



Executive Summary

Freshman Encounter: e³ 4 life

T. A. Lawson State Community College's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), Freshman Encounter: e³ 4 life is designed to equip, engage and empower (e³) freshmen with skills and knowledge that will contribute to their success at Lawson State and provide effective engagement strategies to facilitate that success. The three-pronged initiative assists students in making the academic and social transition to college and is integrated in the college's mission, vision and goals. The QEP is designed to help students learn to better navigate the scope and depth of what a full college experience has to offer; improve student engagement levels; broaden individual skills, abilities and horizons; strengthen intellectual and individual responsibility and independence; and actively involve students in the learning process. The strategic approach of the QEP involves three key components which serve to embed student engagement campus-wide and improve student learning. The plan includes the revamping of the freshman orientation course (*newly entitled, The Freshman Academy*), the Faculty & Staff Academy, and the creation of a SPACE Center (Student Persistence through Assistance and Collaborative Efforts).

The Freshman Academy is designed to equip, engage and empower students and will provide students with an array of experimental learning opportunities geared towards specific student learning outcomes. Each expected outcome addresses a specific and targeted area that the college (faculty, staff, students and administrators), the community and other stakeholders as well as strategic planning data have indicated as areas in need of improvement. The targeted areas include: technology skills, critical thinking skills, communication skills (oral, written and listening), social skills, time management skills, study skills, leadership skills and accepting personal responsibility.

The Faculty & Staff Academy is housed in the Center for Teaching Excellence and Learning (CTEL) and is designed to equip, engage and empower faculty and staff with enhanced engagement skills. Faculty and staff will be exposed to a variety of seminars, workshops and activities that are focused on the teaching and learning process and how to engage students in that process. Participants will gain the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in fostering student learning and enabling the College to meet its goals college-wide. Eighteen instructors (Freshman Academy Master Educators) were selected to teach within the Freshman Academy and successfully completed the Faculty Academy training experience which comprised of nine modules developed by the QEP Professional Development Team. The first eight modules are designed to provide faculty with a variety of experiences that will enable them to become more versed on student engagement, classroom technologies, learning styles, motivation techniques, team building, and so forth. The last component is a series of activities that work to teach faculty the actual Freshman Academy course itself. Faculty will be exposed to each lesson, project, and activity covered in the Freshman Academy and will be trained on the *My Skills Lab* component of the course. Faculty will also be familiarized with the Freshman Academy textbook and all other related course materials.

The SPACE Center (Student Persistence through Assistance and Collaborative Efforts) is a collaboration between Instructional and Student Services to facilitate student success. It is a comprehensive integrated academic, career, and counseling service center that addresses both academic and non-academic factors facing students and is designed to better equip, engage and empower students for success. Services include tutoring, counseling, advisement, mentoring, technology services, financial services assistance, academic support, non-academic support, referrals, and more.

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