



**Merced College
First Year Experience Survey
August 2012
Summary**

Background

Several California Community Colleges have implemented First Year Experience (FYE) programs in the past few years. Merced College is considering an FYE program as a means to achieve greater student retention and success. To this end, the Merced College Office of Grants and Institutional Research conducted a survey through Survey Monkey to gain insight from California Community Colleges that have these programs

Results

In total, 43 people responded to the survey, representing at least 25 community colleges (two colleges had multiple respondents, and 16 respondents did not identify their college). Of these 43 respondents, 31 (72.09%) reported that their college had an FYE program, 10 (23.26%) reported that their college did not, and 2 (4.65%) declined to state. Because the respondent pool was self-selected, there is a higher probability the respondents have an FYE program than the California Community Colleges as a whole.

Of the 43 total respondents, 14 volunteered to provide follow-up, 12 with FYE programs and 2 without. Of these, 9 were contacted for interviews, 7 with FYE programs and 2 without.

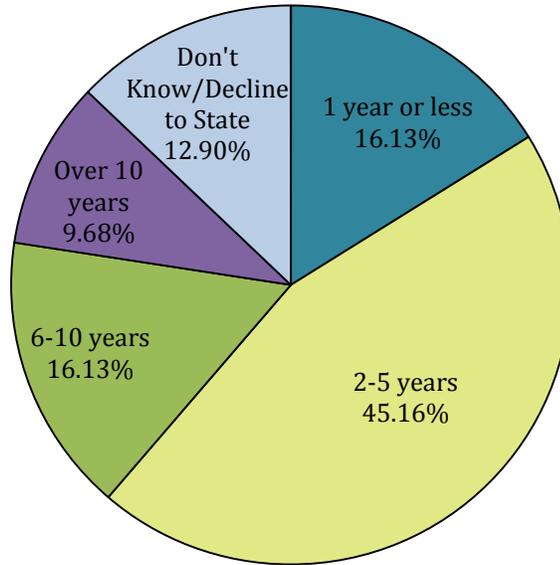
Responses were analyzed for the 31 respondents reporting their college had an FYE program.

All responses in the “other” category for each question appear in Appendix D.

Summary of Findings

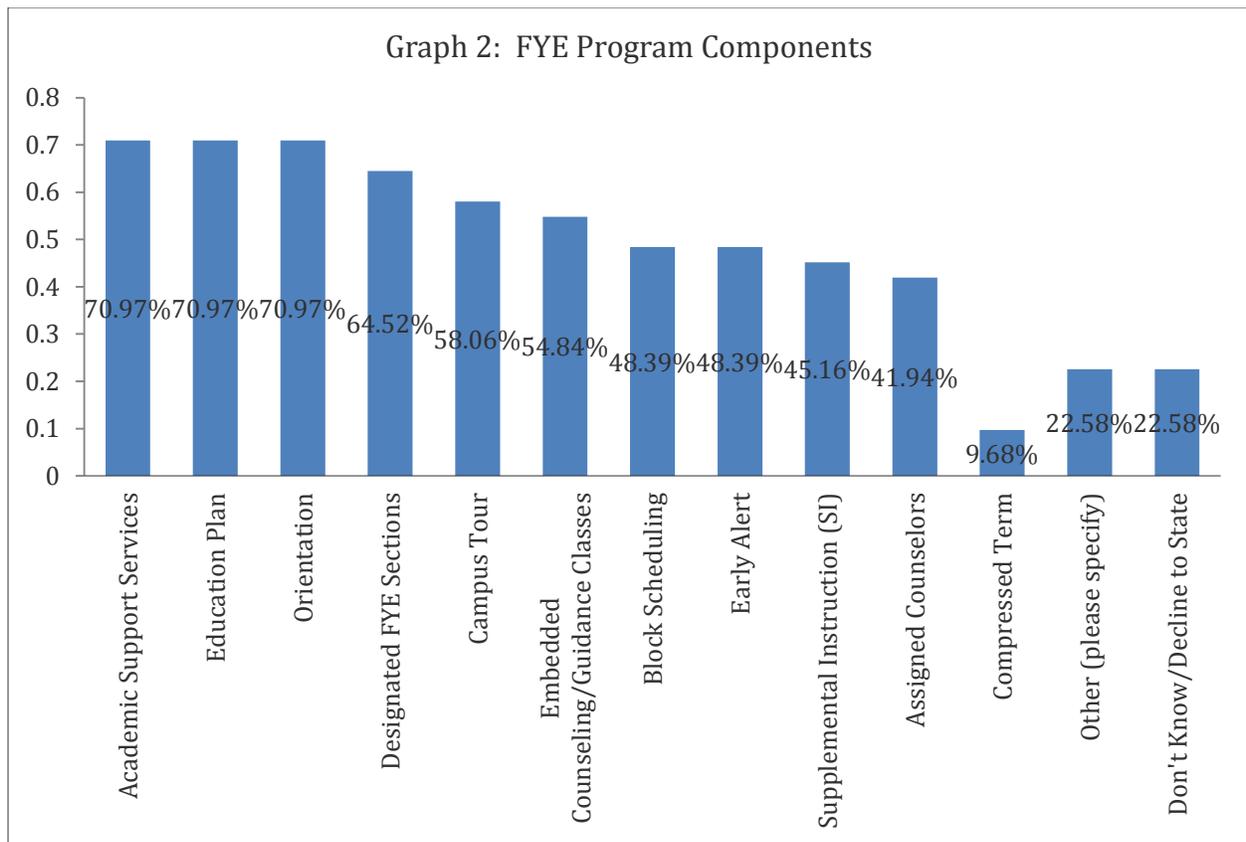
Almost half of responding colleges with an FYE program had their program between 2 and 5 years (45.16%). Another 16.13% each had their program 1 year or less and 6-10 years. Only 9.68% had a program more than 10 years.

Graph 1: Years FYE Program Has Existed (N=31)

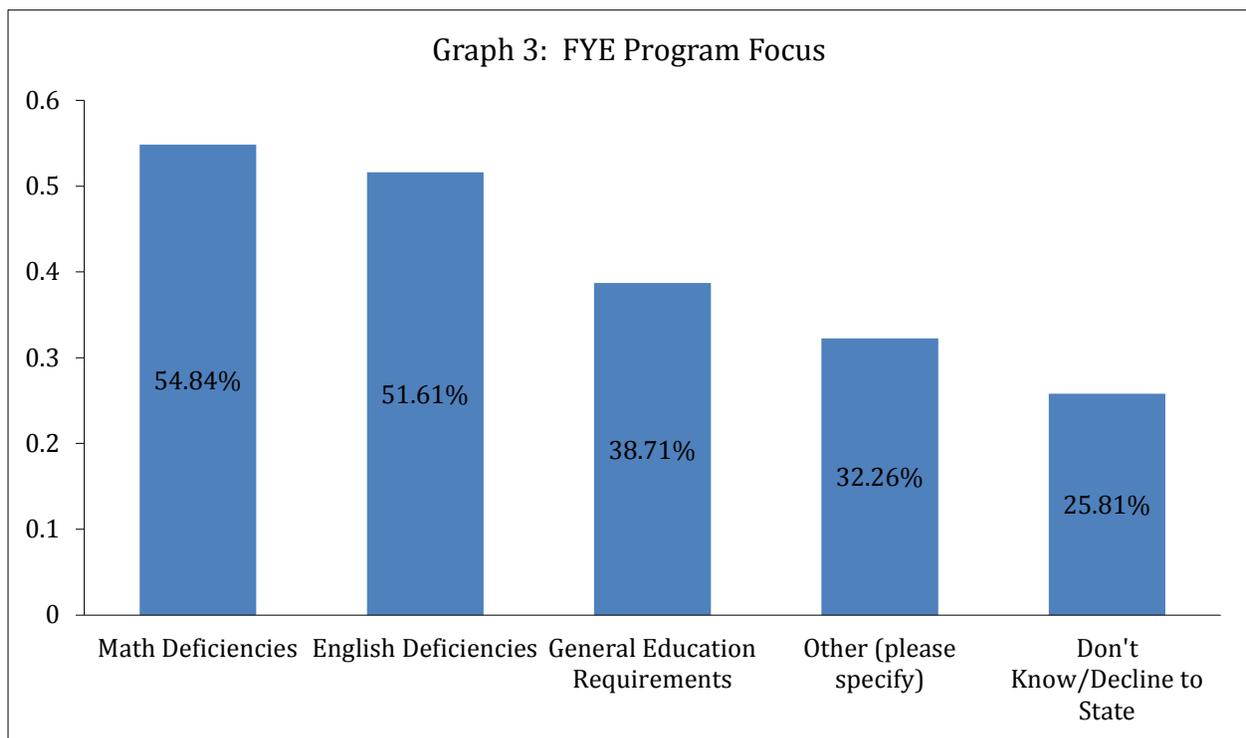


Over three-quarters of the programs served 50 or more students in 2010-2011 (77.42%). Of the remainder, 3.23% each served fewer than 10 and 20-29 students, and 16.12% declined to state.

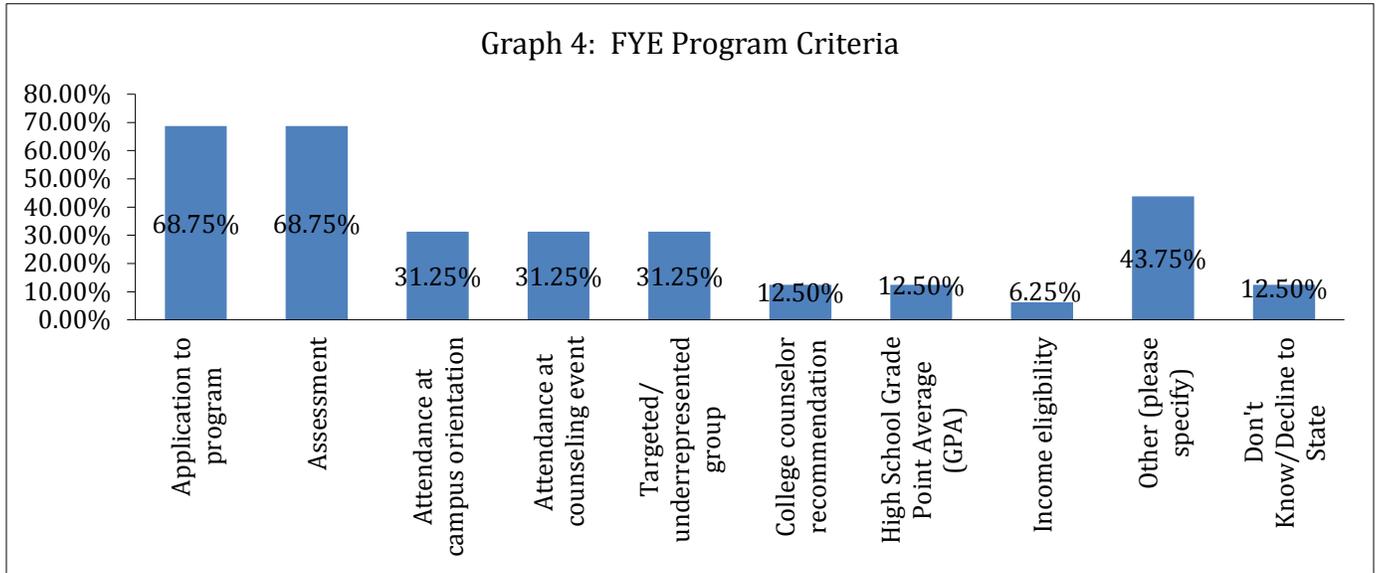
FYE programs most commonly included academic support services (70.97%), education plan (70.97%), and orientation (70.97%). Almost two-thirds included designated FYE sections (64.52%). Over half included campus tour(s) (58.06%) and embedded counseling/guidance classes (54.84%). Just under half included block scheduling (48.39%) and early alert (48.39%). Over 45% included supplemental instruction (45.16%) and over 41.94% included assigned counselors.



With regards to FYE program focus, about half the programs focused on math deficiencies (54.84%) and/or English deficiencies (51.61%). Over a third (38.71%) focused on general education requirements. Other areas focused on included general college preparation and accelerated completion of math and English sequences.



Almost 60.00% of programs selected their students from local high schools (58.06%), while 12.90% did not. The remaining 29.03% declined to state. When selecting students, 51.61% used established criteria, 19.35% did not, and 29.03% declined to state. Of the 16 respondents using established criteria, an application to the program (68.75%) and assessment (68.75%) were most commonly used. Attendance at campus orientation (31.25%), attendance at counseling event (31.25%), and targeted/underrepresented group (e.g. ethnicity, age, veteran status) (31.25%) were also frequently used criteria.



Over 40.00% of FYE programs enrolled their students in “Learning Communities” (41.94%) and 25.81% did not. The remaining 32.26% declined to state. What the “Learning Community” consisted of varied. Some merely enrolled the students in the same counseling class, while others enrolled them in the same math, English, and counseling class. Other configurations also occurred.

Students were offered priority enrollment in pre-selected classes in 45.16% of programs. They were not offered priority enrollment in 22.58% of programs, and 32.26% declined to state.

Various measures were used to define FYE program success. Almost two-thirds (64.52%) of programs measured success by term-to-term persistence (Fall-to-Fall or Fall-to-Spring), 41.94% measured it by grade point average (GPA) compared to non-participants, and 35.48% measured success by successful completion of at least one basic skills course. Just over one-fifth (22.58% each) measured success by successful completion of a course at least one level above their prior basic skills enrollment and completion of 12 or more college-level credits. Success rate was used by 16.13% of programs, and 12.90% used retention rate to measure success.

Table 1: FYE Program Measurement of Success

| Measurement | Number | Percent |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| Term-to-Term Persistence (Fall-to-Fall or Fall-to-Spring) | 20 | 64.52% |
| GPA Compared to Non-Participants | 13 | 41.94% |
| Successful Completion of at Least One Basic Skills Course | 11 | 35.48% |
| Successful Completion of a Course at Least One Level Above Their Prior Basic Skills Enrollment | 7 | 22.58% |
| Completion of 12 or More College-Level Credits | 7 | 22.58% |
| Success Rate | 5 | 16.13% |
| Retention Rate | 4 | 12.90% |
| Other | 5 | 16.13% |
| Don't Know/Decline to State | 10 | 32.26% |

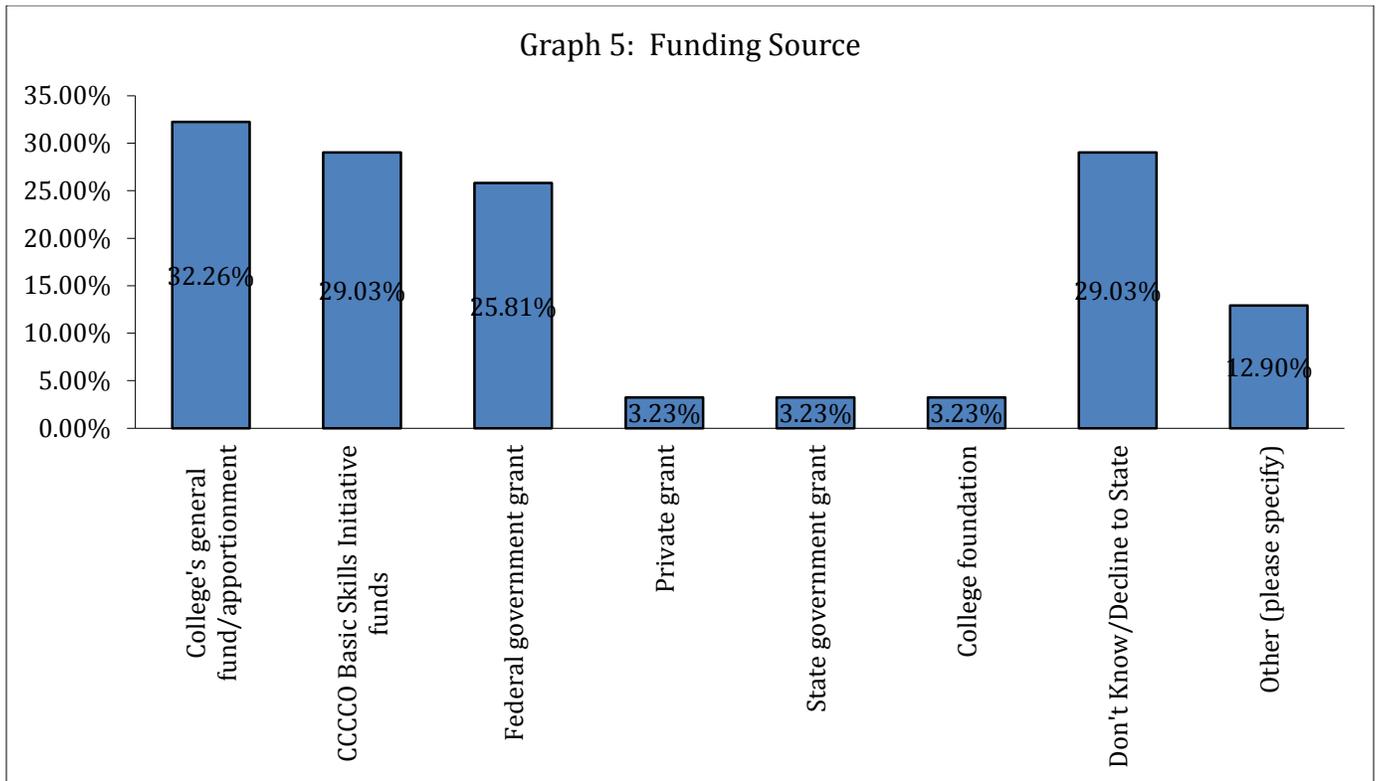
About one-fourth of programs were implemented all at once (25.81%), 32.26% were implemented incrementally, and 6.45% were implemented some other way. The remaining 35.48% of respondents declined to state.

The 2010-2011 budget for FYE programs ranged from \$10,000 to over \$500,000, with almost half of respondents declining to state (48.39%).

Table 2: Budget

| Budget | Number | Percent |
|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Less than \$50,000 | 3 | 9.68% |
| \$50-99,000 | 2 | 6.45% |
| \$100-199,000 | 2 | 6.45% |
| \$200-499,999 | 2 | 6.45% |
| \$500,000 or more | 2 | 6.45% |
| Other | 5 | 16.13% |
| Don't Know/Decline to State | 15 | 48.39% |

Almost one-third of programs were funded through the college's general fund/apportionment (32.26%), 29.03% were funded through the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Basic Skills Initiative funds, and 25.81% were funded through a federal government grant. About 30% declined to state (29.03%).

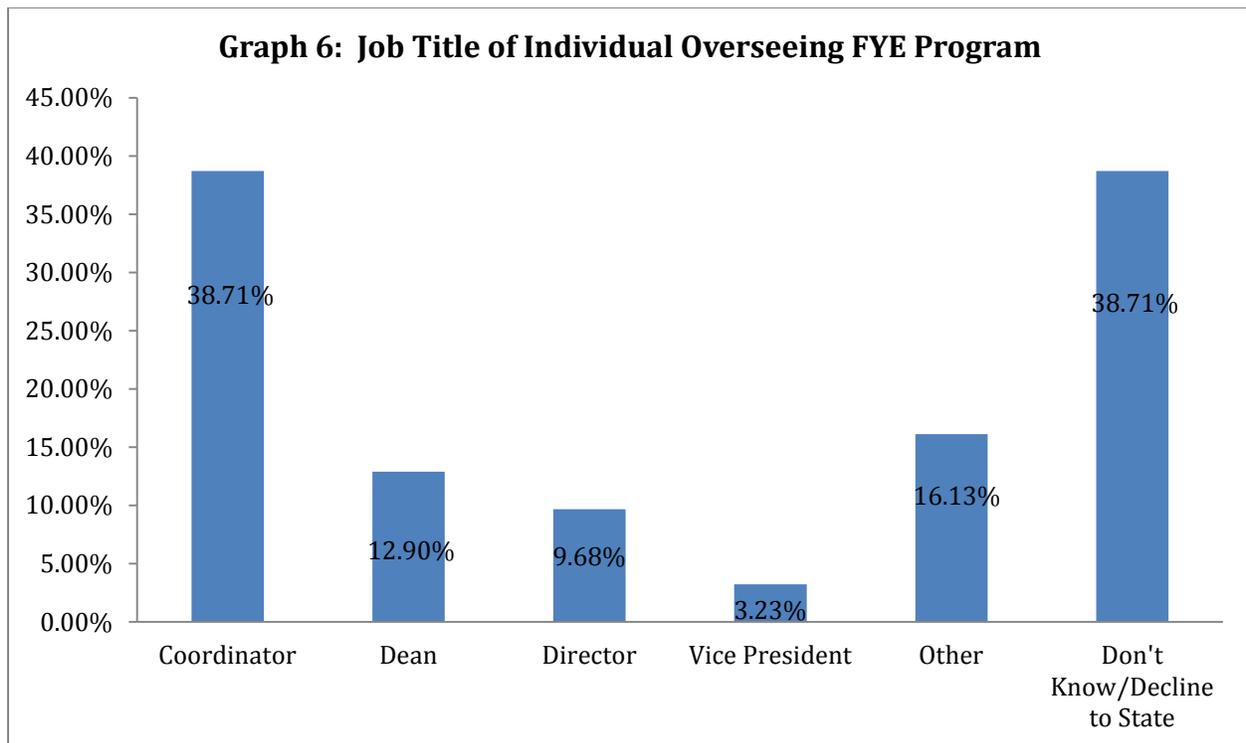


On average, FYE programs had 2.21 full-time individuals and 2.58 part-time individuals overseeing the program. Over one-third (38.71%) did not specify the number of full-time individuals, and almost two-thirds (61.29%) did not specify the number of part-time individuals.

Table 3: Number of Individuals Overseeing FYE Program

| <u>Number of Individuals</u> | <u>Respondents</u> | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| | <u>Full-Time</u> | | <u>Part-Time</u> | |
| | <u>Number</u> | <u>Percent</u> | <u>Number</u> | <u>Percent</u> |
| None | 1 | 3.23% | 3 | 9.68% |
| 1 | 5 | 16.13% | 1 | 3.23% |
| 2 | 8 | 25.81% | 1 | 3.23% |
| 3 | 2 | 6.45% | 3 | 9.68% |
| 4 | 1 | 3.23% | 2 | 6.45% |
| 5 | 1 | 3.23% | 1 | 3.23% |
| 6 | 1 | 3.23% | 1 | 3.23% |
| Don't Know/Decline to State | 12 | 38.71% | 19 | 61.29% |

Most programs were administered by a coordinator (38.71%). If more than one person administered the program, multiple job titles may have been specified.



Two-thirds of respondents did not know how many FTE(s) were allotted to their program or declined to state (67.74%). Of those who did respond, answers varied greatly.

Interviews

Key themes from the in-depth interviews included:

- Inclusion of a counseling or student success course in the FYE program
- Contract with FYE program students
- Faculty and student buy-in
- Institutionalization of funding
- Scale of implementation
- Professional development
- Cooperation with Institutional Research to provide background information and follow-up metrics

A number of the programs implemented by those granting in-depth interviews included a counseling or student success course, often two courses—one the first semester and one the second. These varied from 1-3 units. Those with 1 unit courses wanted to increase it to 3 as they felt that a 1 unit course was not sufficient.

Two of the interviewees reported that their institutions implemented contracts with their FYE students stipulating what the college would provide and what was expected of the student.

Interviewees stressed the importance of faculty buy-in; several advocated having an FYE program proponent active on shared governance and other key committees. One college also recommended having student buy-in and voluntary participation; his institution found that mandatory participation had a negative impact on the program.

One interviewee at a college with an FYE program suggested starting at one level below transfer rather than with lower levels as persistence is better among this group even without an FYE course.

A few programs were grant funded, and the interviewees expressed concern as to what would happen when the grants ended. Institutionalization of the program and inclusion in the general budget was considered important.

Interviewees' recommendations regarding scale of implementation varied. One college recommended implementing the program at full-scale immediately; another recommended starting with one or two cohorts of 25-30 students and building from there.

Multiple interviewees stressed the importance of professional development, particularly attending various conferences focused on students' experience the first year of college.

Interviewees indicated a strong relationship with the college's Institutional Research Department was important to provide background research prior to implementing the program and follow-up metrics such as success, persistence and retention after implementation.

Both colleges without FYE programs interviewed had some components in place, such as a bridge program, outreach to local high schools, and/or orientation. Both hoped to further implement an FYE program, but it was not on the immediate horizon. Desired components included a freshman course, career/educational counseling, and summer orientation. Budget cuts were one reason cited for the delay in implementing full FYE programs.

The Merced College Office of Grants and Institutional Research will be available for follow-up regarding this FYE survey and its results.

Andrea Hall-Cuccia

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(209) 384-6370

October 5, 2012

Appendix A: Survey Instrument

First Year Experience

Dear Colleague,

Several California Community Colleges have implemented First Year Experience (FYE) programs in the past few years. Merced College is considering an FYE program as a means to achieve greater student retention and success. The Merced College Office of Grants and Institutional Research is conducting a brief, on-line survey to gain insight from colleges that have these programs. Your responses will remain confidential and will help inform Merced College's development of an FYE program.

The survey should take 15-30 minutes to complete.

This survey will close by August 24, 2012.

For further information, please contact Dr. Kevin Kistler, Dean of Instruction, English, Basic Skills, Child Development, at kevin.kistler@mccd.edu or Cherie Davis, Director of Grants and Institutional Research at cherie.davis@mccd.edu.

Thank you for your assistance!

Sincerely,

Kevin Kistler, Ed.D.

Merced College Dean

of Instruction

English, Basic Skills, Child Development

209-381-6489

1. Does your college have an First Year Experience (FYE) program?

Yes

No

Don't Know/Decline to State

2. How many students did your FYE program serve in academic year 2010-2011?

Less than 10

10-19

20-29

30-39

40-49

50 or more

3. What components does your FYE program include? (Check all that apply.)

- Orientation
- Campus Tour
- Education Plan
- Assigned Counselors
- Embedded Counseling/Guidance Classes
- Academic Support Services
- Supplemental Instruction (SI)
- Designated FYE Sections
- Early Alert
- Block Scheduling
- Compressed Term
- Other (please specify)

5

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4. What is the focus of your FYE program? (Check all that apply.)

- English Deficiencies
- Math Deficiencies
- General Education Requirements
- Other (please specify)

5. Are your FYE program students selected from area high schools?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know/Decline to State

6. Do you use established criteria to select students for your FYE program?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know/Decline to State

First Year Experience

7. What criteria do you use? (Check all that apply.)

- Application to program
- High School counselor recommendation
- College counselor recommendation
- High School instructor recommendation
- College instructor recommendation
- Attendance at counseling event
- Attendance at campus orientation
- Assessment
- High School Grade Point Average (GPA)
- College Grade Point Average (GPA)
- Income eligibility
- Targeted/underrepresented group (e.g. ethnicity, age, veteran status) (please specify under "other")
- Other (please specify)

8. Are FYE program students enrolled in Learning Communities?

- Yes (describe below)
- No
- Don't Know/Decline to State

If yes, describe your Learning Communities

9. Are FYE students offered priority enrollment for pre-selected classes?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know/Decline to State

10. How do you measure FYE program success? (check all that apply.)

- GPA compared to non-participants
- Fall- to Fall- persistence
- Successful completion of at least one basic skills course
- Successful completion of a course at least one level above their prior basic skills enrollment
- Completion of 12 or more college-level credits
- Other (please specify)
-

[Redacted]

11. Was your FYE program implemented all at once or incrementally?

- All components were implemented at the same time
- Components were added incrementally
- Don't Know/Decline to State
- Other (please specify)
-

[Redacted]

12. What was your 2010-2011 budget for your FYE program?

13. How is this program funded? (check all that apply.)

- Local government grant
- State government grant
- Federal government grant
- Private grant
- California Community College's Chancellor's Office Basic Skills funds
- College foundation
- College's general fund/apportionment
- Other (please specify)
-

[Redacted]

14. How many full-time and/or part time people oversee your FYE Program

Full-time

[Redacted]

Part-Time

[Redacted]

15. What is the job title(s) of the person(s) who oversees the FYE program?

1 [Redacted] 2

16. How many FTE(s) are allocated for your FYE program?

17. Please select your college from the drop down menu below.

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18. What is your job title?



19. Optional Follow-up: Please provide your full name, phone number and the best time/day of the week if you would like to be contacted by the Merced College Office of Grants and Institutional Research staff. Alternatively, you may contact us by phone at (209) 386-6786 or by e-mail at research@mccd.edu.

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Thank you for your participation!

For further information, please contact Dr. Kevin Kistler, kevin.kistler@mccd.edu or Cherie Davis, cherie.davis@mccd.edu.

