

Identification of the Topic

The goal of NRCC's QEP is to improve student persistence, retention and, ultimately, graduation rates through goal setting/tracking and community building in the students' first semester. An integrated first semester experience is the logical next step in implementing NRCC's intentional engagement model which, up until this point, has largely focused on a required new student orientation and assigned connection specialists (or go-to people) for each NRCC student, all empowered by a locally-developed technology platform (CLAS).

This QEP will develop the model further by helping students to feel an increased sense of belonging in higher education in general and at NRCC specifically. And that increased sense of belonging and community will be a more conducive environment in which students will set educational goals and be supported as they meet benchmarks along the way to meeting those goals.

This first semester experience will include student experiences that have long been a part of NRCC (SDV-100, the college success skills course) and ones that have been revamped over the past couple of years (the required new student orientation and open house kick-off celebrations). It will also be bookended by new components: an online pre-orientation module and, most prominently, a four to nine credit first semester seminar for all new program-placed students; the seminar will include three courses for transfer students and two courses for career and technical education students.

First Semester Experience Components:

