BRONX COMMUNITY COLLEGE

First Year Program Facts

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Evolution of the BCC First Year Program

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The BCC First Year Program (FYP) and Seminar (FYS) were created as part of a college-wide effort to positively impact the success of first year students at the College. FYS is a holistic introduction to college life which: (1) builds upon traditional student success courses by integrating academic content and skill-building with traditional college orientation activities; (2) creates opportunities for students to practice new skills via student-centered and constructivist pedagogies; (3) embeds advising and student support into the course; and (4) provides opportunities for instructor learning.

Chronology

1. BCC engaged in a campus-wide self-study and improvement plan undertaken through the auspices of the John Gardner Foundations of Excellence in the First Year. (**2010-11**).

- Four major factors were identified as contributing to the lack of student success at BCC included: student disposition; curricular organization; pedagogy and academic supports; institutional organization.
- Theoretical and evidence-based recommendations made to address those factors included: facilitating success in basic skill requirements and first year courses; facilitating efficient and effective course taking; promoting student engagement and knowledge of college expectations; promoting faculty use of engaged and effective pedagogies; providing for a cohesive 1st year experience with clear pathways, organized experiences, consistent communications and clear oversight/accountabilities.
- Two groups included: Freshman Analytical Group (P. Barbatis, K. Ditommaso, C. Efthimiou, H. Hizmetli, M. Lopez, A. McInerney, O.. Melendez, I. Mirsky, L. Montenegro, G. Osborne, M. Pita, N. Ritze (convener), M. Roggow, E. Ruiz, D. Thompson, H. Wach, V. Walker, J. Wilson); and Freshman Seminar Design Group (C. Bellabe, R. Butt, F. DiSalvo, K. Ditommaso, T. Ingram, J. Kelley-Williams, C. Liachovitzky, N. Reynoso, V. Rodriguez, T. Rothenberg, H. Wach (convener).

2. First Year Advisory Committee (with more than 90 participants) established (**Fall 2011**) to address recommendations made from Foundations of Excellence reports. Eight working group established , including a Freshman Seminar Design group.

3. First Year Seminar (FYS) piloted in **Spring 2012** with 10 sections and 155 students.

4. FYS Sections/Enrollment grew as follows:

Semester	Sections	Enrollment
Spring 2012	10	155
Fall 2012	21	499
Spring 2013	18	341
Fall 2013	29	760
Spring 2014	22	518
Fall 2014	35	934
Spring 2015	28	656
TOTAL		3863

5. Program staff hired including: Associate Director for Freshman Programs (**Fall 2012**); dedicated academic advisors (summer 2013); peer mentors (each semester)

6. Spring **2013**—BCC awarded a CUNY Student Success Research Grant ($150,000) to collaborate with the Community College Research Center (CCRC) of Teachers College, Columbia University to conduct a comprehensive formative evaluation (as well as a propensity score analysis) of the FYS to further inform program development, improvement and institutionalization. Findings:
   - support previous literature finding that student success courses have a positive impact on early student outcomes
   - suggest that when students have opportunity to practice student success and academic skills as part of success course, they are likely to apply skills to other classes, potentially increasing attainment over the long run.

7. First Year Seminar (FYS) first approved by Curriculum Committee in **Spring 2014** to be included as a requirement in Education Associate Program.

CUNY

Summary of Research Results:

One-semester/One-year outcomes are highest for students in FYS sections in Fall 2012 (compared to those students in traditional OCD seminar or in no seminar).

- FA12 FYS students had higher end-term GPA's, credits earned and retention rates compared to those in the traditional seminar (OCD) or in no seminar. Those gains persisted over 1 year.
- One-semester retention rates were higher for FYS students (85%) compared to those in OCD (79%) or in no seminar (75%).
- After one-year, the average GPA for FYS students (2.36) was higher than for those in OCD (2.0) or in not seminar (2.03).
- After one-year, FYS students earned more credits on average (15.31) than those in OCD (10.43) or in no seminar (12.25).

One-semester Student outcomes in FYS sections (from Fall 2012) are strongest in sections with the highest fidelity of implementation levels with the program design.

- FYS sections with the strongest level of implementation had the highest average credit accumulation (7.1-9.7) compared to those with moderate implementation levels (5.3-6.6) and low levels (4.2-5.1).
- FYS sections with the strongest level of implementation had the highest average GPA range (2.38-2.88) compared to those with moderate levels of implementation (GPA=2.8-2.58) and those with weak levels of implementation (GPA=1.65-1.90).
- FYS sections with the strongest level of implementation had the highest one-semester retention rate range (81%-100%) compared to those with moderate implementation levels (71%-86%) or weak levels (57%-78%).

Outcomes evaluation utilizing propensity score matching analysis demonstrated positive 1-semester and 1-year performance and persistence impacts for students participating in FYS

- Using a data file containing demographic and academic information for all first-time, full-time freshmen who entered BCC in FA2012, SP2013, and FA2013—matched comparison groups were identified (from the students who did not take any first year seminar) for students who took FYS and those who took traditional OCD Seminar.
- The FYS group demonstrated about a 10% point higher retention rate compared to their matched group of students not enrolled in any seminar both after one semester (82% vs. 72) and one-year (64% to 54%), while the OCD group demonstrated a lead of 7 points after one semester (75% vs. 68%), but no lead after one year (54% vs. 54%).

FYS Students (n= 570) report substantial impacts of FYS, with 85% or more of FYS Students surveyed in Fall 2014 agreed (or strongly agreed)that FYS enabled them to :

- Reflect on academic performance (94%); better communicate with instructors (93%); better resolve academic problems (93%); understand what to do to be successful in college (93%); participate in class with greater confidence (90%); think critically and analytically (90%) feel comfortable communicating with instructors (90%); do research (88%); develop a multi-year plan (88%); participate in class regularly (87%); have a better sense of career options (85%).

FYS Peer Mentors (n=27) report substantial impacts of FYS, with 85% or more in Fall 2014 agreed (or strongly agreed) that FYS :

- Helped to develop leadership/management skills (100%); improved communication and social skills (100%}); improved presentation skills (100%}); provided a sense of fulfillment/personal growth (97%); helped enhance resume (96%); helped relate better with others (97%); helped develop sense of responsibility (93%); helped develop career/transfer options (92%); improved ability to resolve campus issues (993%); helped improve time management skills (93%); increased self-confidence/motivation to succeed academically (89%); increased my circle of friends (89%); helped reinforce study skills (85%); improved critical & analytical thinking skills (85%).