of experience in teaching FYE courses or you are new to the ranks, you are about to enter an exciting phase in FY programs at WCU. Teaching our FY students is a rewarding experience, filled with all the challenges and opportunities inherent in the transition process.

Of course, transitions are tough for anyone; new environments, new people, new expectations, new experiences. Transitions are also exciting, filled with opportunity and promise. It is our job, as FY Educators, to offer guidance, support, and instruction. It is our job to know the program goals and learning objectives, and to understand what helps students adjust and persist with college. It is our job to be there for our students. At the end of the day, the job isn't all that different – students need to trust in our expertise and to know they are safe, cared for, and accepted. These characteristics are the reasons why you are special and why our students are fortunate that you have chosen to be a teacher and guide this year!

FYE Course Instructor Qualifications & Characteristics

Following are the qualifications and characteristics that provide a foundation upon which to build the Transition course curriculum, a professional development series, and by which to empower and evaluate successful teaching and learning outcomes in your FYE course.

(Adapted from the writings of Joe Cuseo, Professor Emeritus from Marymount College; FYE author and professional development scholar)

- *Student-centered* educational philosophy
- Demonstrated desire to achieve excellence in teaching *first-year* students and courses
- Commitment to professional development opportunities for teaching a *transition course* and/or *first-year experience* initiatives
- Use of *engaging pedagogy* that *involves* students in the learning process
- Capable of relating to and developing classroom *rapport* with students
- Genuine interest in *advising and mentoring* new students.
- Evidence of commitment to *out-of-class contact* with students
- Commitment to *general education*, the *liberal arts*, and development of the student as a *whole person*.
- Willingness to work with faculty and staff across *different academic disciplines* and *student-support services*
- Appreciation of the educational role of *student development* professionals and *the co-curriculum*.

FYE TRANSITION PATHWAYS: FALL 2015

Chapter 5

Transition Pathways are designed to help students make a seamless and holistic transition to their new community at WCU. Students are different with different needs and interests and that is why we have choices. Each Pathway is comprised of different components and students select the best fit for their interests and educational goals. The FYE goals and Core Element content are central to all transition course types.

LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Learning Communities foster integrated learning environments that have the potential to provide a significant impact on learning outcomes and establish a strong support network. A Learning Community is a set of linked courses that place students with similar interests together in two or three courses, typically one or two liberal studies courses paired with USI 130.

LIVING-LEARNING COMMUNITIES (LLCs)

In a Living-Learning Community (LLC), students are organized into living-learning cohorts with a particular theme, thus the classroom and the living room reinforce and promote integrated learning. These communities connect residential life with one course or even a full academic cohort.

FYE COLLEGE TRANSITIONS

In this one-hour course, students will learn about campus resources, procedures and policies, as they learn to negotiate college life. Students have opportunities to integrate classroom learning with extra-curricular activities and residence hall programming.

FYE SUMMER

Summer Learning Communities (SLC) invite students to launch their first-year experience with a summer admission option that includes 7 credit/hours of study along with special programming based on the theme of the learning community in which they enroll. The credits include two liberal studies courses plus USI 130. In this five-week program, students are co-located and provided an extensive support network as they transition to college life.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS PROGRAM

The Academic Success Program (ASP) provides an opportunity for students who meet the criteria for conditional admission to WCU to begin their college experience early and to prepare them for success in college and beyond. This program is designed to provide a full year of support to facilitate a successful first-year experience and to help students develop skills to excel in their college career. It helps motivate students to set higher goals in school and in life and helps hold students accountable for demonstrating attitudes and behaviors that coincide with reaching their goals.

Finding Purpose

Transition courses are designed to introduce students to the academic, procedural, and social elements of their new community and to maximize their opportunities for a successful transition to college. As the instructor, you are their mentor, teacher, coach, and home-base. Experienced instructors suggest that when you design the course you keep in mind these multiple roles and plan time to work on skill-building and confidence activities. Be explicit about what you are doing and why; maintain flexibility; practice patience.

First-year students who understand the purpose of this course and see its relationship to their education are more motivated to participate at a high level in your class. Further, *when students engage fully in your course, the positive outcomes transfer to other classes, leading to persistence, student satisfaction, and retention.*

Purpose and Objectives

Transitions Pathways courses aim to help students

1. connect with other students—to form peer-support networks and learning communities;
2. connect with the college—to promote (a) appreciation of the meaning and relevance of the college *curriculum* (liberal arts & sciences), (b) involvement in the *co-curriculum* (out-of-class experiential learning), and (c) use of *campus support services* (academic-support and student-development services); and
3. connect with the present college experience and with future goals and plans—to help students relate their current college experience with upcoming decisions about a college *major*, future *career* path, and life beyond college.

First-year Learning Goals and Outcomes

Discover College

Students will adapt successfully to new environments and responsibilities, and will discover and utilize the resources available to them which include academic gateways, social networks, and co-curricular and personal development opportunities.

- Outcome 1: Students will identify the purpose and function of the campus resources that serve as tools for success (i.e., the Core Elements).
- Outcome 2: Students will engage with the campus community.

Be Involved

[Practice civic engagement]

Students will identify their roles and responsibilities as engaged citizens by considering the public policies that affect their choices and actions; by recognizing commonalities and interdependence of diverse views/ values; and by acting responsibly to positively affect public policy.

- Outcome 1: Students will practice the Community Creed.

Connect the Dots

[Integrate information from a variety of contexts]

Students will make connections between personal interest and abilities, general education, programs of study, general electives, experiential learning opportunities, and other co-curricular activities; and relate the implications/value of these connections to “real world” scenarios.

- **Outcome:** Students will identify connections between personal experiences and closely related academic knowledge (i.e., facts, ideas, concepts, experiences).
- **Outcome 2:** Students will articulate their own strengths and challenges as learners in dealing with a specific task, performance, event, etc.

Think First

[Solving complex problems]

Students will identify the dimensions of complex issues or problems; analyze and evaluate multiple sources of information/data; apply knowledge and decision-making processes to new questions or issues; and reflect on the implications of their solution/decision.

- **Outcome 1:** Students will select from available information and resources to solve issues in their collegiate lives and campus communities.
- **Outcome 2:** Students will construct a plan to achieve an intended solution.

Exchange Ideas.

[Communicate effectively and responsibly]

Students will convey complex information in a variety of formats and contexts; identify intended audience and communicate appropriately and respectfully.

- **Outcome 1:** Students will communicate as appropriate to the context and audience in order to articulate needs or share information.

Calibrate Your Compass

[Clarify and act on purpose and values]

Students will examine the values that influence their own decision-making processes; take responsibility for their own learning and development in a manner consistent with academic integrity and their own goals and aspirations; intentionally use knowledge gained from learning experiences to make informed judgments about their future plans; and bring those plans into action.

- **Outcome 1:** Students will choose learning experiences consistent with their own values and goals.
- **Outcome 2:** Students will prioritize values that influence decision making.

Transition Course Objectives & Content

Course Objectives:

FYE Transition courses seek to help students become oriented to life at the University.

In particular, students will:

- Become familiar with academic expectations, policies, programs and support resources;
- Cope successfully with the stresses that often accompany major life transitions;
- Clarify values and take responsibility for academic, personal, and career development;
- Develop empathy, respect, and appreciation for others who are different in terms of the ways our society defines human and group differences, including race, ethnicity, religious backgrounds, linguistic differences, socioeconomic levels, age, geography, sexual orientation, and national origins;
- Integrate knowledge and skills from academic and co-curricular experiences to become intentional participants in their own learning.

Course Content:

These core elements have been identified as critical to student success. Do not think of them as goals or outcomes, but as course content – those things students need to know and understand to succeed in college. The teaching and learning experience will be more rich and robust if you use the FYE goals as a course design guide and the core elements as the “text outline.” A foundation in the core elements will provide your students with firm footing on the pathway ahead.

The Core Elements – Course content and knowledge	
A. Academic Navigation	B. Academic Resources
Academic components/Policies	Academic Success Centers
Advising	Career counseling
Grading & GPA calculation	Information literacy
Liberal Studies – understanding value	Service Learning
Registration	Study Skills
C. Communication Tools	D. Personal Navigation
Blackboard & Catamount Email	Responsible living & wellness
Communication Skills	Sense of Place
E. Social Navigation	F. All together now
Campus activities	Engagement
Diversity & Difference	Status checks
Leadership	Synthesis
Common Intellectual Experiences	
Bookmark Success	
FOCUS	
One Book	
Finish in Four	
Financial Literacy	

1. **Academic Components/Policies** It is essential that students understand that there are academic rules and practices in place, and that students are ultimately responsible for knowing the impact of these rules and practices on their individual educational experience. Students should be introduced to grading scales, withdrawal and incomplete grade policies, four-year degree plans and the degree audit, grade point average calculation, attendance policies, the roles of majors, minors, electives and concentrations, and similar policies and components. The *Undergraduate Record* (catalog), department materials, and the University’s Web site provide valuable resources for this information. We suggest making students aware of these resources and information in creative ways, such as through pre/post testing, fact-finding assignments, and class discussions as issues arise individually. <http://catalog.wcu.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=231>

2. **Academic Success Centers** Students should be introduced to and periodically reminded of the services of the Academic Success Centers: The Writing and Learning Commons (WaLC) and the Mathematics Tutoring (MTC), as well as Class TIPS (Technology Instruction/Peer Success). Include these resources in your syllabus and incorporate a discussion of their services and contact information in your classes. Inviting representatives (particularly students who are employed as tutors in the centers) to your class is a great way to introduce the services. The mission of the centers is to help all students become better students, but students identified as at-risk or struggling in one or more classes often need your personal encouragement to participate in services.
3. **Advising** Every student has an assigned advisor, either in the Advising Center, TRACS, or the Honors College, in addition to a faculty advisor. Advisors help students to select proper courses, choose careers and appropriate majors, and to understand university academic policies and procedures. Transition courses can support advisors by encouraging students to schedule meetings throughout the first semester. *Professional advisors in the Advising Center are a great resource to use in transition courses to talk about Liberal Studies, the advising process and academic policies and procedures.*
4. **Blackboard/Catamount Email** WCU Students are required to use Blackboard as their Learning Management System and Catamount Email for electronic communication with the university. Instructors are encouraged to underscore this policy and implement it in transition classes to help students become comfortable with navigating Blackboard in their other courses and to develop the habit of checking their university email. Student login credentials for Blackboard:
 - Username: Catamount Account (name before the @ in Catamount Mail address)
 - Password: MyCat password
5. **Campus Activities** Students are encouraged to get involved on campus by attending athletic events, joining student organizations, and participating in cultural events. In addition, students can be challenged to become a part of the local community through service learning and civic engagement. A number of assignment formats can be used so that students can make selections from a broad range of required and elective activities.
6. **Career Counseling** Students need to consider three questions as they go about the process of choosing a career - What are you interested in? What do you do well? What do you value in life? Taking advantage of the total university experience—academics, activities, work, service—helps students discover who they are and develop a plan for the future. All incoming students take the Personality Mosaic, an interest inventory; results can be provided to instructors and discussed as part of the transition course. Inventories of skills, abilities and values are available from Career Services and results can be used to help students discover potential majors that will help them achieve their life goals.

7. **Communication Skills** Critical to success at all levels, today's first year students must navigate and master many forms of communication, from traditional reading, writing, speaking – to social media and multi-media. Students must learn the appropriate form of communication for the intended audience, especially in higher education.
8. **Diversity** An important aspect of university life is developing or enhancing students' appreciation for our diverse society. Transition courses present an opportunity for faculty to incorporate issues of diversity into the undergraduate experience. *The Office of Intercultural Affairs is a resource for incorporating diversity into class activities.*
9. **Engagement** Incorporating in-class and out of class experiences should be an important aspect of any first year transition course. Students need to be actively involved in their education, not passive observers. Faculty are encouraged to *use service learning opportunities, group field trips, and team assignments, both inside and outside the classroom, to help foster student engagement.*
10. **Grading:** Transition courses award academic credit, and as such, should hold students to a high standard, but not be so challenging that students lose sight of the opportunity for an outstanding transition to the college experience. *The Coulter Faculty Commons can help with designing appropriate assessment of student learning.*
11. **Information Literacy:** Hunter Library's Information Literacy Instruction Program is designed to teach members of the WCU community how to *find, evaluate, and use* information effectively. Information literacy skills will help students be successful, not only in their classes and majors, but also as life-long learners. Librarians will work with faculty to identify information literacy goals and identify the best ways to meet those goals and adapt to varying learning styles and changing technology.
12. **Leadership** is a collective process to influence positive change in individual lives and in the quality of living for all. The leadership philosophy stems from the Social Change Model for Leadership Development and looks specifically at leadership through the lens of consciousness of self, commitment, congruency, collaboration, common purpose, conflict with civility, and citizenship. *The Office of Student Involvement and Leadership is a resource for leadership activities for transition courses.*
13. **Liberal Studies** All undergraduates must complete the liberal studies program, either by resident courses or transfer equivalents. The transition courses offer an excellent opportunity to underscore the importance of a liberal education and the need to expand intellectual skills such as critical thinking, oral and written communication, and analytical abilities. Transition courses should provide practice and reflection on the relationship between these skills and the academic and co-curricular development of our students. Transition courses are also a place for the liberal studies program requirements to be discussed in class.

14. **Registration** The registration process should be reviewed with all new students as part of their transition to the university. Students must meet with their primary advisor (Advising Center, TRACS, Honors College or major department) to review their degree plan before registering for classes each semester. Only after the advisor reviews and approves the plan is a PIN issued, allowing students access to online registration. *Advising Center staff members are available to visit transition classes to discuss the registration process and issues.*
15. **Responsible Living and Wellness** incorporates four major areas:
Holism: alignment of values and purpose, thinking critically and making wise choices.
Personal Responsibility: Management: self, financial, priority/time; locus of control; attitude; self-discipline; goal-setting; decision making; problem solving).
Healthy Lifestyles: Proactive physical and mental/emotional health: sexual responsibility; substance use; healthy computer use; exercise; good nutrition; sufficient sleep;
Mental/emotional health: recognizing depression; managing emotions; emotional intelligence; stress management; identifying stressors.
Interdependence: The need for building relationships and developing interpersonal skills. *The staff at the Wellness Center, Counseling and Psychological Services, and the Student Wellness Council are great resources.*
16. **Service Learning** The transition courses present perfect opportunities to foster civic and community engagement and build connections to both the community and the university. Ties to the course concepts/themes and serious reflection on the experience are essential for service learning opportunities to be meaningful. *The Center for Service Learning will assist in the development of class service learning projects from small, one-time sample experiences to extensive class involvements throughout the semester.*
17. **Sense of Place** Transition courses should help students celebrate becoming members of a new community, including:
- Community Building An important part of a successful transition to college for any student is the degree to which he or she is a member of the college community. The transition course provides a way for students to become aware of their assimilation into the campus culture. Community building is also important in the classroom.
 - Western Carolina University Transition courses should help to foster pride in WCU in particular, and develop an awareness of Western's history and traditions.
 - The Region The location of the University offers an opportunity to foster an appreciation of Appalachian and Cherokee culture and the impact that location and the region have on students' college life and education.
 - World-view Transition course instructors should be sensitive to opportunities to develop a student's awareness of the scope of the world, one's place in that world, and one's impact on the world at many levels (local, community, region, country, continent, and planet). Developing self-awareness of the larger world is the beginning of making sound decisions at all levels.



Transition Pathways

18. **Status check** Instructors can quickly identify problems and issues if they begin class meetings by *informally asking how students are doing, if they are encountering any special problems, or have concerns about any aspect of college life*. By allowing students to raise topics on an “as needed” basis, the students will focus on the appropriate process to seek a solution. WCU has a wealth of resources to help students in distress. <http://www.wcu.edu/student-life/division-of-student-affairs/student-concern-response-team/what-is-a-student-concern/helping-students/index.asp>
19. **Study skills** The transition course should make students aware of proper academic preparation such as successful reading, organization, test taking, note taking, and study skills. Students can be referred to the Academic Success Centers for tutoring or workshops to support development of study skills. *ASC staff can be invited to visit classes to elaborate on available services.*
20. **Synthesis** First year students should be introduced to the concept of synthesis as a critical learning concept that is central to students maximizing their entire undergraduate experience. Transition courses are an excellent opportunity to model synthesis by integrating academic and co-curricular experiences in meaningful, reflective ways.

Please visit the transition Pathways Blackboard Commons to learn more about the core elements and see selected lesson ideas and contributions from your colleagues. Please also consider adding your best practice tips and lessons to the site so that we may develop it as a robust resource for all. ***We not only learn better together -- we teach better together!***

DEVELOPING YOUR SYLLABUS

Chapter 7

Learning Goals & Outcomes

Reference the FYE Goals and Learning Outcomes in chapter 5, defining the aptitudes, skills, and knowledge that are important for students to accomplish during their first year of college. Please introduce these goals in your transition course and plan to address the learning outcomes within your course design. It is important that we are consistent in stating expectations to all first-year students. Your course will be a vital link to establish a solid foundation for our WCU students.

Learning Outcomes:

Like all university courses, your syllabus must contain your course goals and student learning outcomes for your course. You may choose to state the FYE goals verbatim or adapted to suit the flavor of your thematic approach.

Reminder: There is a difference between goals and learning outcomes. Goals tend to be somewhat intangible or abstract – a statement of an ideal, if you will. For example, it might be important to you that your first-year students become comfortable with university life. This goal is great, but it is not an easily measurable outcome, so it remains a goal in need of a defined and *measurable* outcome to demonstrate success.

Learning outcomes should be:

- Clear to your audiences, including faculty and students.
- Process oriented and specific.
- Linked to other elements in the course (assignments, assessment, etc.).
- Realistic, given the time frame of the course.
- Measurable.

Syllabus Resources

Visit the Coulter Faculty Commons website: [Syllabus Resources](#) to access generic templates, academic calendars, policy statements, and taxonomy charts.

Attendance

Attendance is critical to student success in any course – and the transition course is a perfect place to begin to build this good habit. Help your students by holding them accountable. Include a statement of your attendance policy. View [university policy](#)

WCU Handbook Academic Honesty Policy

Students, faculty, staff, and administrators of Western Carolina University (WCU) strive to achieve the highest standards of scholarship and integrity. Any violation of the Academic Integrity Policy is a serious offense because it threatens the quality of scholarship and undermines the integrity of the community. While academic in scope, any violation of this policy is by nature, a violation of the Code of Student Conduct. You may learn more at the [Department of Student Community Ethics:](#)

TRANSITION COURSE SYLLABUS TEMPLATE

Please find the Transition Course Syllabus Template in the Appendix. You will find it also on the Blackboard Commons site as a word document for ease of editing.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Excerpted from full article by Joe Cuseo (Professor Emeritus from Marymount College; FYE author and professional development scholar)

STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET

Joe Cuseo

Reprinted with permission

A Proactive Strategy for Initiating Teacher-Student Rapport

"The first and foremost goal in the FYE course should be to establish rapport with your students. Meeting students' need for acceptance and validation is a necessary precondition for establishing the social-emotional foundation needed for subsequent learning and personal growth. It has been my experience that students begin to care more about learning and become more committed to the learning process when they sense that their instructor cares about them.

One way to gain and maintain instructor-student rapport is through use of what I call the "Student Information Sheet." The sheet contains questions for students to answer, which I've divided into six general areas: (1) personal background, (2) future plans, (3) personal abilities, achievements, and distinctive qualities, (4) personal interests, (5) personal values, and (6) course expectations, expectations and interests. (See the list of questions at the end of this exhibit for a specific list of questions relating to each of these six categories.)"

Potential Questions

PERSONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Your *name* (as you prefer to be called)?
2. *Phone number/E-Mail number* (optional)?
3. Place of *birth*? Places *lived*? Presently living on campus (where) or commuting (from where)?
4. What is your *class schedule* for this term? (Course *titles* and *times*)?
5. How many *college credits* have you *completed*? (Freshman, sophomore, junior, senior?)
6. Why did you choose *this college*? (What brought you here?)
7. Have any of your *friends* or family *attended* this college?
8. Have you attended any *other colleges*? (If yes, where and when?)
9. What *jobs* or *volunteer* experiences have you had?
10. Will you be working or volunteering *this term*? If so, how many *hours per week*? *On* or *off campus*?
11. Will you have *family responsibilities* this term?
12. Has anyone in your *immediate family* (parents or siblings) *graduated from college*?

FUTURE PLANS

13. Intended *major* (already decided or being considered)? *How sure* are you about this choice?
14. *What lead* you to this choice?
15. What are your *plans* (definite or tentative) after *graduating* from this college?
16. Intended *career*? (If already decided or being considered) *How sure* are you about this choice?
17. *What lead* you to this choice?

PERSONAL ABILITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, & DISTINCTIVE QUALITIES

18. What are you really *good* at? What comes *easily* or *naturally* to you?
19. What would you say are your most developed *skills* or *talents*?
20. How do you think you *learn best*?
21. What would you say has been your greatest *accomplishment*, *achievement*, or *success story* in your life thus far?
22. What *three words* do you think *best* describe you?
23. What would your *best friend(s)* say is your *most likable quality*?
24. What would you say are your personal *strengths* right now? What personal areas you would like to *work on* or *improve*?

PERSONAL INTERESTS

25. What sorts of things do you *look forward to*, and get *excited* about?
26. What sorts of things *capture and hold* your *interest*?
27. What would you say have been your most enjoyable & least enjoyable learning experiences?
28. What are your *hobbies*? *Fun* activities?
29. How do you *relax and unwind*?
30. If you had a day, week, or year to *go anywhere* you wanted and *do anything* you liked, *where* would you go and *what* would you do?
31. What do you like to *read*?
32. When you open a *newspaper*, what *section* of it do you turn to *first*?
33. What's your favorite *movie and/or TV program* (if any)?
34. What's your favorite *music* or *musical artist(s)*?
35. Is there anyone dead or alive, real or imaginary, whom you've never met but would like to *meet* and have a *conversation* with? (Why?)

PERSONAL VALUES

36. What's very *important* to you?)(What *matters* to you the most?)(What is something you really *care* about?)
37. When you have *free time*, what do you usually find yourself doing?
38. When you have extra spending *money*, what do you usually find yourself spending it on?
39. Is there a *motto, quote, song, symbol, or bumper sticker* that represents something you stand for or believe in?
40. If there is one thing in this world you could *change*, what would it be?)
41. How would you define *success*? (What does "*being successful*" mean to you?)
42. Do you tend to *daydream* about anything in particular?
43. Do you have any *heroes*? Is there anyone you *admire, look up to, or feel has set an example worth following*? (Why?)
44. Who or what would you say has had the *greatest influence on your life* thus far? (In what way?)
45. If there is anything in your life you could *change or do over again*, what would it be? Why?
46. What would you like to be said about you in your *obituary* or at your *eulogy*?

COURSE EXPECTATIONS, ATTITUDES, & INTERESTS

47. Why *are you taking this course*?
48. When you hear "[title of the course]" what's the *first thing* that comes to your mind?
49. *What information or topics do you think will be covered in this course*?
50. Have you had any other *courses or learning experiences* in this subject area?
51. Do you have any course *expectations or goals*? Anything that you *hope* will be *covered or discussed* in this class?
52. Right now, how do you *feel* about taking this course—positive, negative, neutral? (Why?)
53. Is there *anything else* about the *course*, or about *yourself*, that I haven't asked, but you think would be interesting or useful for me to know?

COMMON INTELLECTUAL EXPERIENCES

Chapter 9

The [American Association of Colleges and Universities](#) (AAC&U) identified 10 high impact practices. Among those are “***Common Intellectual Experiences.***”

“These programs often combine broad themes—e.g., technology and society, global interdependence—with a variety of curricular and co-curricular options for students.”

Adapting this notion, the intention with FYE ‘high-impact’ is to provide rich learning experiences that help our students reinforce the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they need to succeed in college and beyond. We are eager for students to see how the FYE goals are integral to their own success and how those goals compliment and inform each other in a never-ending spiral of connectivity. To that end, FYE has identified the following opportunities for you to adopt in your course design intended to help students make the learning authentic as they take ownership of their educational experience at WCU.

On the following pages you will see a summary of each learning design and a few ideas to ignite your own creative process. Please find your own pathways to integrate these four learning experiences/opportunities. They are designed to help your students see how they fit into the grand scheme of things as the class of 2019!

1. One Book: a common reading experience for first-year students
2. FOCUS: First-year Opportunities for Community and University Service
3. Bookmark Success
4. Finish in Four
5. Financial Literacy
6. Difference & Diversity

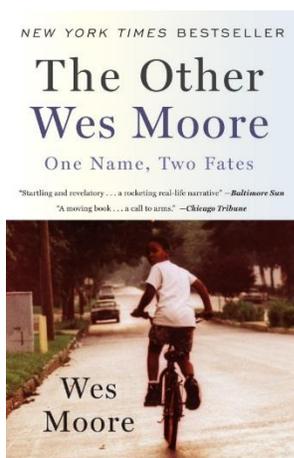
One Book 2015

onebook.wcu.edu

A Common Reading Experience for WCU first-year students!

The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates

A New York Times Bestseller by: Wes Moore



- The 2015 selection is intended to be complimentary with the WCU commitment to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) *National Initiative focused on the topic of Economic Inequality*.
- Research guides, plus a variety of sponsored programs will be available to assist with course planning as faculty see appropriate.
- A common reading experience encourages new students to engage early with faculty, staff, and peers as they launch their college career. Early engagement fosters student success!

Events and Programs to support your classroom discussions

Learn more and keep up with updates and added events at <http://onebook.wcu.edu>

*****Please require your students to attend at least one of the posted events within your course design to reinforce WCU's mission for a common reading experience!***

Freshman Convocation

August 14, 2015 – 5:00 pm – Ramsey Regional Activity Center at WCU

Author, Wes Moore, will be the keynote speaker to this year's incoming class of 2019.

Readers Round Table Discussions

- **September 17, 2015** - 7:00 PM in the University Center Grand Room
A Diversity Week Discussion hosted by the Office of Intercultural Affairs
- **September 23, 2015** – 5:00 pm in the Blue Ridge Hall Conference Room

Panel Discussion & Conversation Series

Fall 2015: Final details (times, topics, guests) TBA

- September 22 & 24
- October 5, 6, & 7

FOCUS – First-year Opportunities for Community & University Service FYE Service and Learning --- Celebrate the Student Community Creed

Purpose:

1. Engage students in service learning and civic engagement experiences during their first weeks of college and to continue to build on the foundation through meaningful service to their campus community as well as to the local community.
2. Facilitate the work of faculty and staff in their efforts to engage first-year students in community and service by removing some of the logistical barriers and challenges such as transportation, etc.

Student Learning Goal:

Be Involved ----- [*Practice civic engagement*]

Students will identify their roles and responsibilities as engaged citizens by considering the public policies that affect their choices and actions; by recognizing commonalities and interdependence of diverse views/ values; and by acting responsibly to positively affect public policy.

- **Outcome 1:** Students will practice the Community Creed.
Creed: a system of beliefs, principles, and aspirations
 - I will practice personal and academic integrity.
 - I will respect the dignity and rights of all persons.
 - I will demonstrate concern for others and live up to my community responsibilities.
 - I will engage myself in the arts, culture and intellectual life of my University.
 - I will celebrate and take pride in Western Carolina University.

Strategies:

- Develop campus partnerships to foster opportunities for service.
- Launch the year-long campaign during the *Week of Welcome* in and out of the classroom.
- Sponsor a *FYE Day of Service*: Saturday, August 24th
- Provide resources, maps, organization, and tactical support.
- Track participation via OrgSync and assess outcomes.

Instructors

- Help your students develop the relationships and networks that will help them persist in their transition to college life.
- Help your students Discover College.
- Show them the way – join the campaign as a class – adopt a project and spin it to meet your course learning goals.



Bookmark Success

Bookmark--- (Definition):

To mark your place; enable you to remember important parts; enable you to return with ease

Objective: To help students discover and use WCU campus resources and networks; connect those resources with the FYE goals; and connect resources to their own educational goals.

Goal: Students *Discover College* as they connect the journey to the learning goals and to their overall college experience.

WCU Resources & Services for Student Success:

WaLC : Writing & Learning Commons	Class TIPS: Technology Commons	Leadership & Student Involvement
Hunter Library	Campus Recreation Center	International Programs & Ed.
FAM: Fine Art Museum	Mountain Heritage Center	First Year Experience
Bird Building: Health Center	Center for Service Learning	Intercultural Affairs
Advising Center	One Stop	Career Services

Strategies

Following are a few ways to engage the students with the discovery. *NOTE: Please ask students to be respectful/quiet at resource sites and to NOT help themselves to site marketing materials or take photographs without permission.*

- DOCUMENT the DISCOVERY:** Ask students to 'map' the location of the resources – know where each is located physically and how to look them up on the web. Students should know the purpose of the resource and be encouraged to discuss in class.
- TALK ABOUT the DISCOVERY:**
As a brief warm-up conversation for class, invite students to share where they have been, what they learned and what questions they have.
- SHARE the DISCOVERY:**
A great way to have students develop study or learning groups, have them ‘take a road trip’ together -- by creating small groups. You may even want to challenge them to see which group can complete their journey first -- documented by whatever means you have selected.
- OWN the MAP:**
Have students communicate via a written paper, presentation, artwork, and multimedia project, etc. how one or more resources align with their FYE learning goals. This is a perfect place to have students synthesize new understandings by connecting course goals and activities to their own goals and values.

LESSON IDEA: *Make a Commercial for Success!*

Students explore resource sites in small groups and create a 'commercial' for one site that they found most interesting, surprising, helpful, etc. This could be added to their eB or could even be used for an EYE on FYE entry!

LESSON IDEA: *Values, Goals and Tools to Mine Success*

Link the Values Shield activity, to a reflective look at the FYE Goals, and then consider which Resources (strategies) helped them meet the goals that matched their values.

ASSESSING THE TRANSITION COURSE

Chapter 10

Good assessment of learning is essential to any successful course. Like all WCU courses, your syllabus must include learning outcomes, a grading scale, and a list of assignments and their relative weight; but the creativity and innovation fostered by the transition format often leads to assessment challenges.

Some tips from seasoned educators:

1. Constructive comments are particularly important at this stage. Rather than simply assigning a grade, explain to students what they need to do to perform at a higher level and why.
2. Grading non-traditional and/or oral projects can be very tricky, particularly when some of these can be tied to self-image, not just academic performance. Students at this level haven't always figured out the difference, so remember your own emotional vulnerability as a first-year student when you design your assessments.
3. Group projects: There are numerous tried and true techniques available for evaluating group projects. Avail yourself of the experience of others, including the Coulter Faculty Commons and --other instructors!
4. Encourage your students to discover their learning style and to understand how that will impact how they learn and demonstrate their understanding.
5. Involve your students in evaluation processes (self and each other) to help them understand your expectations and the level of work expected of a college student.

Assessment across courses

In addition to individual course assessment, there is significant value in evaluating transition courses as a collective due to the nature and purpose of the course. With careful attention to process and practice, we can develop strategies to support effective teaching and learning experiences and foster student satisfaction, persistence and retention.

APPENDIX

Template & Example

**FYE Transition Course Syllabus
Fall 2015**

Please feel welcome to use the template wholesale, filling in your specific course information or you may adapt this to meet your style preference. This template is intended as a resource and help to allow you to devote your time to the fun part – designing learning experiences!

- Please make sure to include the transition course description, goals, and core elements.
- Please incorporate the Common Intellectual Experiences:
 - One Book: a common reading experience for first-year students
 - FOCUS: First-year Opportunities for Community and University Service
 - Bookmark Success
 - Finish in Four
 - Financial Literacy
 - Difference & Diversity

NOTE:

You will find the word document version of this template posted on the Transition Pathways Blackboard Commons (BBC) site – your open access resource. It is listed under “My Organizations” which is under your course list in Blackboard.

As with all resources from FYE, you are welcome to use and adapt with permission any of the lesson ideas, etc. in the BBC.

Template for FYE Transition Course Syllabus Fall 2015

Instructor: *(name, office, phone, email, office hours, etc.)*

Course Prefix & Title *(USI 130 or COUN 140 or USI 101 of LEAD 140,150-157)*

For Learning Community sections, also include the specific course title: eg. “Ripple Effect” or “WHEE Teach”, etc.

Course Description:

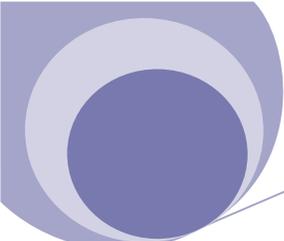
This course provides an introduction and opportunity for you to transition to university life, as you discover the resources available (academic, co-curricular, community). You will examine the principles of leadership through the thematic lens. This subject of this course is you. It is intentionally designed to promote your self-awareness and personal success—in college and in life after college—by empowering you with flexible skills and strategies that are applicable across subjects (transferable, cross-disciplinary skills) and across time (durable, lifelong learning skills).

PLUS: You should include additional thematic focus description as applicable: (Describe what makes the theme unique and what students can expect to learn and experience as they explore transitional (and leadership if applicable) principles through this lens.

Learning Community: In a Learning Community students are organized into cohorts that appeal to their interests and goals, and may also include a residential co-location - thus the collaboration among educators reinforces and promotes integrated learning. Cohorts may enroll students in two or more courses (LC) or may connect one course with a residential component (LLC).

Textbooks:

- **LEAD Courses:** Peak Performance: Success in College & Beyond, 8th ed.
ISBN: 978-0-07-722771-5 (available in book rental)
- **USI and COUN Courses:** Your College Experience: Strategies for success, 10th ed. –
ISBN: 978-0-312-60254-3 (available in book rental) –
(Electronic content is available on the USI Course Template in Blackboard)
- **ALL Transition Courses:** One Book 2015 – The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates *(provided at no charge to all incoming freshmen during orientation. All Transition courses should include this book within curriculum plans.)*
- Optional supplemental texts/readings assigned by instructors to compliment thematic focus, or instructor preferences



Transition Pathways

Purpose, Goals and Outcomes:

The Purpose of this course is to:

- (1) *connect* you with other *students*—i.e., to help you form peer-support networks and peer-learning communities;
- (2) *connect* you with the *college*—i.e., to promote (a) your appreciation of the meaning and relevance of the college *curriculum* (liberal arts & sciences), (b) your involvement in the *co-curriculum* (out-of-class experiential learning), and (c) your use of *campus support services* (academic-support and student-development services);
- (3) *connect* your *present* college experience with your *future* goals and plans—i.e., to help you relate your current college experience with your upcoming decisions about your college *major*, your future *career* path, and your life beyond college.
- (4) *connect* you with the principles of *leadership* - i.e., to help you understand the importance of leadership to your college experience and your life.

Transition Objectives for the course include the following

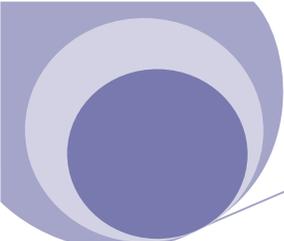
- To help you orient yourself at WCU by making you familiar with academic policies, programs and support resources;
- To help you cope successfully with the stresses that often accompany major life transitions, such as coming to college;
- To create a context in which you can clarify values and continue to develop a sense of responsibility for your academic, personal, and career development;
- To guide you to develop empathy, respect, and appreciation for others who are different from you in terms of the ways our society defines human and group differences, including race, ethnicity, religious backgrounds, linguistic differences, socioeconomic levels, age, geography, sexual orientation, and national origins.
- This Course is meant to get you off to a good start in college, and to motivate you to successfully complete your college education. It is the place to get your questions answered, explore and establish your goals, develop connections to the campus community, and discover resources that will help you be successful. Your instructor is also a mentor, a “go-to” person, when you have questions, insecurities, indecisions, or other difficulties—please take advantage of this both in class and individually!

LEARNING GOALS & OUTCOMES:

To achieve the expected learning goals, WCU has identified a set of core skills and behaviors (goals) that are central to a student’s development as an integrated, intentional learner.

University Learning Goals: Students should

- Identify their aptitudes, abilities, and interests and articulate their future goals and aspirations;
- Modify their behaviors and values in response to knowledge and skills gained from their academic and co-curricular experiences; and
- Recognize the synthesis of their university experiences relative to their future education and career plans.



Transition Pathways

1. DISCOVER COLLEGE

- Students will identify the purpose and function of the campus resources that serve as tools for success (i.e., the Core Element Content).
- Students will engage with the campus community.

2. Be Involved *(Practice civic engagement)*

- Students will practice the Community Creed.

3. Connect the Dots *(Integrate information from a variety of contexts)*

- Students will identify connections between personal experiences and closely related academic knowledge (i.e., facts, ideas, concepts, experiences).
- Students will articulate their own strengths and challenges as learners in dealing with a specific task, performance, event, etc.

4. Think First *(Solve complex problems)*

- Students will select from available information and resources to solve issues in their collegiate lives and campus communities.
- Students will construct a plan to achieve an intended solution.

5. Exchange Ideas *(Communicate effectively and responsibly)*

- Students will communicate as appropriate to the context and audience in order to articulate needs or share information.

6. Calibrate Your Compass *(Clarify and act on purpose and values)*

- Students will choose learning experiences consistent with their own values and goals.
- Students will prioritize values that influence decision making.

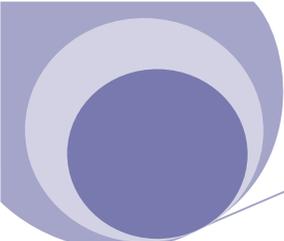
OTHER POINTS OF IMPORTANCE AND INTEREST

The First Year Experience aims to foster opportunities that will empower you to not only succeed with your transition to college life, but to also discover a passion for learning as you become the co-creator of your collegiate experience. Discover information and resources just for you at fye.wcu.edu

Co-curricular Opportunities: This class will require your attendance of arts and co-curricular events outside of the class time, as indicated on the course outline and calendar. These events are intended to strengthen learning outcomes, and in some cases will define the outcome and the assessment, such as the completion of papers or projects in response to particular events, performances, or exhibits, thus having a direct impact on your course grade.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Western Carolina University is committed to providing equal educational opportunities for students with documented disabilities. Students who require disability services or reasonable accommodations must identify themselves as having a disability and provide current diagnostic documentation to Disability Services. All information is confidential. Please contact Disability Services for more information at (828) 227-2716 or 144 Killian Annex.



Transition Pathways

Attendance:

Much of a person's learning and thinking originates in, and is supported by, interactions with other people. What happens inside the classroom is important for your success with the course. Therefore, your performance on in-class activities and contributions to class discussion are important to you and to your fellow students, and will be the basis for your course grade.

As per the University's Undergraduate Catalog, the Record, you are allowed up to two absences providing that your instructor excuses the absence. You are encouraged to consult the complete statement of this policy in the Undergraduate Catalog. Acceptable excuses include the following:

- Clear evidence that you are too ill or otherwise indisposed to benefit from being in class and will be a risk or distraction to others in the class;
- Documented evidence of your required presence in a court of law;
- Documented evidence of a personal or family emergency requiring your presence away from campus;
- Documented evidence of your participation in an approved university activity (field trip, athletic event, etc.; documentation will be provided by the university official in charge of the activity, and must be presented ***before the time of the absence***);
- Other circumstances approved by your instructor, preferably *prior to the absence*.

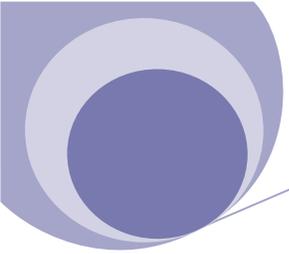
You must request IN WRITING that each absence be excused before the next regular class period. Your written excuse must be presented to your instructor as soon as possible after the absence occurs. If you miss class for what you believe is a good reason, you still must ask, in writing, that the absence be excused—we want to see that you are acting responsibly about class attendance. Even if you miss class unexpectedly or accidentally, don't compound the error by failing to turn in a request for an excuse; if you act responsibly, you might be granted an excuse even with a poor reason. It is up to your instructor to grant excuses, so don't ever assume your absence won't be excused until you have communicated with your instructor.

Attendance WILL affect your final grade per course policy. Keep in mind that if you miss a class meeting, you are still responsible for the material addressed during that meeting and for submitting assignments due at the meeting.

Classes meet each week as scheduled in the course calendar; in order to accommodate special activities, some class meetings will vary in location. A final assessment will be completed during final exam week. *The course calendar is subject to change per the instructor's notification.*

Inclement Weather Policy: Please see the student handbook for the policy on inclement weather.

Withdrawal and Drop/add: Please refer to your catalogue for the dates and policy. Do not assume that your non-attendance will result in an automatic withdrawal.



Transition Pathways

Academic Integrity: Western Carolina University’s Code of Conduct, (available via the online Student Handbook at www.wcu.edu/univcenter/handbook/PDF/Student%20Handbook.pdf), specifically prohibits “all forms of student (and faculty) academic dishonesty, including cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism.

- Cheating is defined by the Code as follows: Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.
- Plagiarism is defined by the Code to mean “Intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of someone else as one’s own in an academic exercise.”
- You may also review the University Academic Integrity policy at <http://catalog.wcu.edu/content.php?catoid=20&navoid=346#honestypolicy>

Course Eval is the WCU course evaluation and you are encouraged to participate and complete this on-line evaluation for this course. We strive to constantly improve course design and delivery – your cooperation to complete the Course Eval provides a mechanism that will help us in our goals to improve teaching and learning outcomes for all students.

Student Responsibility & Etiquette—*Students need to know and understand what is expected and what you have determined acceptable behaviour in your course. These elements are also highly personal based on your teaching approach and should be tailored accordingly. Many instructors address these elements and you may have others to include.*

- Class participation
- Food & drink in the classroom
- The use of cell phones
- The use of computers during class
- Assignments and in-class work (I.e.: late or missed work policy)

Basis for Student Evaluation: EXAMPLE					
Grading Standard			13 point scale		97-100 = A+
93-96 = A	90-92 = A-	87-89 = B+	83-86=B	80-82=B-	77-79=C+
73-76= C	70-72 = C-	67-69 = D+	63-66 = D	60-62 – D-	59 /below = F
Grade percentage	Evaluation Criteria	Methods/strategies (<i>options appropriate to theme</i>)			
20 %	Writing	Journals; Papers – research/creative/reflective			
20 %	Tests	Core elements; Leadership Principles; Theme			
20 %	Documents	Portfolio; Creative; Surveys; etc.			
20 %	Experiential	Service Learning; Interdisciplinary; Departmental			
20 %	Collaborative	Study groups; Expressive; Events			

Course Content Outline:

The “*The Core Elements*” of Transition: (WCU Standard)

- Academic Components/Policies
- Academic Success Centers
- Advising & Registration
- Blackboard and Catamount Email
- Campus Activities
- Career Counseling
- Communication Skills
- Difference & Diversity
- Grading & GPA
- Engagement
- Financial Literacy
- Information Literacy
- Leadership
- Liberal studies
- Responsible Living & Wellness
- Sense of Place
- Service Learning
- Status Checks
- Study Skills
- Synthesis

Common Intellectual Experiences: (*Required content*)

- Bookmark Success: *Discover campus resources and networks*
- FOCUS: *First-year Opportunities for Community & University Service*
- One Book 2015: *The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates*
- Difference and Diversity
- Financial Literacy: *Financial Aid Office*
- Finish in Four: *Advising Center*

The COURSE CALENDAR

Your course calendar should integrate content areas with campus opportunities and activities that help to make the transition content authentic – the university events calendar and student life calendar will help you plan ahead to take advantage of interdisciplinary and current events. You will also have the option to visit or invite guests from resource units to utilize the expertise of resource specialists such as the WaLC, Advising Center, Hunter Library, etc.

NOTE: *Please remember to include the **Common Intellectual Experiences** in course calendar and requirements.*



Discover College:

Adapt, explore, discover, and engage: Campus & Resources

Be Involved:

Identify and act upon your role as an engaged citizen.

Connect the Dots:

To make sense of the world: Personal, academic, co-curricular opportunities.

Think First:

Identify, evaluate, and reflect to address complex issues or problems.

Exchange Ideas:

Communicate in context and with respect

Calibrate Your Compass:

Know where you stand with values, goals, responsibility, and integrity.

Their journey begins here.....

Office of First Year Experience

Division of Student Success

Western Carolina University

