

**The First Year Pilot Program at Berea College**  
**Academic Connections Engagement & Success**  
**Association of American Colleges & Universities**  
**January 24, 2009**

**Berea College**

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Founded in 1855 Berea College serves students who possess great academic promise and limited financial resources. Berea College charges no tuition (84% of students are Pell Grant eligible), providing all students with the equivalent of a full-tuition scholarship. All students must work at least 10 hours per week in one of the most ethnically diverse liberal arts colleges in the U.S. Established by ardent abolitionists, Berea became the first college in the south to educate black and white, men and women in the same classroom.

**Institutional Commitment to the First Year Initiative**

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Berea's Strategic Plan: Being & Becoming Question #2

- What population of students does Berea seek to serve and how can the College best serve them?

Quality Enhancement Plan for SACS

- "The intention is to develop and implement a program (primarily aimed at first-year students) to enhance students' learning success before they go on probation...implementing a proactive initiative to assist first-year students become active, engaged, and effective learners."

The Task Force on Student Success (2007)

- "...the development and long-term support of a comprehensive and intentional program that addresses the various policies, practices, and services designed to engage and assist first-year students in making a successful transition to college."

**Academic Connections, Engagement, & Success (ACES) Program Objectives**

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- **Skills & Abilities:** Provide opportunities for students to further develop pre-existing skills and learn new skills which are deemed crucial to both academic and personal success and which enhance students' abilities to become effective and engaged learners.
- **Foundations:** Instill and cultivate the habits of mind that are necessary to form a strong foundation for success in college and beyond.
- **Engagement:** Foster engaged learning by helping students better understand how to take responsibility for their own education using the full range of resources and activities the College has to offer.
- **Discovery:** Present students with opportunities to explore and refine their personal, educational, and career goals by gaining a more complete understanding of themselves and their motivations for achieving success in college.
- **Relationships:** Help students develop mutually supportive relationships with faculty, staff, and peers that contribute to engaged learning and success in all spheres of their college experience.
- **Community:** Cultivate a greater sense of connection, responsibility and belonging that allows students to become fully engaged citizens of the college, the community, and the world.

## Piloted First Year Initiatives Model

### Primary Components of FYI Pilot

#### Student Success Team:

- GSTR 110 Faculty/Advisor
- Staff Mentor/Lab Instructor
- Peer Leader

#### Student Cohorts

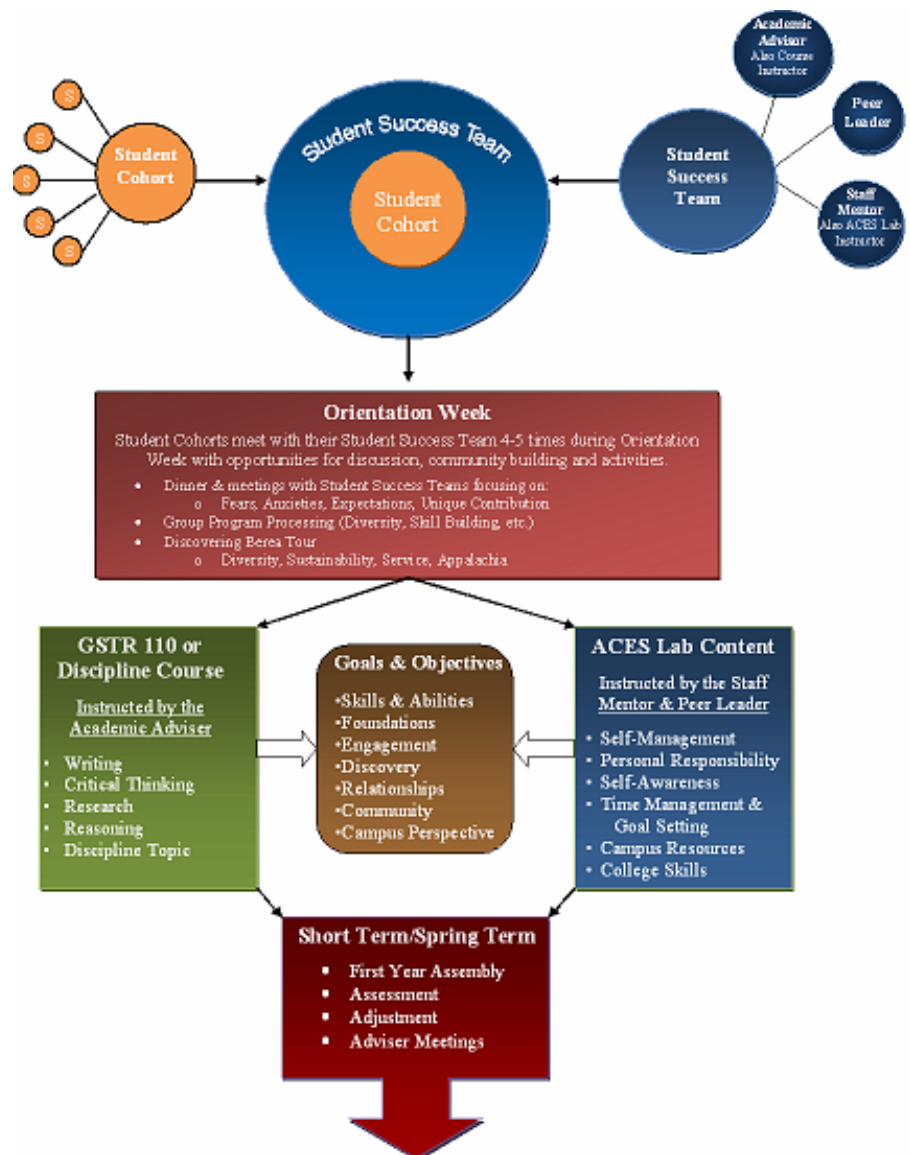
- 15-Students per group based on GSTR 110/Discipline Course Assignment
- Increased focus on greater peer connections, faculty-student interactions, engagement and accountability

#### Expanded Orientation Experience

- Success Team Meetings on Expectations, Fears/Anxieties, Contribution, etc.
- Discovering Berea Tour
- Program Processing

#### Transitional Skill Development Lab

- 1-hour lab paired Principle Course
- Lab Topics focus on Personal Responsibility, Goal Setting, Time-Management, Self-Awareness, College Skills, Campus Resources, etc.



### Preliminary Assessment Data – 2007-2008 Pilot

#### Student Performance – 1<sup>st</sup> Generation Students

Academic Indicators of Student Success	1 <sup>st</sup> Generation Students ACES	1 <sup>st</sup> Generation Students Non-ACES
Midterm Course Grade	3.03	2.76
Final Course Grade	3.11	2.88
Overall GPA	2.81	2.63
Dean's List	34.7%	24.8%

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