

First-Year Experience: Connect to Complete Cleveland State Community College

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Cleveland State's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), First-Year Experience: *Connect to Complete* is a program designed to support and challenge our first-year students as they transition from either the workforce or high school into college. The QEP contributes to Cleveland State's Mission by equipping first-year students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities and available support services. Therefore, the program increases the likelihood that students will persist, graduate, and possess a skill set that will be applicable at a transfer institution or the workforce upon degree/certificate completion.

In addition to supporting Cleveland State's Mission, the QEP supports three key priorities set forth in Cleveland State's (and the Tennessee Board of Regent's) Strategic Plan. Specifically the initiative will (1) improve higher education opportunities for Tennesseans, (2) increase the number of students receiving post-secondary awards, and (3) achieve excellence by improving access and completion rates. The program consists of two major components.

The first major component is a holistic First-Year Experience (FYE) Program which integrates and assesses several long-standing programs with a newly developed First-Year Seminar (FYS). These programs assist students during their first semester in college, including mandatory Orientation, New Student Advising and Registration (NSAR) processes, an optional celebratory event to kick-off the start of the new academic year, and a 3 credit hour First-Year Seminar (FYS). Chronologically speaking, these components occur during the student's first semester as students *create connections* within the college community.

This second component focuses on program of study persistence and completion and is being achieved through revising our academic advising and promoting an Early Alert (EA) program. This component includes: 1) mandatory academic advising, partnered with a newly created academic advising syllabus, and 2) increasing faculty participation in Early Alert.