



Quality Enhancement Plan Summary

Title: First Semester Experience

Institution: New River Community College, 5251 College Drive, Dublin, VA 24084

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QEP Summary:

The goal of NRCC's QEP is to improve student persistence, retention and, ultimately, graduation rates through goal setting/tracking and community building in the students' first semester. An integrated first semester experience is the logical next step in implementing NRCC's intentional engagement model which, up until this point, has largely focused on a required new student orientation and assigned connection specialists (or go-to people) for each NRCC student, all empowered by a locally-developed technology platform (CLAS).

This QEP develops the model further by helping students to feel an increased sense of belonging in higher education in general and at NRCC specifically. It is believed that an increased sense of belonging and community will contribute to a more conducive environment for students to set educational goals and be supported as they meet benchmarks along the way to meeting those goals.

This first semester experience will include student experiences that have long been a part of NRCC (a college success skills course) and others that have been recently revamped (the required new student orientation and open house kick-off celebrations). It will also be bookended by new components: an online pre-orientation module and, most prominently, a first semester seminar for all new program-placed students that will combine two or three common first semester courses; the seminar will include three courses for transfer students and two courses for career and technical education students.

Programming and other resources will also be developed to support two groups of individuals critical to students' success: (1) family and friends (particularly first generation families) and (2) NRCC faculty and staff.