



fye.vt.edu

Greetings FYE Community!

Spring has sprung and the semester has flown by! We appreciate all of your hard work. As the semester draws to a close, we would like to inform you of end-of-year information and events for FYE.

Peer Mentor Training: You previously received an email requesting the names and emails of your peer mentors so we could invite them to attend one of the trainings. Two of the three Peer Mentor trainings happened this April, and the third will be in August. Students can still RSVP for the last of the three sessions. The workshop content was shared in the email. The date for the August workshop will be announced soon.

Summer Institute: Planning for the Summer Institute on June 5 and 6th is underway. Please register at www.undergraduate.provost.vt.edu/summerinstitute.

There will be two additional FYE events for you to engage during the institute. There will be a pre-institute workshop on Tuesday, June 4, from 2:00 - 4:00 for us to experience the Virginia Tech Challenge Course and learn strategies for incorporating this awesome resource into your FYE class.

We will also host a FYE Coffee Klatch on Friday morning, June 7. See your email to register for both events; note these are a separate registration process from the institute.

*"Nobody can go back and start a new beginning,
but anyone can start today and make a new ending."*

Maria Robinson

Rex Waters | Associate Director of Undergraduate Academic Programs

In this edition:

- **Conference Overview & Faculty Highlights** | p. 2
- **Professional Development: Camp FYE** | p. 3
- **Student Highlights & Course Spotlights** | p. 4-5
- **Mission Statement** | p. 6
- **Essential Practices** | p. 7-8

THE SUMMER INSTITUTE

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR
UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

June 5-6

> Conference Overview

Virginia Tech Faculty and Staff Attend Annual Conference on the First-Year Experience

This year, Rex Waters, Associate Director of Undergraduate Academic Programs, and several FYE faculty from Virginia Tech went to the 38th Annual Conference on the First-Year Experience in Las Vegas, Nevada. The conference provided a forum for higher education professionals to share their experiences, accomplishments, and concerns regarding student success and development during the first year of college. Conference attendees had opportunities to grow their personal and professional development as well as present their findings and experiences with First-Year Experiences with other educators and participants.

Many faculty from Virginia Tech presented at the conference and were a significant part of four professional presentations and workshops that greatly added to the FYE conversation:

- Elaine Lewis, Assistant Director of Undergraduate Programs for the Department of Biological Sciences, supported the “Utilizing Communication Theories and Campus Partners to Enhance the Hand-Off” pre-conference workshop.
- Dr. Tiffany Shoop, Associate Director for Special Programs at the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, and Rex Waters presented “Cultivating a Community of Practice for FYE Faculty and Partners”.
- Dr. Lori Blanc, Assistant Professor of Practice for the Department of Biological Sciences, presented “Practicing What We Preach: Taking Risks to Promote Self-Authorship”.
- Janice Chatham, Academic Advisor for University Studies, Cynthia Crawford, Administrative Assistant for University Studies, and Karlyn Chen, a Virginia Tech senior and University Studies Intern, presented “Implementing the Group Interview Process for Peer Mentor Selection” as a panel.



In addition, FYE faculty Renee Eaton and Linda Granata were also recognized for being nominees for national awards. More information about the awards may be found at www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/national_resource_center/award_recognition_programs.

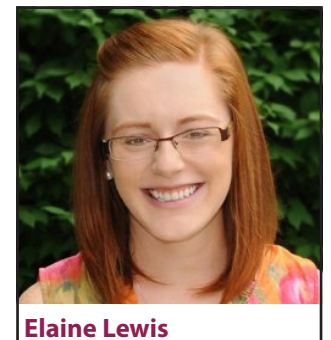
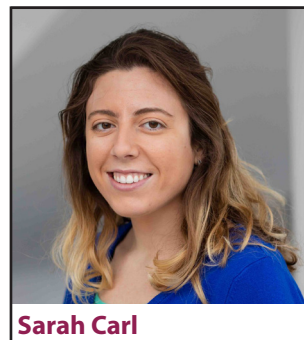
Rex Waters describes his experience at the conference as being an exciting opportunity to join a strong contingent of Virginia Tech faculty and staff. “We convened with over 2000 attendees from around the world to explore and share the current trends, new thinking and best practices in the field.”

Next year’s conference will be held February 21 - 24, 2020, in Washington DC.

> Faculty Highlights

FYE Faculty Receive Advising Travel Grants

The Office of Academic Advising Initiatives provides a \$500 professional development grant to faculty, staff, and professional advisors who serve undergraduates to offset expenses such as conferences and events. Two FYE Faculty, Sarah Carl, Academic Advisor for the School of Neuroscience, and Elaine Lewis, Assistant Director of Undergraduate Programs for the Department of Biological Sciences, are recipients of this year’s award. They were recognized at the 9th Annual Advising Matter Conference on March 4th at the Inn at Virginia Tech. Congratulations Sarah and Elaine!



> Professional Development

Instructors of First-Year Courses Come Together for Camp FYE 2019

At the start of Spring 2019 semester, First-Year Experience instructors gathered at the Merryman Center for the annual Camp FYE, a professional development workshop. Attendees were greeted by Rex Waters, Associate Director of Undergraduate Academic Programs, and Cyril Clarke, Executive Vice President and Provost for Virginia Tech. The program offered many different opportunities for instructors to learn more about what to expect from first-year students and share their experiences teaching an FYE course.

Throughout the day, sessions were held where faculty could communicate and collaborate with partners of FYE, as well as having the option to choose between varied breakout sessions and presentations. Breakout sessions focused on topics such as digital and information literacy, peer mentoring in FYE, student success through academic

planning, and the impact of microaggressions and implicit bias in the classroom. Faculty also had the opportunity to split up into groups based on the class size they teach. During these sessions, faculty discussed and worked together in small groups to create a short presentation to showcase the failures and successes of teaching FYE students.

Missed Camp FYE this January? Be sure to mark your calendar for the Summer Institute, June 5 - 6, 2019, where FYE will join forces with Pathways General Education and Howard Hughes Medical Institute for two days of workshops, presentations, and poster sessions focused on the theme of inclusive excellence. For more information or to register to attend, please visit the website: www.undergraduate.provost.vt.edu/summerinstitute.



Executive Vice President and Provost Cyril Clarke speaks to faculty to kick off Camp FYE



Whit Babcock welcomes Camp FYE attendees to the Merryman Center for Virginia Tech athletics



Danette Beane presents "what we know" about this generation of first-year students



Attendees look over the program for Camp FYE

> In the Spotlight

Student Highlights

This semester, the Office of First-Year Experiences is pleased to be working with graduate student Gabby Singh for her practicum experience. In this role, Gabby is primarily

supporting FYE assessment and data analysis efforts, in addition to assisting with strategic communications, messaging, and website content development.

Gabby Singh



Gabby is a first-year student in the Higher Education master's program. She earned a bachelor's degree in Strategic Communications from Susquehanna University in 2017. Upon completing her undergraduate studies, Gabby served as an AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteer In Service to America) at West Chester University. In this role she worked as the Resource Pantry Coordinator, managing the daily operations of the pantry and supporting the sustainability of the initiative. Gabby also works in Student Engagement and Campus Life as the Graduate Advisor for the Student Government Association. She is excited to be working with First-Year Experiences this semester, learning more about the undergraduate academic experience and strategies for supporting students in transition.

> Course Spotlight

Students in HIST 1004 produce website for the “African American Fourth of July”

Students in HIST 1004: Introduction to History took part in an opening reception on December 4, 2018, to conclude their fall semester and celebrate the opening of the website they produced for the course focused on African American Perspectives on the Fourth of July. The website can be found at <https://africanamerican4th.omeka.net>, with the conclusions the students have made from their research conducted throughout the semester.

Course professor Brett Shadle notes, “In an 1852 speech, Frederick Douglass reflected on the meaning of the Fourth of July for the enslaved, and for free African Americans in the North threatened by the Fugitive Slave Act. My students wished to explore the changing meaning of the Fourth for African Americans in later years. Students searched seven different African American newspapers, covering over 140 years after the Civil War, to identify articles that discussed celebrations, critiques, and observations of the day.”

Along with students’ analyses of major themes and outstanding articles, full transcriptions of these articles appear on their website, and are fully searchable and open to the public.

This class project won the Department of History’s 2019 Digital History Prize for undergraduates.



> Course Spotlight

Chemistry First-Year Experience Course Teaches More Than Just What It Means to Be a Chem Major

Chemistry 1004 is no ordinary science class. It is a unique class for first-year students where the focus is on the student and their path to self-examination and reflection. Professor Jeannine Eddleton shares that her “primary goal for each and every student is that they do enough self-examination, rumination, and reflection such that they either stay on the path in chemistry or move to some other path because they see something in that possible future that speaks to their heart, their authentic self.” A first-year experience course is about much more than introducing students to Virginia Tech; it is also about teaching students how to handle the transition from high school to college and the stress that comes with it. These courses also help transfer students during their first semester at Virginia Tech.

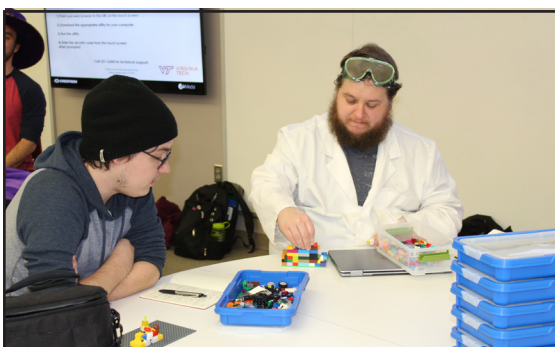
For transfer student Anna Falls, she noted that “The transfer experience is really unique just because you come in with such a smaller group, so it’s a lot harder to find your place... but then being in this one class where we can all connect... about something really helped.” Students in the

class sit at tables with a group ranging from 5-7 students and a peer mentor, which helps make the big class feel smaller since students are only working with those around them.

Chemistry 1004 brings in a wide range of guest speakers from around campus to introduce students to what is available to them around campus and future steps students can take within the major, or beyond if that is what is right for them. For student Sarah Steffen, she noted how the speakers introduced her to many different possibilities in the future. “They helped us realize that there’s more than just chemistry in a chemistry major,” she stated. Chemistry has a unique culture, both at Virginia Tech and in the global/historical context, according to professor Candace Wall, and this FYE class is a chance for instructors to introduce their students to the many available opportunities Chemistry has to offer. “FYE is our way to welcome these students into the chemistry family,” stated Candace Wall.



Chem FYE students building with legos as part of a self-reflection.



Chem FYE student sits with a peer mentor.



The CHEM 1004 transfer students band together as the Incredibles on Halloween during Fall 2018.

FYE Mission Statement

First-Year Experiences at Virginia Tech courses offer multiple courses, each housed in a different academic unit and each uniquely consistent with the strategic direction, mission, and culture of that unit.

The courses are anchored by four foundational cornerstones:


ACADEMIC TRANSITION – introduce the discipline, the practice of learning from experience, and the resources for successful academic transition to Virginia Tech;

HOLISTIC EDUCATION – integrate experiences inside and outside of the classroom for a meaningful, holistic student experience;

INTEGRITY – develop academic and personal integrity; and

COMMUNITY – foster a connection to the discipline and Virginia Tech community. FYE offers students integrated academic and social opportunities designed to promote the complex thinking and ethical abilities necessary for success in a global community.

These opportunities enable students to investigate the world around them, resulting in a stronger sense of self, values, community and potential.



Students and Faculty say FYE is all about...

FYE @ VT
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCES
AT VIRGINIA TECH

Essential Skills

- Anchoring students' Virginia Tech experience for a strong college life foundation in "learn-by-doing" settings
- Preparing students to tackle the "messy problems" of tomorrow through courses designed to promote the problem-solving, critical thinking, and innovation skills they will need when working as professionals in the field

Creating Community

- Developing a sense of belonging to the wider Hokie community within inclusive foundational learning communities
- Forming relationships with faculty and peers through collaborative group work and thought-provoking dialogue

Engaged Learning

- Designing opportunities to engage every aspect of the course, such as collaborating with faculty, alumni, guests speakers, and others
- Providing experiential learning opportunities for students to explore beyond the classroom, such as undergraduate research and service learning

Personal Mastery

- Empowering students to align personal and professional goals through exploration and self-discovery
- Helping students find purpose through intentional exploration of academic opportunities and co-curricular experiences

Relationships for Success

- Orienting students to campus life, academic pathways, and professional careers through mentorship and meeting individual needs
- Creating a supportive, student-centered environment where students are introduced to resources, events, services, and opportunities available to them

FYE's Five Essential Practices

FYE leverages the cornerstones through five essential practices for transitioning students to learn skills necessary to be successful in the discipline. They include: effective teaching and learning; Virginia Tech Principles of Community; mentorship and engagement; digital and information literacies; and undergraduate academic integrity. The five FYE essential practices demonstrate meaningful integration of practice to support a VT-shaped learning experience that demonstrates the foundational cornerstones.



I. EFFECTIVE TEACHING & LEARNING

FYE courses are intentionally designed to use research-based learning experiences to foster student engagement and to support the development and success of first-year students. Specifically, first-year students will experience high-quality learning experiences requiring students to employ a critical and reflective process for experiential learning that will set them on the path for meaningful engagement in advanced experiences including undergraduate research, study abroad, service learning, internships, and capstone projects. Faculty who teach FYE courses facilitate a VT-shaped learning experience through implementing contemporary, student-centered curricula; and participate in a professional teaching and learning community of practice that reaches beyond disciplinary boundaries and is grounded in inclusive pedagogy.



II. VIRGINIA TECH PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY

FYE courses introduce students to and are conducted in the spirit of the Virginia Tech Principles of Community and *Ut Prosim* ("That I May Serve"). Students who take FYE courses create meaningful connections to further their understanding of self and concepts within DiversityEdu, while providing students opportunities to engage with different perspectives, challenge assumptions, and to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for diverse cultures and identities



III. MENTORSHIP & ENGAGEMENT

FYE courses demonstrate diverse ways of reinforcing an engaged campus through connecting students to social, curricular, co-curricular and cultural enrichment opportunities. Students in FYE courses learn to navigate campus through active participation in the Virginia Tech Community. They build a "Hokie" identity and develop skills to adapt and persevere during and beyond the first year. Faculty teaching first-year courses should be adept at mentoring a diverse population of first-year students to empower them to develop and revise their academic plan, identify and access both mentors and advisors, learn about career options, and begin building personal and professional identities.

> FYE's Five Essential Practices (*continued*)



IV. DIGITAL & INFORMATION LITERACIES

FYE courses help students create connections with University Libraries to enhance their ability to discover, create, reflect, evaluate, and communicate knowledge to diverse audiences. Faculty who teach FYE facilitate the connections through methods such as collaborative assignment design and assessment, collaborative teaching teams, and use of library space for creation of experiential learning opportunities. Students who take FYE courses should demonstrate their digital and information literacies within the creation and scholarship competency area and one other area of focus which includes: reflective discovery; critical evaluation; ethics; communication and collaboration; identity and self-development; and technological literacy.



V. UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

FYE courses support individual understanding and ability to adhere to the principles of academic integrity when using and/or creating information in accordance with the Virginia Tech Honor Code and professional norms of their field. Students who take FYE courses should engage in ethical behavior, showing academic integrity through methods that may include giving credit to the work of others, following established academic policies, and beginning to navigate disciplinary standards for research. Faculty who teach FYE courses should serve as guides who connect the Virginia Tech Honor Code with the professional norms of the field they are introducing in the course.



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