

QEP Title: Tyler Connections: Making the First Year Count

Institution: John Tyler Community College

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Summary of Plan

The broad goals of this Quality Enhancement Plan are: (1) a positive, supportive first year experience, (2) increased opportunities for new students to build connections with full-time faculty in a College Success Skills (SDV) course, (3) meaningful advising experiences with faculty, and (4) improved retention from first semester to second semester and beyond. These goals will be achieved through a focused effort to require early enrollment in an SDV course, meaningful SDV classroom experiences that help students build connections with students, faculty, and their academic goals, as well as an enhanced faculty advising program.

The course objectives include providing students with: 1) an overview of career options, 2) information about general college resources, 3) an overview of important college policies, 4) information related to academic programs and how student can achieve their academic goals, 5) information about optimal academic performance, and 6) information on life-management and social and personal wellness. The course is recommended to be completed in a student's first semester.

A comprehensive faculty development program will help faculty understand and present the College Success course content. Professional development in the area of advising and academic planning is also planned. Developing standardized course content with specific learning outcome assessments will enable the College to focus assessment of the first year experience. Faculty advisors will connect with new advisees with a welcome letter in order to create an "open-door" advising atmosphere. Finally, new students will communicate with their faculty advisors prior to their second semester registration.