



Connect — Engage — Lead — Apply:
Improving Retention through
Scaffolded Engagement

Texas Wesleyan University is an institution that deliberately serves a highly diverse student population. To that end, we are focusing on improvements to the college experience to close retention and graduation gaps. This focus builds on other retention and completion efforts the University has been undertaking over the past several years. The purpose of the Texas Wesleyan QEP is to make the college experience as engaging as possible, both in academics and in student life. Keying in on early engagement, as literature related to first-generation and underrepresented minorities has demonstrated, will help improve retention rates for all students, and ultimately improve on-time graduation rates.

The first academic intervention includes self-introduction videos by students in two courses taken during the first three semesters (speech and composition 2). They will revise these during the semester to help refine their goals for college in speech, and to reflect upon what they have accomplished after about one year in composition 2. Additionally, the University is deploying thematic branding of each academic level, with a badging system to help students and their advisors track progress in engaging and in reaching academic and personal goals. The themes are (First year) Connect, (Second) Engage, (Third) Lead and (Fourth) Apply. Assessment includes tracking of different cohorts (e.g., athletes, Pell eligible students, different ethnicities/races as well as genders, ...) to determine which activities are most effective for any specific group.

The theme-based years provide the link between academics and campus life. The campus-life portion includes intentional outreach to improve participation in campus activities (e.g., clubs, events, community engagement). As students progress, they will be steered toward focused activities to increase internship connections and placements, especially during the sophomore and junior years.

Expected student outcomes include a clearer understanding of goals and expectations related to students' time at Texas Wesleyan. We also envision swifter connection and engagement with the campus community and the students' classmates as well as the development of a stronger safety net for all students. Finally, we foresee that the QEP will lead to higher level of participation in campus activities and events, as well as improved student readiness to assume campus leadership roles.

QEP Director:
Steven Daniell
Associate Provost of Academic Affairs and Professor of French
sdaniell@txwes.edu