

Program Title: WSCC-FSU Connections Program
Institution: Ferris State University
Innovation Category: College Access and Outreach
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<https://www.westshore.edu/academics/partnerships/fsu-connections>

Project Description: The West Shore Community College and Ferris State University Connections Program is an opportunity for WSCC students to participate in FSU events and hold FSU student status from the very beginning of their time at WSCC. The program is designed to create exciting experiences for WSCC students in a university atmosphere, while also building relationships at FSU to make transferring into a bachelor's program even easier. Throughout the program, students are able to visit campus to learn about and utilize FSU campus resources such as academic support, use of the Ferris Student Recreation Center, attend athletic and other on-campus events and begin to build the FSU student network that will aid in their success overall.

Project Objectives:

- Create a cohort of students to aid in the transition from West Shore CC to Ferris State University.
- Introduce students to campus life through activities and other visits to campus to allow the student to already feel connected to the university.
- Allow students to benefit from student services earlier to feel acclimated to the campus before even enrolling.
- Break down any barriers that a student may face when transitioning from the community college setting to a university setting.

Target Population: Students that attend West Shore Community College with plans to transfer to Ferris after completing their program at WSCC.

Quantifiable/Qualifiable Outcomes:

- The program has just started in Fall 2019 but we have had 20 students already apply to be a part of the Connections Program.
- In order for the students to be a part of the program an application is submitted at West Shore that is then shared with Ferris to process and ensure the student is active. Ferris and West Shore can then track these students to review the effectiveness overall.

Challenges/Problems Encountered: The biggest challenge thus far has been deciding on the best way to promote the program at West Shore CC and deciding on the proper audience. At Ferris, the biggest challenge had been accurately coding the students to be able to track them accordingly and ensure that they are eligible to receive the Connections program benefits that are available to them. All things have been ironed through, however, to make this a seamless process for the students.

Evaluation Approach: With an application in place we are able to fully process the students on both campuses to be able to track and monitor the program's effectiveness. Registration

through events and coordination on both campuses will allow us to track student engagement all the way through the program.

Value Proposition, Financing Strategy and Return-On-Investment Indicators:

West Shore Community College has continually served as a strong pipeline of transfer students to Ferris State University. With the Connections program in place, students at WSCC can start to benefit from the partnership with FSU to allow them to get integrated into Ferris much prior to actually transferring and enrolling in the university. From inquiry to enrollment, students will have access to support services at both institutions. Overall costs are funded through the standard budgeting of events already planned and determined with on-campus resources. Overall effectiveness/return-on-investment will hopefully be seen as we start to build an even stronger pipeline of students enrolling from WSCC to FSU.

Potential for Replication:

This partnership could definitely be replicated among other community colleges and universities. A student application would need to be designed among the partnering institutions, with the WSCC-FSU application serving as a template/model. Collaborative efforts would be made through both institutions to build programming around scheduled on-campus events to involve the students and ensure the campus experience is being provided to the students intending to transfer and enroll at the four-year partner institution.

Vendor Involvement: None.

Requisite Program Manager Competencies:

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the presidents from each institution that empowered the Connections program. This would need to be a factor with any new partnerships to ensure that the campuses have the power to fully implement. It is also important to bring the group together for initial planning of support services, processing and student engagement so all factors are planned out or discussed before full implementation.

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