1.18	CSCC College and Career Success 101	20-099	2020-06-18

1.18   CSCC College and Career Success 101

Research has established that First Year Experience courses must be taken early in a student's academic career to have the highest impact, that the optimal First Year Experience course is a 3-credit stand-alone class, and that all students, even those who are high-performing or transfer students, benefit from establishing a career path as well as learning the academic and personal skills to be successful students and employees. The Holistic Case Management Advising policy of the Board of Regents requires that all students create a personalized academic and career plan.

The General Education Core for Connecticut State Community College has been established to include competency requirements as well as a diversity requirement.

The learning outcomes of College and Career Success 101 are designed to promote a successful first year, student success, and equity, which are three of the five goals of the Board of Regents.

The Board of Regents for Higher Education directed the Connecticut State Community College, in conjunction with the CSCU System Office through the leadership of the CSCU Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, to:

- Require all Connecticut State Community College programs of study to include the three (3) credit CCS 101 which is focused on college success and career exploration.
- Require all degree-seeking students to enroll in CCS 101 within their first nine (9) credits.
- Ensure that CCS 101 includes a component that meets the general education core diversity requirement, with the acknowledgement that diversity topics should ideally be embedded throughout the General Education core and across the curriculum.
- Ensure that CCS 101 fulfills one of the general education core competencies.
- Make recommendations regarding which programs of study might add CCS 101 as an exception to normalization, in accordance with BOR policy.
- Provide guidance regarding which circumstances allow a student to request exemption from taking CCS 101 with final decisions on exemptions made by campus academic leadership.
- Ensure that CCS 101 is regularly updated to align with the latest research and evidence from the field regarding successful first year experience courses, noting that current research demonstrates that the most successful first year experience courses use pedagogies that promote learning-for-application, use equity-minded pedagogies and inclusive formats, give instructors the tools and structural supports to teach effectively, and substantively link the course to other academic courses to improve transfer of learning.
- Provide administrative oversight of CCS 101 to ensure consistency of delivery and outcomes.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This staff report consists of three main sections:

- A. **BACKGROUND (p. 3-7)**, which establishes that:
    - a. The first year of college is a critical period in determining students' chances of long-term success;
    - b. The Connecticut State Community College can improve retention and completion rates by strengthening support services for students in their first year;
    - c. A well-designed first-year experience course is an efficient vehicle to get every incoming student on a personalized academic and career plan and effectively teach them the knowledge, skills, and habits associated with higher learning, better course performance, and persistence in college; and
    - d. Participation in a first-year experience course improves a wide range of student outcomes, such as course performance, credit accrual, persistence, retention, and graduation;
- B. **THE COURSE (p. 8-11)**, which describes how:
    - a. College & Career Success 101 (CCS 101) promotes Guided Pathways principles by equipping all degree-seeking students at the Connecticut State Community College with a personalized academic and career plan and the knowledge, skills, and habits required to achieve their educational goals;
    - b. CCS 101 promotes equity by improving outcomes for all students who take it, especially those who face the greatest social, economic, and cultural disadvantages, thereby reducing disparities in student success rates among CSCU student groups;
    - c. CCS 101 works in concert with Guided Pathways Advising and Areas of Study to promote early student success and the efficient completion of credentials; and
    - d. CCS 101 was developed by a team representing many different perspectives from all twelve community college campuses; and
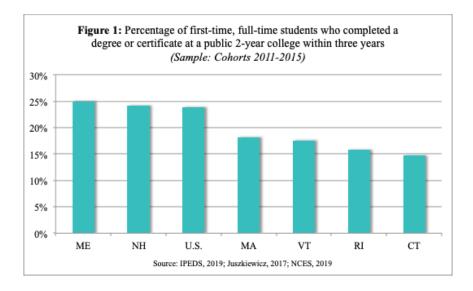- C. **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (p. 12-14)**, which explains that:
    - a. CCS 101 should be mandatory to preserve its potential to bring greater equity to the Connecticut State Community College and improve the most disadvantaged students' chances of reaching their academic and career goals;
    - b. CCS 101 should be worth three (3) credits because it is academically rigorous and requires significant time to fulfill its potential to meet the student outcomes;
    - c. CCS 101 should be taken within the first nine (9) credits for students to reap the benefits of the course;
    - d. CCS 101 aligns with the general education core diversity requirement to prepare students to live in a diverse and interdependent society; and
    - e. The Board of Regents will direct the CSCU Provost, Associate Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, and Provost for Connecticut State Community College to take further action if the policy is approved.

BACKGROUND

Why increase support for students in their first year specifically?
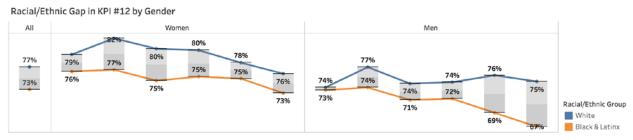
CSCU's community college students face tremendous challenges to efficient completion of a postsecondary credential. These challenges have resulted in persistently low graduation rates across all twelve community colleges. Among first-time, full-time students who enrolled in a CSCU community college between 2011 and 2015, fifteen percent completed all the requirements for a degree or certificate within three years of starting. As illustrated in Figure 1, this was lower than the national graduation average and that of all other state community college systems in New England during the same time period.

Figure 1: Percentage of first-time, full-time students who completed a degree or certificate at a public 2-year college within three years
(Sample: Cohorts 2011-2015)

Source: IPEDS, 2019; Juszkiewicz, 2017; NCES, 2019

Historically underserved and minoritized student groups at the community colleges face additional barriers to success that make them even less likely to graduate. The average IPEDS three-year graduation rate for Black students has been 7 percent over the past five years and 11 percent for Latinx students, compared to 18 percent for Asian students and 19 percent for White students. The Board of Regents has stated its goals to increase retention and graduation rates and eliminate these racial and ethnic disparities, as well as disparities between different socioeconomic and gender groups (BOR, 2019).
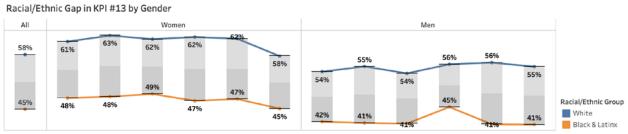
While these endpoint statistics reveal the inadequacy of current institutional supports for students, they do not tell the entire story of the CSCU community colleges' completion and equity problem. Our students are not bound to drop out of college at such extreme rates when they first enroll; the vast majority of them are determined to complete a credential and either move on to further education or a job. But various Guided Pathways Key Performance Indicators show that as early as their first year, students struggle to reach certain milestones predictive of completion. Figures 2, 3, and 4 illustrate disheartening trends in first-year student persistence, academic performance, and credit accrual across the community colleges, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender.

Figure 2: Percentage of students who persisted from term one to term two (fall to spring) among Fall 2013-2018 cohorts
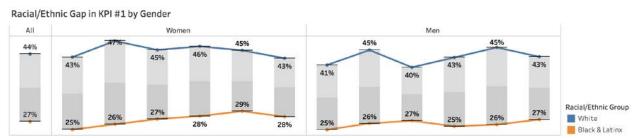
Racial/Ethnic Gap in KPI #12 by Gender

Source: CSCU Office of Research and Systemic Effectiveness

Figure 3: Rate of college-level course passing (C or above) in students' first academic year (fall, winter, spring, summer) among Fall 2013-2018 cohorts

Racial/Ethnic Gap in KPI #13 by Gender

Source: CSCU Office of Research and Systemic Effectiveness

Figure 4: Percentage of students who earned 15 or more college-level credits after year one (fall, winter, spring, summer) among Fall 2013-2018 cohorts

Racial/Ethnic Gap in KPI #1 by Gender

Source: CSCU Office of Research and Systemic Effectiveness

These indicators are evidence that major obstacles to success are present from the very beginning of students' community college journey. Indeed, the transition to postsecondary education in general poses several simultaneous challenges to incoming students:

First, college-level coursework is more rigorous than the classes most students took in high school. In addition to a higher mastery of course content and competencies, academic success in college requires more disciplined and sophisticated study habits like reflective note-taking, independent time management, and the proactive use of academic support services (Karp & Bork, 2012). The gap between college academic standards and students' level of preparation is greatest for those who attended less resourced and effective elementary, middle, and high schools.

Second, success in college requires students to model new behaviors that are specific to the culture of higher education. These behaviors include speaking and writing in academic language, actively participating in class, interacting with professors, adapting to different instructors' teaching styles and classroom expectations, and navigating bureaucratic systems like financial aid and transfer (Karp & Bork, 2012). It is important to note that collegiate expectations of "proper" behavior are rooted in White, middle-class norms (Rendon et al., 2000; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Tierney, 1999); thus, they can be especially difficult to perform for students who did not grow up in that culture or have family members who attended college (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Falcon, 2015; Karp & Bork, 2012, O'Gara et al., 2009).

Third, many new college students must contend with more responsibilities than they ever have before, balancing school with part-time or full-time jobs and caregiving roles at home. These various commitments compete constantly for students' time and attention. Being able to prioritize school work amidst these constraints requires students to intentionally carve out study time, make contingency plans, filter out distractions, modify their class schedule to accommodate work and family, and communicate with instructors about conflicts (Karp & Bork, 2012).

Last but not least, success in college often requires students to ask for help from instructors, advisors, and other support staff without prompting. Seeking help is more complicated than meets the eye. Students must first recognize and admit that they need help, ideally before the situation becomes dire; then understand where and how to seek help given the available resources; and finally have the sense of agency to take action (Karp & Bork, 2012). Asking for help and advocating for oneself do not come easily to many college students. It can be challenging, anxiety-provoking, and even identity-threatening (Cox, 2009; Gardenhire-Crooks et al., 2010; Peña & Rhoads, 2018).

Altogether, these challenges make the transition to college very difficult for many students. This is why the students' first year of college–especially their first semester–is a decisive time for colleges to provide stronger institutional support services. College students' earliest moves have outsized consequences and can set forth in motion either a positive or negative feedback loop. On the one hand, students with good academic preparation, adequate financial resources, minimal commitments outside of school, and family members who graduated from college have the highest chances of transitioning to college smoothly, building confidence and early

connections, and making steady progress toward their goals. On the other hand, students without these advantages are at a greater risk of making an early misstep–e.g., a bad grade, missed class, late assignment–losing focus and self-esteem, and never fully recovering. As the system's 72 percent persistence rate from Fall 2018 to Spring 2019 suggests, a considerable number of first-year community college students drop out under the stress.

The challenge of first-year student attrition presents an opportunity for stronger first-year student supports. Intentional first-year programming–particularly within students' first 15 credit hours–can divert "early leavers" away from exiting college prematurely to excelling in their introductory courses and persisting further along the path to completion (CCSSE, 2009; Hunter, 2006; Puyana & Shugart, 2001; Scott-Clayton, 2011; Veenstra, 2009).

Why adopt a first-year experience course?

Two- and four-year colleges across the nation have pursued several strategies to promote first-year success. Among the most popular and high-impact strategies is the first-year experience (FYE) course–also known as a student success course or College 101 course–which generally serves as an extended orientation seminar for new students (Barefoot & Fidler, 1992). FYE courses have gained a foothold at the majority of higher education institutions. According to a 2009 survey of more than 1,000 institutions, 87 percent of respondents offered a first-year seminar (Padgett & Keup, 2011).

While FYE courses vary in content, instruction, and institutional context, they share the common purpose of familiarizing students with the college environment and developing their ability and confidence to achieve their educational goals. The typical FYE course provides participants with information about campus resources and services, assistance in academic and career planning, and techniques to improve study habits and personal skills like time management (Barefoot & Fidler, 1992; Hunter & Linder, 2005; Karp et al., 2012).

FYE courses are a useful vehicle to teach students a wide range of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors associated with college and career success in a coherent way. To become an effective college student, incoming students must engage in several distinct tasks at once, such as career exploration, academic planning, academic and personal skill development, and orientation to campus resources and services. An FYE course is a convenient, one-stop location where students can learn about these various topics from a single source, understand their relevance and utility, and clarify the connections between them (O'Gara et al., 2009). Without an FYE course to streamline and coordinate this information, students have to piece together the recipe for success on their own, an approach too burdensome, confusing, and haphazard for something as high-stakes as the transition to college.

Another advantage of FYE courses, at least compared with campus-wide orientations, is that they allow enough time for students to engage in deeper, more interactive learning activities that improve their internalization of new knowledge and skills and ability to use them in the future. Thoughtful career exploration and academic planning are also time-intensive, iterative processes (Harrington et al., 2018). FYE courses give students a supportive environment and extended period of time dedicated to honing these skills and strategies and gaining comfort transferring them to other contexts.

Finally, FYE courses are an efficient way to deliver support services to far more students than other mechanisms like advising, given the same amount of resources. There are pieces of information and activities that all new students should learn and participate in; conveying this information and facilitating these activities for 20 to 25 students in one classroom requires less time and energy than doing so in 20 to 25 individual advising sessions (Karp, 2011; O'Gara et al., 2009). Yet another benefit of bringing groups of 20 to 25 students together in an FYE course setting is the potential for closer friendships and support networks to form (O'Gara et al., 2009; Tinto, 1993). Positive relationships can increase student persistence by making them more comfortable in college.

The research literature strongly suggests that student participation in a first-year experience course is associated with a range of positive outcomes. In studies of various two- and four-year college across the nation, students who enrolled in an FYE course, as compared to similar peers who did not, were more likely to:

- **stay in college longer (from one semester to multiple years longer);**
  - (Belcher, 1993; Blanton et al., n.d.; Boudreau & Kromrey, 1994; Bushko, 1995; Goodman & Pascarella, 2006; Jackson, 2005; Jaijairam, 2016; Karp et al., 2015; Fraser et al., 2017; Miller et al., 2007; Permzadian & Crede, 2016; Pittendrigh et al., 2016; Schnell & Doetkett, 2004; Starke et al., 2001; Strumpf & Hunt, 1993; Stupka, 1993; Vaughan et al., 2014; VerDuin, 2005)
- **earn more college credits and higher grades in subsequent terms;**
  - (House, 2005; Jaijairam, 2016; Jamelske, 2008; Jenkins-Guarnieri et al., 2015; Karp et al., 2015; Schwartz & Grieve, 2008; Vaughan et al., 2014; Wahlstrom, 1993)
- **feel a greater sense of belonging;**
  - (Jaijairam, 2016; Keup & Barefoot, 2005; O'Gara et al., 2009)
- **feel better about the career decision-making process;** and
  - (Adams et al., 2008; Belson & Deegan, 1993; Jaijairam, 2016; Fraser et al., 2017; Peterson & Stubblefield, 2008)
- **graduate in less time and with fewer credits.**
  - (Blowers, 2005; Clouse, 2012; Lang, 2007; Miller & Lesik, 2015; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Schnell et al., 2003)

Larger-scale studies of the community college systems in Florida, Virginia, and North Carolina found a positive association between FYE course participation and retention and completion rates (Cho & Karp, 2013; Yamasaki, 2010; Zeidenberg et al., 2007). Furthermore, FYE has already shown promise to improve student success here in Connecticut: New students who enrolled at Asnuntuck Community College in the fall semester between 2008 and 2014 and who took its FYE course had a nearly 17 percent higher fall-to-fall retention rate than their peers who did not take the course (CCC Advising Leads Council, 2019).

THE COURSE

CCS 101: College & Career Success

The Guided Pathways framework seeks to help community college students efficiently complete credentials, transfer, and attain jobs with value in the labor market. It imagines a student's college journey as a pathway from entry to completion that is filled with obstacles that institutions must clear to promote student success. Guided Pathways consists of four principles around which colleges can organize their various student success initiatives in a coherent way:

1) Provide students with clearly structured pathways to a credential, transfer, and employment;
2) Get students on a plan that lays out the requirements to achieve their academic and career goals;
3) Help students stay on track until they complete their goals; and
4) Ensure that students are learning with clear program outcomes and effective teaching practices.

CCS 101: College & Career Success is a first-year experience course designed by faculty, staff, and administrators from CSCU's 12 community college campuses to help new students transition effectively to college and to improve student learning and persistence. The course connects seamlessly to the principles of Guided Pathways: CCS 101 is an efficient way to ensure all students entering the Connecticut State Community College have a personal academic and career plan, the knowledge and skills to persist through challenges, and study strategies that facilitate greater learning and success in their coursework.

CCS 101's learning objectives are rooted in theories of student persistence and empirical evidence of the key determinants of college success. For instance, by the end of the course, students will have 1) created a personal academic and career plan after assessing their personal strengths, interests and values; 2) researched the nature and outlook of different professions; 3) mapped out a course of study that helps them meet their desired job qualifications; and 4) devised a strategy to cover the costs associated with their chosen degree or credential (CSCU FYE Work Group, 2019). There are potentially tremendous benefits of engaging in a structured exploration and planning process at the beginning of college. First, the exploration process gives incoming students the time and guidance to articulate their goals and the value of a college education, increasing their motivation and intentionality. Students who do not have clear goals or a genuine understanding of why college is worthwhile are more likely to make counterproductive choices and get derailed by minor challenges and setbacks (Grubb, 2006).

Furthermore, the planning process results in a thoughtful, realistic course-by-course roadmap to completion. Research strongly suggests that success outcomes improve when students develop a concrete set of steps for attaining their goals (Bahr, 2008; Jenkins et al., 2017; Metzner, 1989; Visher et al., 2010). Second, a plan may help students make more informed academic and personal decisions by regularly reminding them of the requirements for completion and providing them with clear benchmarks against which they can measure their progress. Last but not least, the act of creating a plan in CCS 101 may have as much value as the document itself. The experience of researching, drafting, and refining the plan during the first year could develop

students' ability to reflect on their personal goals and circumstances, critically assess their options, and formulate a course of action that best suits them (Harrington et al., 2018; Karp & Bork, 2012). These skills are essential to independently manage and rebound from challenges in the future, which can improve student persistence (Dignath & Büettner, 2008).

The other learning objectives of CCS 101 support the third and fourth principles of Guided Pathways: help students stay on a path and ensure students are learning. In CCS 101, students will learn the expectations required of successful college students; develop essential academic skills such as information literacy, critical thinking, and effective communication; identify and practice using campus resources and services; and learn how to apply various study habits and personal success strategies that promote well-being, motivation, and resilience (CSCU FYE Work Group, 2019). Accomplishing these outcomes will enable students to decipher and master the many unwritten rules of college that impact their academic performance and motivation to stay in college. Examples of these oft-unspoken requirements of success include knowing how to participate in class appropriately, how to navigate bureaucratic systems to access resources, how and when to ask for help, and how to effectively balance school, work, and family commitments (Bourdieu, 1973; Karp, 2011; Tinto, 1993). Failure to learn these behaviors can demoralize students and contribute to low persistence (Tinto, 1993).

Instead of leaving students to figure out how to navigate the college environment and do well in college-level courses, CCS 101 lays out what it takes for them to achieve academic success and then empowers them to do so. Moreover, CCS 101 sets students up for higher quality learning, which is the true value of earning a degree or credential. Students will effectively learn more not only by virtue of persisting and taking more classes, but also because they have the skills and strategies to more meaningfully engage with the lessons in each class that faculty work so hard to impart. Several CSCU community college campuses have demonstrated support for components of CCS 101, and they are taking action independently to incorporate them into their program curricula.

Equity Impact Statement

Disparities in achievement remain despite the best efforts of the twelve community college campuses to promote equity among CSCU students. The Connecticut State Community College's CCS 101 will advance the Board of Regents' twin goals of increasing student success and eliminating achievement disparities among different racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and gender groups (BOR, 2019).

First, by taking CCS 101, all degree-seeking community college students will gain the resources and skills associated with college and career success. Students will take the course within their first nine credits so they can apply what they learn as early as possible, thereby maximizing the quality of their learning, their preparedness for upper-level coursework, and their chances of completing their goals. Research strongly suggests that an early and intentional intervention like CCS 101 stands to improve a range of outcomes for *all* CSCU community college students, including course performance, credit accrual, and retention and completion rates.

Second, CCS 101 will especially empower students who face the greatest barriers to college and career success. Compared to more selective higher education institutions, community colleges

enroll a disproportionate share of disadvantaged students, including first-generation college students, low-income dependents and earners, part- and full-time workers, and caregivers. These student populations face high barriers to learning, education, and employment, and are the most likely to drop out of college before earning a credential (Carnevale et al., 2015; Carnevale & Smith, 2018; Cataldi et al., 2018; Edgecombe, 2019; Fountain, 2019; Gault et al., 2016; Jenkins, 2003; RTI International, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c; Ma & Baum, 2016; NSC Research Center, 2019; Noll et al., 2017; Yuen, 2019).

CCS 101's emphasis on developing academic skills and study habits, practicing using campus resources, and engaging with community members will benefit students whose home lives and previous schooling did not provide them with the social network or academic, practical, and cultural knowledge required to navigate higher education and excel in college-level classes. Furthermore, CCS 101's focus on personal success strategies and academic, career, and financial planning will increase the bandwidth and resilience of students who are balancing college with work and family commitments and other personal needs like physical well-being, mental health, and food and housing security. Taken together, the various learning outcomes of CCS 101 comprise both a safety net and springboard to success for students who would otherwise struggle to stay in college long enough to complete their educational goals.

How does CCS 101 interact with other Guided Pathways efforts?

CCS 101 is a critical piece of CSCU's implementation of Guided Pathways. The course works in concert with the Areas of Study and Holistic Case Management Advising (HCMA) policies to get every Connecticut State Community College student on a pathway as early as possible and to equip them with the tools to achieve those goals as efficiently as possible. CCS 101 will provide Guided Pathways Advisors with the necessary support in making sure every student has a thoughtful academic and career plan. Additionally, the six Areas of Study will give students early momentum by helping them choose early course sequences that align with their interests and goals and reduce the chances that they switch programs of study later on, which might result in taking classes that do not count toward requirements for completion (Bailey et al., 2015; Karp, 2011; Rosenbaum et al., 2006).

The overall effects of this suite of Guided Pathways initiatives will be greater student motivation, focus, and preparedness. There is evidence from other community colleges across the nation, such as Lorain County Community College, that have implemented similar changes simultaneously and seen both a significant rise in credential attainment and decrease in the number of excess credits at the time of graduation (Ohio Higher Ed, 2018).

How was CCS 101 created?

The CSCU Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs charged the FYE workgroup in 2018, a subgroup under the CSCU Guided Pathways Choice Architecture and Support Architecture (later renamed as Holistic Student Support Redesign). The workgroup was tasked with designing and recommending policies and practices that facilitate student retention and completion through the development of a First Year Experience course that provides opportunity for career exploration and leads to the creation of an academic/career plan. The group's recommendations would then move to the Guided Pathways Task Force and the

Community College Implementation Committee for approval. All twelve colleges were asked to participate and ultimately sent members; the workgroup was comprised of FYE course coordinators, faculty, college administrators, and staff from complementary areas including library services, advising, and academic support (see Appendix for a list of contributors). Together this group brought diverse experiences and perspectives on content, pedagogy, and administration.

The development of CCS 101 was supported by a partnership with the New Jersey Success Center. Dr. Christine Harrington, then Executive Director of the NJ Success Center, is a nationally renowned expert in FYE. Dr. Harrington visited Connecticut three times in 2018 to facilitate a series of course development workshops. The course development started with a broad discussion about what students should be able to know or do upon completion of the course and developed a list of potential course objectives and outcomes. The group engaged in breakout sessions and full-group dialogue to winnow down the list of outcomes into a set of four course outcomes. The group then developed more detailed learning objectives along with two exemplar assessments. The group established the course name, subject code, prerequisite, and recommended class size. The group engaged in a series of edits and revisions to refine the content, language, and essential elements of the proposal needed for faculty to bring the course through their curricular governance process. The final proposal was approved in December 2019.

The community college advising council developed a statement of support endorsing the efficacy of the course and recommending that the general education committee adopt CCS 101 as a requirement for all students. The FYE workgroup mirrored that statement of support stressing the importance of the course in reaching the BOR's stated goals for Guided Pathways and equity. Several colleges have already incorporated aspects of the CCS 101 course into their current FYE course. Manchester Community College brought the CCS 101 course through the entire faculty curricular governance process and the course was formally approved by the college senate on May 7, 2020.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why should CCS 101 be mandatory?

All new students enrolled at Connecticut State Community College should be required to take CCS 101, unless they are granted an exception, for a plain and simple reason: equity.

A Guided Pathways-informed first-year experience course like CCS 101: College and Career Success potentially has tremendous value for disadvantaged student populations, including first-generation college students, low-income dependents and earners, part- and full-time workers, and caregivers. Unfortunately, students who may benefit the most from an optional first-year experience course are least likely to take advantage of it (Harrington et al., 2018). For instance, first-generation college students are less likely than their counterparts whose parents have a Bachelors degree to use a variety of optional support services, such as academic advising services, health services, academic support services, and career services (RTI International, 2019c). Reasons for this include a lack of awareness of the service's potential benefits; not knowing how to access the service; unfamiliarity or discomfort with asking for help; and work or family-related scheduling conflicts that prevent students from visiting campus (Cox, 2009; Gardenhire-Crooks et al., 2010; Karp & Bork, 2012; Peña & Rhoads, 2018).

To ensure the benefits of CCS 101 flow to those who need the greatest support in making a successful transition to college, the course must be mandatory. Making the seminar optional–which the One College General Education Core currently does–undermines its potential to ensure *every* Connecticut State Community College student has the foundational knowledge and skills to achieve their academic and career goals, not just those students who are fortunate enough to be college-ready upon enrollment.

Why should CCS 101 be worth 3 credits?

CCS 101 should be worth three (3) credits because it is academically rigorous, holds students to high standards, and grows their cognitive capacities. A major focus of the course is developing students' critical thinking, writing, communication, and information literacy skills so they can meet the expectations of college-level classes. Students will cultivate these skills through a variety of tasks that will challenge them to think and perform at a higher level than they did before; example tasks include close reading, writing, and research assignments, as well as focused discussions and interactive projects. CCS 101 is no less demanding than courses in traditional academic departments and should be accorded the contact hours and status it deserves.

Furthermore, CCS 101 should be worth three (3) credits because college and career readiness is not a singular skill that can be acquired instantaneously. Rather, it encompasses an array of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits associated with academic achievement and persistence; learning this suite of competencies requires extensive reflection, practice, and consequently time (Karp et al., 2012; Harrington et al., 2018). For CCS 101 to fulfill its potential to improve student learning, retention, and completion, it must be worth three credits. The increased number of contact hours also ensures that students who have the least time outside of class–whether due to

work, family, or other responsibilities–have ample time to develop a thoughtful academic and career plan as well as the essential academic and personal skills to succeed.

Additionally, creating a personalized academic and career plan is a time-intensive process. It is highly reflective, complex, and iterative: students must reflect on their goals, values, interests, and strengths; explore and assess potential career options; identify a program of study that aligns with their career(s) of interest; map out the courses required to graduate from that program of study; and identify the support services and funding sources they will need to complete their credential. CCS 101 provides students with the time, structure, and guidance to do a thorough job, such that their plans are genuinely effective tools for future decision-making.

Research shows that reducing CCS 101 to one or two credits would both limit instructors' ability to achieve all of the learning outcomes by the end of the term and weaken students' motivation to take the class seriously (Blanton et al., n.d.; Cuseo, n.d.; Du, 2016; Jessup-Anger, 2011; Swing, 2002). Although it is difficult to make space in program curricula for a 3-credit course, the upfront investment of time will pay dividends for both students and instructors whose classes will be filled with better prepared learners.

Why should CCS 101 be taken within the first 9 credits?

CCS 101's value increases the earlier students take it: the sooner they gain these tools, the more confident, prepared to learn, and successful they will be. Research and practice make it unambiguously clear that students' earliest experiences in college have an outsized impact on their decision to stay and their chances of completion (Hunter, 2006). According to the Center for Community College Engagement, colleges can improve students' first-year experience by creating a welcoming and supportive environment, promoting a sense of community, making sure students have a clear academic plan and pathway, promote engaged learning, and provide opportunities for students to build their academic and social support network (CCSSE, 2009). CCS 101 is designed to accomplish all of these goals as soon as possible.

How is CCS 101 suited to fulfill the general education core diversity requirement?

The ultimate goal of the diversity requirement–"to prepare students for an increasingly diverse and interdependent campus and the world that they live in and will lead" (UCLA)–dovetails nicely with the self-reflective and collaborative ethos of CCS 101. Through various experiences and assignments, CCS 101 students will develop a greater awareness of themselves, including their values, biases, and assumptions, as well as engage with other students with different backgrounds and cultures. Learning to recognize their own perspectives, appreciate those of others, and build relationships across differences are key interpersonal competencies to successfully work and live in diverse societies. Colleges and universities across the nation, such as Guttman Community College, Georgia Southern University, Xavier University, and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, have also seen the potential of first-year experience programming to promote diversity and inclusion and are currently integrating these focuses into their respective courses.

What are the next steps if the policy is approved?

The Board of Regents will direct the CSCU Provost, Associate Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, and Provost for Connecticut State Community College to shepherd the course refinement and curricular approval of CCS 101 through the future Connecticut State Community College curriculum procedures. These procedures must adhere to the principles of shared governance as well as those established by NECHE in standard 4.5.

RECOMMENDATION

It is the recommendation of the System's Provost and Associate Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs that the Board of Regents give favorable consideration to the adoption of the proposed College and Career Success 101 Policy for the Connecticut State Community College.

This report was authored by Benjamin Wong, a Research Fellow for CSCU Guided Pathways.

APPENDIX

CCS 101 Contributors
As of December 18, 2019

Catherine Babbitt	*Associate Professor of Developmental English*	Gateway
Gayle Barrett	*Director of Enrollment Management/Guided Pathways Manager/ Student Success Center College Coach*	Middlesex/Success Center
Anna (Marie) Basche	*Director, Academic Success Center*	Capital
Caitlin Boger-Hawkins	*Director of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness*	Northwestern
Donna Bontatibus	*Professor/Program Coord, English & FYE Instructor*	Middlesex
Michael Buccilli	*Director of Advising & Student Success/Guided Pathways Manager*	Gateway/Success Center
Maria Buchta	*Coordinator of First Year Experience*	Norwalk
Jodi Calvert	*Associate Dean of Student Services*	Three Rivers
Jane Carey	*Associate Professor of English*	Quinebaug
Kevin Davis	*Advisor & Student Activities Director*	Quinebaug
Tamika Davis	*Director of Admissions/Guided Pathways Manager/ Student Success Center College Coach*	Tunxis/Success Center
Lisa Dresdner	*Interim Dean Academic Affairs*	Naugatuck Valley
Dave Ferreira	*Dean of Academic & Student Affairs*	Northwestern
James Gentile	*Professor, Liberal and Creative Arts*	Manchester
Samantha Gonzalez	*Division Director of Liberal Arts, FYE Instructor*	Manchester
Jaime Hammond	*Director of Library Services*	Naugatuck Valley
Forrest Helvie	*Chair, Academic Enrichment & First Year Experience*	Norwalk
Mary Ellen Jukoski	*President*	Three Rivers
Louis Lombard	*English Instructor*	Naugatuck Valley

Bridget Mullally	*Coordinator of First Year Studies*	Gateway
Michaela Mullarkey	*Professor of English*	Asnuntuck
Jane O'Grady	*Program Coordinator Allied health & Medical Assisting*	Northwestern
Julia Petitfrere	*Professor, English*	Naugatuck Valley
Rebecca Rodriguez	*Counselor*	Housatonic
Francine Rosselli-Navarra	*Professor and Department Chair, Psychology and Anthropology*	Manchester/Success Center
Jill Rushbrook	*Director of Advising/FYE Instructor*	Asnuntuck
Rebecca Samberg	*Chair, First Year Studies Department*	Housatonic
Jason Scappaticci	*Associate Dean of Students*	Capital
Monica Stellmacher	*CONNTAC Coordinator*	Manchester
Tim St. James	*Dean of Students/FYE Instructor*	Asnuntuck
Kathy Taylor	*Associate Professor, Legal/Business*	Naugatuck Valley
Joanna White	*GEAR UP Program Director*	Manchester
Pam Williams	*Research Librarian*	Three Rivers
Marguerite Yawin	*Professor of English*	Tunxis
Heidi Zenie	*Program Coordinator, Exercise Science and Sports & Leisure Management/Guided Pathways Manager/Student Success Center College Coach*	Three Rivers/Success Center

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