

Race2Success

Owensboro Community & Technical College

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College provides essential preparation for today's economy. Too often, however, students do not appreciate all that it can do for them. Even those who understand that college can lead to improved career opportunities and a higher income do not realize the positive and transformative effects that college can have on one's life.

Through extensive, campus-wide discussion, faculty and staff at Owensboro Community and Technical College formulated several fundamental questions that we hoped to address through our second Quality Enhancement Plan, including:

- What can we do to convince students to invest time in their studies?
- How can we best teach soft skills like teamwork, attendance, and problem solving?
- What must we do to encourage engagement with faculty, staff, and fellow students?
- How does a college create a sense of belonging and help students find their place in the world?

After a year of research and planning, we discovered that we were missing one crucial and proven method—a first year experience program that would introduce the college's services, set expectations, celebrate successes, and connect students to people who can help. This was confirmed with the publication of *A Matter of Degrees: Practices to Pathways*, in September 2014 by the Center for Community College Student Engagement. Of fourteen high-impact practices for community college student success identified by the report, only two were clearly lacking at the college: a first year experience and a student success course. We had the elements to make this happen—a multitude of on- and off-campus opportunities for student engagement, a deeply devoted faculty and staff, tremendous support from our community partners—and a required first year experience would allow us to better create an environment where we could share our enthusiasm, energy, and expertise with students.

This plan is designed to do just that. While it is based on research and best practices from around the nation, it is a college-specific experience. Through a customized focus on our students—their hopes for the future and the journey that will take them there—we believe we can help them reach their goals.

In sum, their success is our success.

We look forward to welcoming future graduates to our academic community as we help them “Race 2 Success” at Owensboro Community and Technical College.