

Starting Strong: Intentional Strategies for Improving First-Year Student Success
Executive Summary
Trinity University

Starting Strong: Intentional Strategies for Improving First-Year Student Success at Trinity University strengthens first-year advising, teaching, and academic support resource services.

The overarching goal of Starting Strong is straightforward: First-year students will become more aware of and engaged in practices that lead to success. Starting Strong aims to improve the University's faculty-based first-year advising by refining and expanding the training offered to new and experienced first-year advisers. Starting Strong aims to bring best practices into introductory-level teaching as well. Finally, Starting Strong aims to bolster academic support resources offered to first-year students, particularly in STEM fields (where most difficulties are encountered by first-year students).

The Student Learning Outcomes of Starting Strong are four-fold:

1. First-year students will demonstrate an understanding of the Pathways curriculum, registration procedures, and graduation requirements.
2. First-year students will be able to assess their academic performance by the fifth week of class to identify areas that need improvement.
3. First-year students will identify institutional resources that help them overcome academic challenges.
4. First-year students will demonstrate help-seeking behaviors to reach academic goals.

The Learning Environment Outcomes of Starting Strong are six-fold:

1. First-year students will have appropriate resources to be able to prepare for advising sessions.
2. Faculty advisers for first-year students will be adequately prepared for their role.
3. Faculty who teach introductory courses will incorporate research-based pedagogical practices that support student success.
4. Students will have adequate access to appropriate academic support resources.
5. Students and faculty will be aware of academic support resources.
6. Students' perceptions of their academic advising experience will improve.

The University will continually assess Starting Strong using multiple, relevant measurement tools. Student Learning Outcomes will be benchmarked and tested throughout the QEP cycle; outcomes will drive systematic improvement and innovation. Trinity University believes in Starting Strong because we know that a stronger first-year experience will yield the transformative education that all of our students deserve.

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