

Program Title: WSCC-FSU Connections Program
Institution: Ferris State University
Innovation Category: College Access and Outreach
Point Person & Contact Information:

Deedee Stakley – Contact for community college staff.
Director of Transfer & Secondary Partnerships
(231) 591-5981

DeedeeStakley@ferris.edu

Shari Chamberlain – Contact for community college students.
Admissions Transfer Counselor
(231) 591-3955

ShariChamberlain@ferris.edu

Website: <https://transfer.ferris.edu/ferris-connections.htm>

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 started in Fall 2019, but did not remain active through the Pandemic. The program was re-invigorated starting in Fall 2022 through collaboration between the West Shore Community College and Ferris State staff.
- In order for WSCC students to be a part of the program, a webform is completed by the students through the Ferris website (link - <https://transfer.ferris.edu/ferris-connections.htm>) Students must also be actively enrolled at West Shore.
- WSCC staff promote the Connections program at their college events. Some examples include: Welcome Back to West Shore, College Fairs, and Night Against Procrastination.
- Ferris invites WSCC students to University events. Some examples include: Football games, Dawg Day Saturday Campus visits, and specific Department Open Houses.

FERRIS STATE
UNIVERSITY

Challenges/Problems Encountered: The biggest challenge for both colleges is accurately coding and tracking Connection students within the current student record systems.

- In 2022, WSCC was implementing new systems. They were unsure how the new system would allow them to track which WSCC students were interested in Ferris Connections. The Connections application form was switched from a WSCC application to a webform on the Ferris website.
- At Ferris, staff continue to have the challenge of coding WSCC Connections students as *active students* in their systems so these students can use Ferris facilities and services. Much of the processes are manual at each step due to the special circumstances and also to ensure that Connections student counts are not reported within the official University enrollment reports.
- Staff at both institutions meet monthly and are continually working to find new ways to make these processes work more smoothly.

Evaluation Approach: With the above processes in place, we are 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/webform 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.

Date Updated: September 30, 2024