

## PROGRESSION STRATEGIES: INITIATING AND SUSTAINING SUCCESS

**“The ‘American Dream’ is at risk. Community colleges can help reclaim it. But stepping up to the challenge will require dramatic redesign of these institutions, their missions, and most critically, students’ educational experiences.”  
(American Association of Community Colleges, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Report, 2012).**

### First Year Experience Programs (FYE)

First Year Experience (FYE) programs focus on comprehensive approaches designed to improve success rates and increase retention of first-year students. Activities may include interventions focused on streamlining admissions processes, increasing financial aid uptake, community outreach, student success courses, academic planning, career planning and orientation. Typical FYE programs include mandatory pre-enrollment steps and required first-year student seminars. The [National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition](#) provides significant resources and research on FYE programs.

#### Examples

- [Greenville Technical College](#)
- [LaGuardia Community College](#)
- [Davidson County Community College](#)

### Freshman seminar courses

#### Definition

Credit courses designed to help students with study skills, college transition, life skills or a combination of related areas. Typically offered as credit courses; 1 – 3 credits. Historically, these courses have been optional for students, although recent trends show that many institutions are requiring student success classes for either *all* first-time certificate- or degree-seeking students or for those students testing into developmental levels.

#### Examples

- Brazosport College ([PSY/ED 1300: Learning Frameworks](#))
- Durham Technical Community College ([ACA 122: College Transfer Success](#))
- Zane State ([IDS 101: Student Success Strategies](#)):
- Davidson Community College: [ACA 090](#) required student success class for all students testing into developmental education.
- [National Park Community College](#) (required for all first-time, full-time degree-seeking students):

## Learning Communities

### Definition

A set of courses in which students register as a cohort. Three types of learning communities defined by the Washington Center:

1. **Linked:** single cohort of students enrolls in separate courses that are linked either thematically or by contact. Outside-the-class social activities are planned by instructors collaboratively
2. **Cohorts:** Cohort of students enrolled in several larger classes together that meet for integrative academic support and/or social activities
3. **Coordinated/Integrated:** Team-taught and usually focused on a particular issue or theme, course content, assignments and often grades are integrated

### Examples

- [Valencia College](#)
- [Wallace State](#)
- [Kingsborough Community College](#)

## Early Alert

### Definition

According to The Center for Community College Engagement (see [page 20](#)), an institution committed to student success will carefully monitor student progress, especially during the first term, and create intentional interventions to keep students on track. Early alert models are a means by which faculty and staff can identify students who may be struggling early in their academic career--either academically and/or personally--and enables the institution to respond with appropriate interventions. Generally includes a software system that enables the reporting of the initial alert, communication with students and tracking of student progress.

It is important to note that some early alert technology solutions also include a predictive analytics component which allows an institution to determine which students may be more at risk of failure; analytics component is based on institutional longitudinal data. Institutions can use this data to provide intentional support services rather than wait for informal reports.

### Examples

- [Harper College](#)'s early alert program focuses on first-year students who are recent high school graduates and who place into two or more developmental classes. The [Project Success: Early Alert](#) initiative monitors student academic progress and provide specialized counseling. Harper uses [StarFish](#) technology to support their program.
- [Wayne County Community College District](#) increased first year fall-to-winter retention from 49 percent in 2006-07 to 64 percent in 2009-10. This improvement is associated with the an early alert initiative, which provides intrusive advising to students in developmental English and math as well as students in learning communities.
- [Leeward Community College's Early Alert Program](#) has a webpage dedicated to the process of and resources for their early alert service.
- [Rio Salado Community College](#) launched a proactive early alert model by using data analytics to code at-risk students on instructor's rosters to help with early detection of struggling students.

## Career Planning and Coaching

### Definition

The career development process is comprised of understanding one's preferences and skills, exploring career opportunities and discovering the best-fit and/or career path to meet career goals. To increase success rates, it is important that colleges provide students with intentional career-related decisions early in a student's process; this includes declaring a major, developing appropriate academic plans and making connections to potential employers. While career planning can be done in group formats, current trends indicate that one-on-one coaching and the use of professionals tied to a specific disciplines are more effective than generalized group work.

### Examples

- Virginia Community College System: [Career Coach Program](#).
- Oregon Community Colleges: [CASE Grant](#)
- Northwest Vista College: [Major Mania](#)

## Academic Advising & Mandatory Degree Plans

Academic advising has long since been a proven student success strategy; more recently, however, basic advising has evolved into requiring that all students create long-range academic plan with a specific certificate or degree as the goal, as well as specific activities focused on career or transfer planning. Additionally, the Center for Community College Engagement makes six recommendations specific to student success, one of which includes an intentional focus on placing students into a program (or pathway) of study from day one, with undecided students placed into a pathway that helps them decide.

## Academic Probation Interventions

### Definition

Best practices indicate that institutions who create intentional, intrusive and structured interventions for students not meeting an institution's academic standards have better student conversion rates than those who do not. Examples of interventions include required all students on academic warning to enroll in a specifically-designed student success course, develop an individual academic plan to include some level of assistance tailored to the student's situation, assignment to specialized advisors and/or participation in a study skills workshop.

### Examples

- [Northern Essex Community College](#)
- Lane Community College: [Back on Course](#)
- Chaffey College: [Back on Track](#)

## Supplemental Instruction

### Description

[Supplemental Instruction](#) (SI) is an academic assistance program that utilizes regularly scheduled, peer-assisted study sessions. Working in a group format and guided by "SI leaders", SI students learn how to integrate course content with appropriate study skills. "SI leaders" are those who have previously done

well in the course and who attend all class lectures, take notes, and act as model students. The purpose of SI is:

1. To increase retention within targeted historically difficult courses
2. To improve student grades in targeted historically difficult courses
3. To increase the graduation rates of students

#### Variations

Augmented Instruction (AI): AI differs in that it is linked specifically to a math or English course, is offered as noncredit and students are required to participate. The faculty member from the linked course and a student facilitator are present in the AI session. See the [College of the Sequoias](#) as an example.

Embedded SI/Tutoring: Similar to SI, but the SI leader spends 5-10 minutes within each class session teaching basic study skills using specific course content.

#### Examples

- [Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College](#)
- [Merced College](#)
- [Butte College](#)

### **Structured Learning Assistance (SLA)**

#### Description

Structured Learning Assistance (SLA) provides additional instruction related to an enhanced course and engages students in activities to address mathematics, reading, and writing deficiencies that impair their chances to successfully complete core mathematics, English, and other courses. SLA leaders, who conduct the SLA workshops, attend each meeting of the core classes that are paired with the SLA sections for which they provide leadership, design the workshops, and work regularly with the course instructor.

#### Examples

- [Grand Valley State University](#)
- [Austin Peay State University](#)
- [Arkansas State University](#)
- [Farris State University](#)