

Foundations of Excellence—The First Year Student Experience

Background: The Foundations of Excellence model is a blueprint for building the first year of college as the foundation for undergraduate education.

Last year, BC pioneered a Foundations of Excellence partnership with CSUB. We shared a common goal in our work with Foundations of Excellence: to assess our current practices and generate ideas for change. We met last year's goal through a self study of 9 dimensions Foundations of Excellence uses to assess institutional success in meeting first year student needs. The 9 teams met throughout the year together and also participated in a joint BC/CSUB meeting then generated individual campus-based reports regarding current practices as well as the improvements the teams felt were necessary. The teams generated 92 action items for improvement on our BC campus.

The Foundations of Excellence Steering Committee met over the summer, reviewed the reports, removed the personnel items that were beyond the scope of the project, located situations in which action items were already being tackled on campus then found the big project items that multiple teams had noted. The 12 action items that would require the most collaboration and support were funded.

In late September Bonnie Suderman and Helen Acosta were appointed to shepherd the campus implementation of these items and the steering committee will continue oversight of the process.

Current Situation: We have set-up 12 teams to address these 12 action items. Several teams still need members. The members of each team will follow the proven methodologies of our campus CLIPS process and receive a stipend for their work on their team. The rationales provided in the dimension reports have been shared with the teams to provide a history and context for the item. The items are introduced in the numbered list below.

1. Determine what our First Year Student Educational Philosophy is across the campus, inside and outside of the classroom. Build First Year Student Outcomes. Institutionalize college-wide discussions of issues affecting first year students.
2. Pilot four department-based half-day orientation sessions. – develop process.

Evaluate and document the effectiveness of SLOs for the top 5 courses students take in their first 30 units. Create teaching methods dialog and assessment that assures continuous awareness within each discipline of the introductory role these courses play for new students at BC.

- Six different teams will address the following courses:
 3. Health Ed 1
 4. History 17A
 5. English 60
 6. Psychology 1A
 7. Communication 1
 8. Math A

9. Development of First Year Student Success Course.
10. Champion a true "Renegade" student culture that fosters student engagement.
11. To create and institutionalize minimally obtrusive methods and mechanisms to gather student feedback at various points in the first-year student experience.
12. Faculty Orientation Guide - include first year student component.

For more information and background on this year's process go to:
http://www2.bakersfieldcollege.edu/hacosta/foundations_of_excellence1.htm