General Education First-year Experience Proposal

# Proposal:

## The General Education Committee will add a new category – First Year Experience (FYE)

* 1. The GEC will be responsible for creating and setting criteria for FYE courses.
  2. The GEC will be responsible for approving FYE courses.
  3. FYE courses must be from 2-4 hours.
  4. FYE courses must meet the FYE Learning Outcomes and contain required material.
  5. Preexisting courses could be approved as FYE courses so long as they meet the FYE Learning Outcomes and contain required material.
  6. FYE courses for online-only programs will be given flexibility (but not exemptions) for the required material.

1. The General Education Elective will be removed and replaced with the FYE course.
2. Students will be required to take a FYE course as part of their General Education Program requirements.
   1. During the transition year, 2016-2017 incoming undeclared students will be required to take a FYE course.
   2. During the transition year, 2016-2017 students that have already declared a major may also fulfill their Gen. Ed. requirement by taking a Gen. Ed. elective. However, colleges will need to ensure that students not taking a FYE course complete Campus SaVe training and a Career Assessment.
3. Transfer students that have already completed similar required content will not have to take the course.

# Motivation

This course serves two major functions:

1. This course would serve as a cornerstone for new student success initiatives with goals of improving completion and retention of students at YSU, and
2. this course would allow YSU to fulfill potential mandates including:
   1. Federal Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (Campus SaVE) student training
   2. Career Assessments.

According to a survey by Barefoot, Griffen, and Koch (2012) approximately 96% of institutions offer and 80% of students nationwide participate in a first-year experience. Of those institutions that offer first-year experiences 85% view the first-year experience as having a medium or high perceived cost-effectiveness. Research from Griffin and Romm (2008) shows a correlation between students taking first-year seminar courses and student retention rates for schools similar to YSU.

As part of the 2013 federal reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) colleges and universities are to provide new students with training for sexual violence prevention and awareness and administer on-going prevention and awareness campaigns. Ohio’s “A Safer Campus Guidebook”, (available at [ohiohighered.org](https://www.ohiohighered.org/sites/ohiohighered.org/files/uploads/CampusSafety/A-Safer-Campus_Final-Draft_071515.pdf)) provides recommendations and guidance for Ohio’s colleges and universities and lists an extensive set of learning objectives for potential training programs.

# Learning Goals and Outcomes (All FYE Courses):

## Goal: Students will participate in a culture of community

### Outcomes:

1. Students will identify and participate in student organizations and co-curricular activities that fit their interests and goals
2. Students will establish working relationships with faculty, advisors, and student support services
3. Students will evaluate issues of living in a diverse society
4. Students will engage in and reflect on a common, University-wide experience

### Required Activities:

1. Students will be required to participate in a minimum of four student activities. At least one must be outside of the college. Activities can include (but are not limited to) presentations from guest lecturers, college events (STEM day), student organization activities, and fine and performing arts events (Outcome 1.)
2. Students will be required to engage in sexual violence prevention training as part of the University’s requirements for the Campus SaVe act. (Outcome 3)
3. Students will be required to participate in a common intellectual experience as developed by the First Year Experience Committee. (Outcome 4)

## Goal: Students will learn skills that will promote academic and professional growth

### Outcomes:

1. Students will conduct an exploration and development of their academic interests and career pathways
2. Students will practice skills needed to manage their financial resources and situation
3. Students will practice skills need to improve written communication and develop critical thinking

### Required Activities:

1. Student will undergo a career assessment (Outcome 1.)
2. Students will attend a session on financial aid and student debt (Outcome 2.)
3. Students will engage in activities that involve writing and critical thinking (Outcome 3.)

# Required Activities

Required activities will be conducted as follows:

1. Student activities will be tracked through Student Success and Peer Mentors or by instructors
2. Sexual Violence Prevention Training (Campus Save) will be developed and administered through Title IX, Student Success, and Student Life with assistance from faculty advisors
3. Career Assessment will be developed and administered through Student Success
4. Common Intellectual Experience will be designed by Gen. Ed. and the First Year Experience Committee and administered through Student Success and the First Year Experience Committee
5. Financial Aid and Student Debt Session will be designed and administered by Financial Aid, Student Success, and faculty advisors
6. Writing and critical thinking activities will be the responsibility of the instructor.
   1. Minimum required writing of approximately 2500 words (about 10 pages) over multiple assignments. One assignment must require multiple drafts and be approximately 1000 words (3-4 pages.)
7. Instructors should reserve time in the class for university announcements and potential assessments

Schedules for required sessions will be available to instructors in May-August.

# Templates

The Gen. Ed. committee will only evaluate courses based on their ability to meet the required learning outcomes and contain the required material. Courses may contain additional material and be locally controlled. However, courses should be limited to 25 students. However, for instructor qualification purposes we expect courses to fall into one of three categories:

1. University 101

* More Student Success Content with Potential Focus on
  1. Career Exploration
  2. Student Activities and Networking
  3. Soft Skill Development
  4. Financial Literacy
* Some Writing and Critical Thinking

1. Hybrid

* Some Student Success
* Contains Writing and Critical Thinking
* Same course could be taught by multiple faculty
* Connected to One Aspect of the University’s Mission
  + Diversity
  + Sustainability
  + Global Perspectives
  + Research
  + Community Engagement

1. Freshman Seminar

* Thematic topic focused on a big idea
* Could be a special topics course
* More faculty-specific course
* Focus on writing and critical thinking
* Only includes mandatory student success content

# Qualifications for Teaching the FYE Course

Qualifications for teaching a FYE Course will depend on the type of course.

## Seminars

### Instructors:

* Full-time faculty

### Qualifications

* Master’s degree in the field of or a related field to the topic of the seminar
* Master’s degree (any field) plus 18 hours in the field of or related field to the topic of the seminar.

## Hybrid

### Instructors:

* Full-time faculty
* Long-Serving part-time (with Dean’s Approval)
* Emeritus faculty
* University Staff (when qualified)

### Qualifications

* Master’s degree a field related to the course’s connection the University’s Mission
  + Research oriented courses should be taught by members of the University’s Graduate School
* Master’s degree (any field) plus 18 hours in the field related to the course’s connection the University’s Mission

## University 101

### Instructors:

* Full-time faculty
* Long-Serving part-time (with Dean’s Approval)
* Emeritus faculty
* University Staff (when qualified)

### Qualifications

* Master’s degree in any field plus relevant experience and training
  + Courses defined as occupational are not subject to the HLC’s 18 hour rule.
  + Courses that have more specialized content, such as a financial literacy course, may require additional credentials.

# Administering the FYE Course

The GEC only approves courses as FYE courses, and the staffing of the courses will be up to the college/department that offers the course. There could be a variety of FYE courses with some being 2-hour University 101 courses and some being 3-hour Seminar style courses. Therefore, each college/department offering a FYE course will need to determine appropriate staffing. Courses should be capped at approximately 25 students. For seminars, colleges may wish to create a special topics—freshman seminar course.

Those teaching FYE courses, however, will need to receive training on particular issues related the first year experience. For instance, staff or faculty teaching common intellectual experience will likely need training on its expectations and goals. While specific content, such as sexual violence prevention, will not be the direct responsibility of the instructor, it is recommended that course instructors receive supplemental instruction in order to direct questions through to appropriate channels. Training would be provided by content experts on campus.

With the consent of the instructor, courses will be assigned a Peer Mentor. Assessment and quality assurance of the required content of the FYE course, along with tracking of participation in campus-wide FYE events would be the responsibility of Student Success. It is recommended that content be aligned with SOAR and Orientation.

# References

Griffin, A. M., & Romm, J. (Eds.). (2008) Exploring the evidence, vol. IV: Reporting research on first-year seminars. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition. Retrieved 11/20/2015, from <http://www.sc.edu/fye/resources/fyr/index.html>

# Supporting Material

[October 2015 Presentation to Senate](https://www.dropbox.com/s/jmu2egg2avrfm3w/FYE%20Presentation%20to%20Senate%20Oct_2015.pptx?dl=0)

[October 2015 Focus Group Presentation](FYE%20Focus%20Group%20Presentation%20Oct_2015.pptx)

[Focus Group Minutes](GE%20FYE%20Focus%20Group%20Meeting%20Notes.docx)

[Seminar Example Syllabus](God%20and%20Evil-Sample%20FYE%20Syllabus.doc)

[Hybrid Example Syllabus](YSU%20Research%20Frontiers.docx)

[University 101 Example Syllabus](YSU%20Foundations.docx)