University of California, Merced
May 2010

First-Year Experience Learning Outcomes

Mission: A core value at UC Merced is supporting students to be successful. The First Year Experience (FYE) serves UC Merced by facilitating the transition of first year students into the University through programs and services that assist students to succeed academically and by providing them with a wide range of social and developmental resources and opportunities.

While acknowledging the diversity within and among our students, the FYE is a cooperative and collaborative effort of faculty, staff, students and administration that seeks to affect the university's retention efforts by helping students **cultivate knowledge** that will help them be successful, enhance their **core competencies**, understand UC Merced's **expectations**, and effectively **engage** in campus and community experiences. These four areas emerge from "best practice" programs across the country and the literature on the first year student experience.

DRAFT

Knowledge of the Research University Environment

1. Ability to understand and effectively navigate UC Merced.
2. Understand major/minor choices and requirements as well as other academic expectations; understand the purpose of general education requirements.
3. Aware of campus resources, including academic support and student services.
4. Aware of opportunities for research with faculty.

Personal Core Competencies

1. Demonstrate effective study skills and college-level learning, including independent and collaborative learning, critical thinking and problem solving.
2. Ability to articulate informed and realistic perspectives on short and long-term academic, social, community, personal and career goals.
3. Understand and demonstrate self-responsibility and accountability by making appropriate decisions, recognizing and accepting consequences, and following through on commitments and expectations.
4. Possess self-respect and practice ethics and awareness of personal beliefs and values.
5. Begin to acquire a personal leadership style and be an effective team member.
6. Develop interpersonal competence and the ability to prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways.
7. Increase resilience and the ability to adapt well in the face of adversity and stress.

Academic, Community, and Personal Expectations

1. Understand and meet UC Merced's academic expectations, including recognizing the difference between high school and college educational expectations.
2. Recognize the purpose and value of academic integrity and UC Merced's Principles of Community.
3. Appreciate diversity, the dynamics within and among cultures, and recognize the need to develop cultural competencies.
4. Begin a process of developing an awareness and understanding of personal and cultural identity.
5. Initiate development of a global consciousness.
6. Maintain a proactive approach to wellness, including physical, psychological and social well-being and recognize its relationship to overall success.
7. Effectively manage and balance family expectations with university and personal responsibilities.

Student and Community Engagement

1. Develop respect and pride in UC Merced and its ever-expanding traditions and the Merced community.
2. Identify and effectively utilize appropriate resources and opportunities
3. Interact with faculty in and outside of the classroom.
4. Interact with staff to gain support and to address any issues that are an impediment to the quality of life and success at UC Merced.
5. Value and participate, independently and with peers, in social and academically focused co-curricular experiences.
6. Develop relationships outside of personal identity groups and participate in cultural events.
7. Share a common academic experience with other UC Merced first-year students e.g., CORE, Common Book, freshmen seminars.
8. Develop civic awareness and serve the community on or off campus.

DRAFT

Adapted from resources from the following:

California State University, Fullerton, Division of Student Affairs Student Learning Domains & Characteristics
Central Michigan University, First-Year Experience
John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education
Pennsylvania State University, First Year Learning Outcomes and Competencies
Southern Polytechnic State University, University Goals and Registrar's Office Goals
Texas A&M at Corpus Christi, First-Year Learning Dyads
University of California at Merced, Principles of Community
University of California at Santa Barbara, First-Year & Leadership Programs
University of Connecticut, UConn Connects Program
University of South Carolina, University 101 Programs
University of Washington, First-Year Programs

Support by research from the following:

Academic Support & Enrichment Services (2003, April). *Navigating the Berkeley first year experience (study).* Berkeley, CA: University of California.
Astin, A. (1993). *What matters in college? Four critical years revisited.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
Downing, S. (2008). *On Course: Strategies for creating success in college and in life, Fifth Edition.* Mason, OH: Wadsworth/Cengage.
Pascarella, E.T., & Terenzini, P.T. (2005). *How College Affects Students, Volume 2, A Third Decade of Research.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
Peel, M. (1999, May). *Where to Now?* Higher Education Series Report No. 36. Canberra: Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.
Tinto, V. (1987, 1995). *Leaving college. Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition.* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
Upcraft, M., Gardner, J., & Barefoot, B. (2005). *Challenging and supporting the first-year student: A handbook for improving the first year of college.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.