

Quality Enhancement Plan: ***No Excuses!* First-Year Seminar**

Institution: Amarillo College

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Executive Summary

Building upon institutional data and best practices research, Amarillo College (AC) has determined that the implementation of a customized, First-Year Seminar (FYS) course will serve as the focal point of its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Designed to enhance student learning by improving the "College Readiness" of entering freshmen, the FYS targets student needs which College personnel have determined are significant barriers to AC student success based upon triangulated data sources, including data related to developmental education status, retention rates, poverty, and student-identified barriers.

Research findings of David Conley, George Kuh, Vincent Tinto, et al. have guided the QEP Team and FYS Faculty groups in the development of an FYS curriculum which addresses unique AC student needs. Specific learning objectives embedded in the transfer-level course include:

- 1) Increase self-awareness.
- 2) Take charge of your life.
- 3) Identify and interact within your communities.
- 4) Manage your money.
- 5) Communicate effectively using a variety of formats.
- 6) Demonstrate information literacy skills.
- 7) Demonstrate effective study skills.
- 8) Demonstrate creative and critical thinking skills.
- 9) Develop an integrated educational and career pathway.

It is the intent of AC to require entering, First-Time-at-Amarillo-College students to enroll in a 3-hour FYS as a part of the 42-hour core curriculum, effective Fall 2014. Unique to the FYS course offerings will be the alignment of the FYS by Career Clusters, creating the opportunity to engage students in the College Readiness curriculum within their identified areas of study (i.e. Health Sciences FYS; Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics FYS; Arts, A/V Technology & Communications FYS). Long-term evolution of the course necessitates the development of 1- and 2-hour FYS courses to meet the unique needs of the Career & Technical Education (CTE) student who is engaged in a program of shorter duration focused on immediate employment upon completion of the CTE program.

First-Year Seminar assessments will be conducted in coordination with the Planning and Advancement Division, ensuring that all FYS assessments are integrated through a "closing the loops" process – a process which necessitates continual assessment to generate improvement. The *No Excuses!* FYS assessment plan consists of three primary outcomes assessment components – institutional assessments, program-level assessments, and course assessments – allowing for both direct and indirect assessments.