

EGSC 2020-2021 First Year Experience Committee Meetings & Business Report Form

(updated 01/14/2021)

Sept. 18-21, 2020 Virtual Committee meeting

Due to COVID-19 protocols and the need for the FYE committee to meet, the meeting was conducted Asynchronously/electronically. This ensured greater committee membership participation and greater flexibility for member communication. The FYE committee has general responsibility for the overseeing of not only the East Georgia State College program, but also the CATS 1101 FYE foundational course.

2020-2021 FYE Committee members include:

Director of FYE and FYE Committee Chair - Rob Nordan
(no assistant directors any longer due to budget cutbacks)
Humanities Faculty Representative - Val Czerny
Social Sciences Faculty Representative - Jeff Howell
Math & Science Faculty Representative - Breana Simmons
Representative from ACE staff - Rendell (Orry) Cordova
Director of Admissions - Mike Moran
Director of Learning Commons - Karen Murphree
Director of Counseling & Disability Services - Lori Burns
Director of Housing - Angela Storck
Director of Student Conduct - Sherrie Helms
Director of Student Life - Stacey Grant
Library Director - Beth Jones
Registrar - Lynette Saulsberry
Chief of Police - Mack Seckinger

Members participating in the 9/18/20 meeting included:

Rob Nordan, Val Czerny, Jeff Howell, Orry Cordova, Karen Murphree, Lori Burns, Angela Storck, Beth Jones, Mike Moran, and Stacey Grant.

The purpose of the committee was delineated from the ega.edu website as follows:

The purpose of the committee is to provide oversight and guidance to the First Class First Year Experience (First Class) initiative. Its **functions** are to recommend policies and procedures as necessary and proper to accomplish its purpose, provide information dissemination to the college concerning the initiative and to make recommendations concerning long range planning, program expansion and budgetary allocations.

Items covered in the meeting included:

- 1) Introduction of committee members (list shown above);
- 2) A little bit of information...

(From 9/18/2020 Minutes, Chairman Nordan sharing) "If you have been on this committee in the past, we have met near the end of each semester as a committee. We have also met intermittently as needed. Our minutes have not always been posted on the website for ease of review. Dr. Boehmer is requesting that we post committee minutes as the committees take place. ALL EGSC committees are being asked to meet and to record minutes/agendas on the ega.edu website for ease of review.

You will learn with me, I do not prefer to have meetings for the sake of simply having meetings and I greatly value your time. So with that being said, THIS meeting will be Asynchronous (so that you can supply the information that I need from you independently), using e-mail communication, and the meeting content will be in the form of a BRIEF e-mail from you to me answering ONE THING for me".

3) (Chairman Nordan): "Can you do ONE THING for me?"

Will you read the committee and function statements (from above) and share with me which **FUNCTION to you** is the MOST IMPORTANT for this committee's consideration for this year? The feedback that you give me on this will shape our agenda for this academic year and help direct the work that we will do. PLEASE send the answer to this question back to me ASAP. This feedback will constitute the crux of our focus for this 2020-2021 academic year".

4) FYE feedback received from committee members as to what each member cited as the MOST IMPORTANT FYE committee function for the 2020-2021 academic year, was received from Czerny, Howell, Cordova, Murphree, Burns, Storck, Jones, Moran, Grant, and Chairman Nordan. This feedback is displayed below:

Val Czerny – The function most important to me regarding the FYE Committee is to "provide information dissemination to the college concerning the initiative."

Jeff Howell – To me, this is the most important function of the committee... to recommend policies and procedures as necessary and proper to accomplish its purpose,

Orry Cordova – The function I feel is most important to this committee is our ability to recommend new policy that will benefit First-Year students. The benefit of the COVID-19 pandemic is that institutions have had to drastically change how they approach students as well as provide certain resources to them. I think these are the perfect conditions in which a committee such as our own can make radical changes to benefit students in the long term. Everyone is hesitant to change if the norm supplies consistent results, however a shakeup to normal operations is a chance to adapt and improve what is there.

Karen Murphree – I have said for a long time that we need to focus on program expansion, which will of course involve long range planning and goals. As you are well aware, a quality First Year Program is much more than just offering a First-Year course like our CATS 1101 course. CATS is indeed important, but students need more than one course to aid them to transition and excel throughout their first year. I do think we may be starting on the right path with our QEP focus on Student Learning Communities. However, we also need to look at learning/growth opportunities for students beyond the classroom such as aiding them with tying their major to career choices; linking them with information interviewing, job shadowing and internship opportunities; connecting them with alumni in careers they are interested in, etc.

Georgia Southern's Career Services Office had (they may still have it, but I have been gone 8 years so not sure) where Alumni signed up to assist current students with informational interviews, job shadowing and internship opportunities. There is no reason why we could not start a similar program (even without a real Career Services office). But it would entail someone within our Development and Alumni office reaching out to our alums asking if they would be willing to help out with this program. We could call it something like the Bobcat Career Connection. Students would also have to sign up to be part of the program and be provided information on how to reach out to an alum etc. I just reviewed GSU's Career Service site and they have a Job Shadowing page where students have to submit a job shadowing application in order to be connected to someone. We could do something similar.

Link for job shadowing info: <https://students.georgiasouthern.edu/career/students/job-shadowing/>

Link for info interviews: Application is not needed for this program. <https://students.georgiasouthern.edu/career/students/choosing-a-major-exploring-careers/informational-interviews/>

But we have got to figure out how to connect/engage our students for the entire first year so they return for their 2nd year and ideally continue on through graduation. The issue many students have is they do not see the future ahead that is beyond the “boring classes” (that is student speak) they have to take the first couple of semesters and they don’t focus like they should. If we can find a way to help them connect what they are doing now to their future goals (job shadowing etc will help with that I think) then we have a better shot of keeping them.

Lori Burns – The most important initiative to me is making recommendations concerning long range planning and program expansion.

Angela Storck – I think the most important thing this year for the committee to address is ensuring that the CATS class (especially in its modified online format) is meeting our students’ development needs and aligning with whatever the QEP is trying to accomplish. I don’t have a lot of knowledge about the QEP and I’m not on that committee, but it seems there will be a lot of overlap in what each committee is attempting to achieve. It would be helpful to have some basic knowledge of the QEP so that we can make recommendations accordingly.

Long story short, I think our first-year students are more taxed than ever with the new delivery format and that we need to ensure their needs are being met. Could we get a syllabus of the CATS class course so we know what the course entails? It would greatly help other student support functions on campus like housing, retention and conduct to be sure we cover or address topics that may not be adequately covered within the course. Creating an intentional first year experience that is cohesive and holistic would be the ultimate goal.

Beth Jones – To me as the library representative, I would say finding ways to incorporate information literacy within the FYE courses is my primary focus within the committee. So, the function that applies to that is long range planning. Introduction to information literacy was originally done within CATS courses but with the remodel of the classes, a librarian is no longer invited into the courses to allow for us to make a introductory presentation. Unfortunately, that was a majority of our instructional statistics, so I am trying to figure out how to get information literacy to students in other ways. With the new model of the courses, I feel teaching students how to do basic research on those topics would be an easy fit, but Meghan (our librarian in charge of CATS) hasn’t been invited to any course virtually or f2f.

Mike Moran - I would definitely have to say..... *to recommend policies and procedures as necessary and proper to accomplish its purpose.*

Stacey Grant - The most important to me at the time is to recommend policies and procedures as necessary and proper to accomplish its purpose.

Rob Nordan – Thank you to all committee members for your feedback. I would like for us to consider several “most important” priorities for this committee for the 2020-2021 academic year. These priorities include: A) recommend policies and procedures as necessary to accomplish its purpose (3 committee members), B) provide informational dissemination to the college concerning initiatives (1 committee member), C) new policies to benefits First-Year students (1 committee member), D) FYE program expansion (1 committee member), E) recommendations regarding long-range planning (1 committee members), F) meet student needs through QEP(1 committee member), G) find ways to incorporate information literacy into FYE courses (1 committee member).

Based on this input, the largest number of committee members (3) indicated the most important priority to them was “recommend policies and procedures as necessary to accomplish its purpose”. But I also see

committee members (3) indicate consideration to be given to specific elements as related to CATS 1101/FYE as related to students.

5) (Chairman Nordan sharing): “We will plan to meet via Zoom/virtually near the end of the Fall semester and again during the Spring 2021 semester. I will give you information on these meetings a little later in. I will poll you closer to these times to come up with a time/date when ALL or MOST committee members can meet”.

Meeting adjourned on September 21, 2020, with the last participating committee member logging on.

Minutes by Chairman Nordan.

October 2, 2020