

Lessons Learned About Learning in the Foundations of Excellence® Self-Study Process

CIA/State Assessment Meeting
Valencia Community College
June 10, 2010



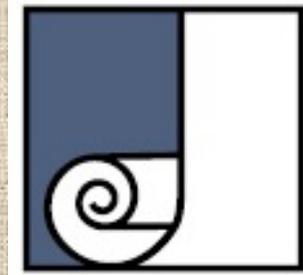
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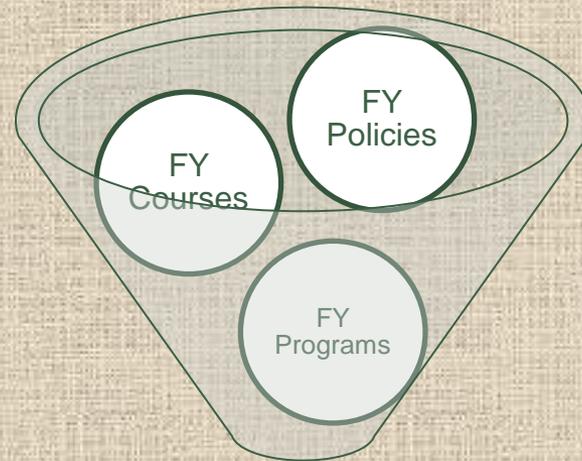
John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education
www.fyfoundations.org

CIA/State Assessment Meeting
Valencia Community College

What is Foundations of Excellence?

The First Year as a Single Unit of Analysis

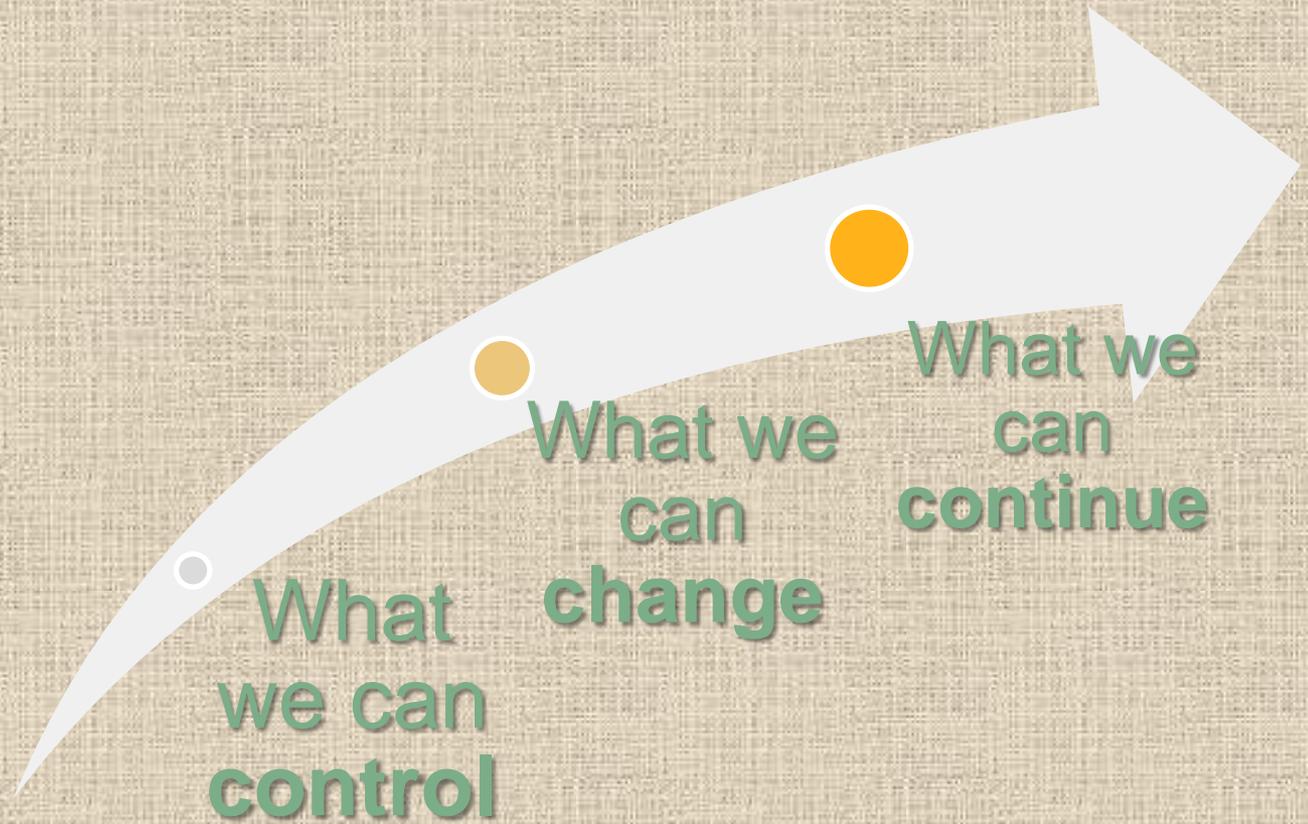
- **Students experience “the college” as a whole – not as an array of units/divisions.**
- **Assessment, historically, has chopped up the first year into artificially distinct programs.**



First College Year

What is
Foundations of Excellence?

A Focus on the Institution



What is Foundations of Excellence?

Builds on 30 year First-Year Experience reform movement

- Takes a holistic approach to the first year
- Aspirational, not minimum, standards
- Model for assessment and improvement
- Voluntary, comprehensive self study
- May be linked to reaccreditation
- Task force-based assessment





- Project began in 2003 with 4-year sector (with 124 pilot and 24 “Founding Institutions”)
- Extended in 2005 to 2-year institutions (with 88 pilot and 10 “Founding Institutions”)
- Piloted new 4-year Transfer Focus self study in 2009 (with six institutions)
- 2-Year Transfer Focus pilot will commence in August 2010
- To date, 167 institutions, both four-year and two-year, have participated in Foundations of Excellence



Florida Participants

Bethune Cookman University (07/08)

Edison State College (09/10)

Florida Southern College (06/07)

St. Petersburg College (06/07)

Valencia Community College (08/09)

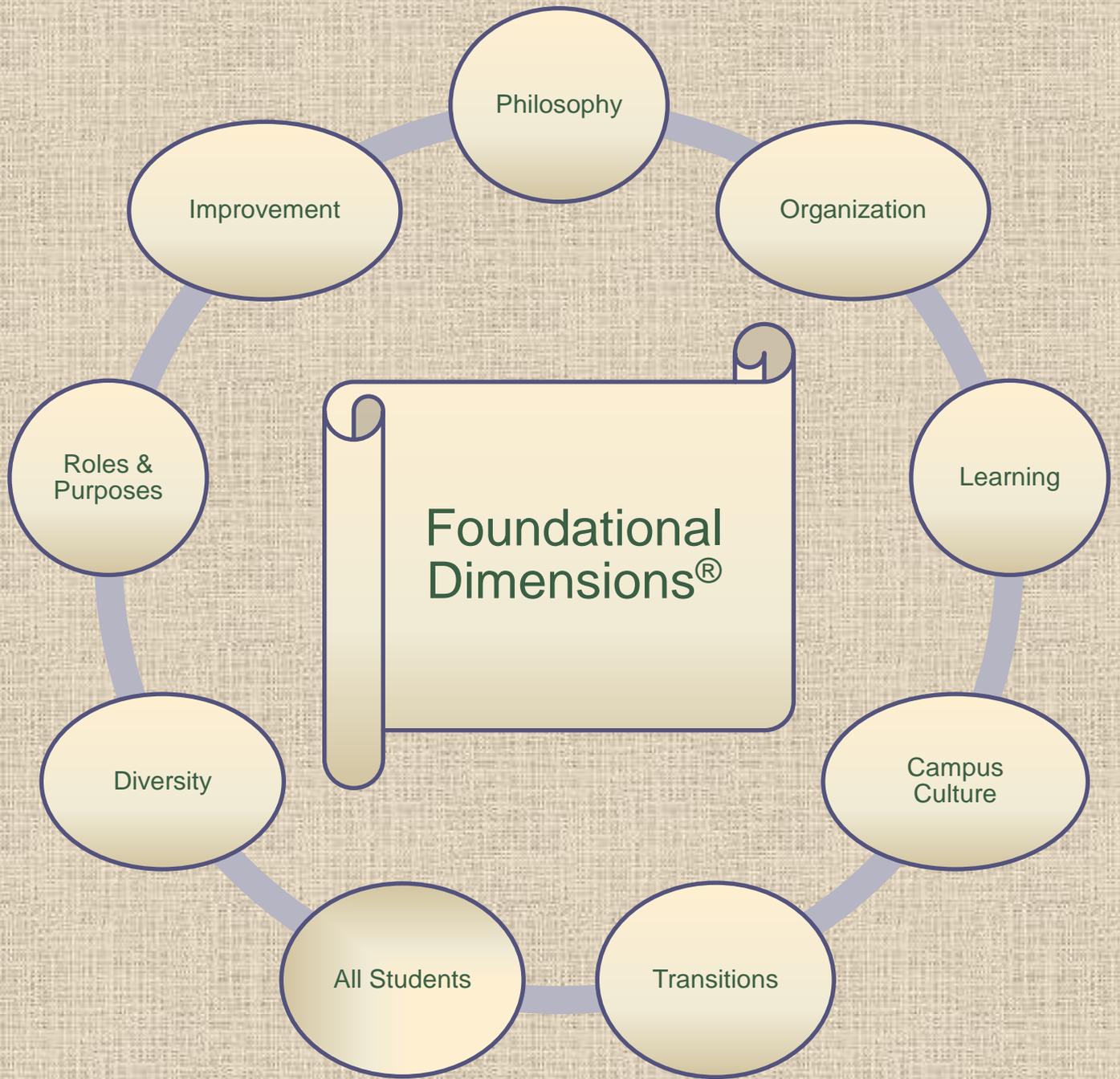


FoE Launch Meeting Asheville, NC

Key Components

- Foundational Dimensions®
- Performance Indicators
- Faculty Staff & Student Surveys
- Current Practices Inventory (CPI)
- FoEtec®
- Gardner Institute Guidance & Feedback

The Intellectual Framework



Philosophy

- *The problem:* Many approaches to the first year have no underlying philosophical base, no purpose beyond retention.
- *Why this Dimension is important:* The experience of first-year students should be crafted with a sense of educational purpose.
- *Performance Indicators:*
 - Whether the campus has a philosophy/rationale
 - Whether it has an influence on policy/practice
 - Whether it is disseminated

Organization

- *The problem:* No one in charge; inefficient and confusing “silos”
- *Why this Dimension is important:* Organization is essential to the realization of purpose.
- *Performance Indicators:*
 - Existing organizational structure(s); evaluation
 - Level of funding
 - Whether structure provides an integrated approach
 - Role of structure in faculty/staff development

Learning

- *The problem:* Inadequate attention to learning
- *Why this Dimension is important:* Learning is the primary purpose of going to college.
- *Performance Indicators*
 - The existence (and assessment) of articulated first-year learning goals
 - Use of effective pedagogies in high-enrollment courses
 - Measures of out-of-class learning
 - Appropriate course placement

Campus Culture

- *The problem:* Need for more meaningful faculty and staff involvement with new students
- *Why this Dimension is important:* Without involvement of faculty and staff, first-year initiatives are difficult to launch and sustain.
- *Performance Indicators:*
 - Institutional or unit encouragement of faculty and staff involvement
 - Expectations at the point of hire
 - Responsibility for retaining students

Transitions

- *The problem:* Uneven attention to elements of successful transition
- *Why this Dimension is important:* The success of the initial transition predicts future collegiate success.
- *Performance Indicators:*
 - The quality of communication to students – setting appropriate expectations
 - The quality of communication to support networks
 - Helping students establish connections
 - Academic advising

All Students

- *The problem:* Many initiatives reach only certain students; others do not reach populations with special needs.
- *Why this Dimension is important:* All new students have developmental needs that should be addressed.
- *Performance Indicators:*
 - What you know about the needs of particular students
 - What you do to meet those needs
 - How well you meet the needs of *all* students

Diversity

- *The problem:* Institutions vary in the degree to which they successfully address diversity issues.
- *Why this Dimension is important:* Education about human difference is an important component of the beginning college experience.
- *Performance Indicators:*
 - Students' exposure to diverse ideas
 - Students' exposure to diverse people
 - Whether the institution conveys "standards" for behavior in a civil and open environment

Roles & Purposes

- ***The problem:*** Students' narrow view of the purpose of higher education
- ***Why this Dimension is important:*** The first year is the time for exploration of roles and purposes.
- ***Performance Indicators:***
 - How well you communicate the institution's notion of purpose
 - Whether you provide students the opportunity to explore their motivation for higher education
 - How well you communicate the institution's rationale for its requirements – courses, skills, competencies

Improvement

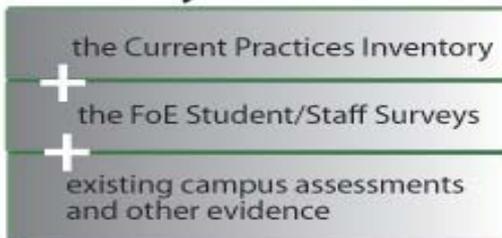
- *The problem:* Too few initiatives are subjected to rigorous assessment. Institutional isolation – lack of exposure to others
- *Why this Dimension is important:* Improvement is vital to sustainability and effectiveness.
- *Performance Indicators:*
 - The practice of assessment
 - The use of assessment for improvement
 - Other strategies for improvement

Key Components

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Foundations of Excellence (FoE) Self Study: The Flow of the Process

Preliminary Work



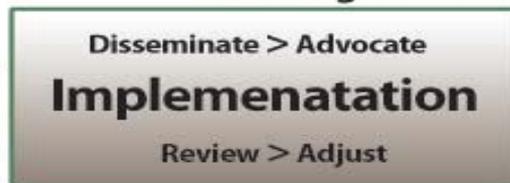
Dimension Committee Reports



Steering Committee Action Plan



Moving Forward



- **40 FoE institutions in the Southern Association region**
 - **Two have used the Foundations of Excellence process to develop a SACS QEP**
 - **Five have used the Foundation of Excellence process to address their QEP**

<http://www.fyfoundations.org/sacs.aspx>

When Stars are Aligned....

- Learning Centered Initiative
- Strategic Plan
<http://valenciacc.edu/strategicplan/documents/StrategicPlanBrochure.pdf>
- Achieving the Dream
- Foundations of Excellence

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FoE at Valencia

Learning Dimension

- Leaders:

Academic and Student Affairs

- Committee:

24 Members

- Process:

Divide and Conquer!

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PI 3.1 Common Learning Goals

Recommended Actions:

New Student Orientations Goals for new students.

If Valencia's desire is to address the needs and goals of new students, then this would be the opportunity to develop a targeted First Year Experience where these goals could be stated and communicated to students and made an integral part of their experience. What we have found is that there appears to be no centralized source or document that clearly states all the goals that Valencia specifically has that addresses the common learning goals for new students.

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Achieving the **D**ream contd.

Developmental **E**ducation **I**nitiative

Student **L**ife **S**kills

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Developmental Education Initiative

- DEI began work this spring on the College Success Infusion Project (The CLC has recommended we adopt the term “College Success Skills” rather than “College Readiness Skills”). We had an inter-disciplinary group of 23 faculty from all four campuses. The project focused on the following:
 - Analyzing the course outlines for English, Math, and Reading College Preparatory Courses and MAT 1033C, MAC 1105, ENC 1101, and ENC 1102
 - Revising the English, Math, and Reading course outlines for the above courses
 - Infusing the following College Success Skills: critical thinking, reading, motivation, note-taking, goal setting, and study skills into these courses.
 - Aligning course outcomes through the prep sequence and to the requisite general education courses, specifically MAC 1105, and ENC 1101 and 1102.

Student Life Skills

- SLS Infusion Project

Faculty development for infusion of College Success Skills into classes across the curriculum.

- Learning in Community (LinC) Courses

SLS LinC'd with Prep Math , English and Reading

- Supplemental Learning

Active in the 5 Highest Enrolled

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PI 3.2 Engaging Students

Recommended Actions:

Students will have common experiences that are aligned with the specific course outcomes of that particular course beginning with each of the 5 highest enrolled courses.

If the college somehow expends effort and resources into evaluating the new student engagement in each of these five classes and uses these evaluations as indicators, perhaps other classes would benefit as well. One useful model, Student Success, has common expectations of course materials, engagement, and presentation—college-wide. These five highest enrolled courses could then be approached as a freshman core program. This would ultimately provide freshmen with a positive learning experience in the classes that most of them will be taking. Another method for evaluating would be to adopt the same kinds of shared assessments that ENC1101 have adopted. In addition, the exit exam in MAT0024C provides a standard that might be modeled.

Align learning outcomes with General Education outcomes.

Instructional methods used in engaging students in learning should align with the learning outcomes of the Gen Ed program.

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Assessment Day Timeline

- Summer 2009

Destinations Assessment Plans

Gen Ed Program Outcome

Common Course Outline (LO) and Common Assessment

- Fall 2009

Academic Assembly

Revision and Preparation

- Spring 2010

Collect evidence

College-wide scoring

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In House Survey: Engagement

ENC 1101 POS 2041 SPC1600 MAT 0024 PSY 1012

- ❖ **Describe different instructional methods that you use in your course to engage students in learning.**
- ❖ **How effective are these instructional methods?**
- ❖ **How do you know?**

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PI 3.3 Course Outcomes

Outlines and Evaluation

Recommended Actions:

In other four courses, replicate ENC1101 pilot using LET rubric.

Common course outlines for ENC 1101, POS 2041, SPC 1600, MAT 0024C, and PSY 1012 are not enough for a measure of outcomes because we do not know if the faculty are using them, and there is no way to measure collaboration. There is also inconsistency in writing common course outlines. Another method for evaluating in order to provide a standard would be to look at shared assessments (ENC1101 and LET Rubric) and at the exit exam in MAT0024.

• Course Outline Builder

- http://ptlpd-prod.valenciacc.edu/cp/render.UserLayoutRootNode.uP?uP_tparam=utf&utf=%2Fcp%2Fip%2Flogin%3Fsys%3Dcip%26url%3Dhttp%253A%252F%252Fgcp%252Evalenciacc%252Eedu%252FCPIP%253Fsys%253Dcob3%2526randomnumber%3DsessPIHolder

• Learning Evidence Team

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PI 3.4 (DFWI) Rates

Recommended Actions:

- Expand the Early Alert program (T. Johnson 4/1/2007) to after the first assessment, mid-term, paper, absence. Early intervention, in whatever format, must be implemented.
- Limit first term course load.
- Revision of withdrawal policies.

Early Alert: How were students identified?

Volunteer faculty members identified students enrolled in specific courses who exhibited characteristics which adversely affected the student's successful academic progress and then notified a designated academic Advisor/counselor

- E1 - Preparedness
- E2 - Performance
- E3 - Personal

- **Early Alert: What Challenges Did We Face?**
- Student follow through with referrals (30)
- Contact with student being intercepted by parent/guardian wanting to know information about student
- Limited staff and resources for expansion
- Being able to actively continue to follow-up with students after completion of course...should this be the time for a identified personal advisor/counselor...
- Technology
- Keeping it simple

New Withdrawal Policy for 2010-11

- Withdrawal and Grades
 - After the withdrawal deadline each term, students can no longer withdraw themselves
 - Faculty can withdraw student with a *W* after the deadline
 - WP and WF (which used to be given after the deadline) have been eliminated

PI 3.5 Placement

Recommended Actions

- Try to avoid spur-of-the-moment testing; make students aware of options to get ready for CPT
- Continue to examine the effectiveness of the CPT for accurate placement
- Evaluate writing skills and reading CPT review sessions for each campus
- Implement a college-wide standard for review sessions
- Encourage students to take CPT-M: students can be offered targeted instruction/ refresher on specific areas of math

Assessment/Tutoring Services

- Free Study Guides on the website
- New \$10 retake fee
- Math Support Centers
- Communication Support Centers
- Live next Fall PERT (Post-secondary Education Readiness Test) to replace Accuplacer Test

PI 3.6 Out-Of-Class Learning

Recommended Actions:

- Infuse out-of-class opportunities into the General Education Program
- Incentives to students who participate, i.e. co-curricular transcript, scholarships

Out-Of-Class Learning

- NSO and General Education's Critical Thinking:
 - Developed a rubric and a pre/post survey to indicate levels of critical thinking
- Clubs and Organizations:
 - Required to identify key outcomes that are expected as a result of programs being funded
 - Team being organized to align outcomes with General Education for Student Leaders

Questions?

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