

# **First Year Academic Experience**

## **Executive Summary & Report**

### **Fall 2020**

#### **History & Context:**

The First Year Academic Experience (FYAE) began as an idea that was brought forward during a committee meeting for the Students Recommended for Support (SRS) meeting. Students Recommended for Support encompasses students admitted to the university typically with an indicator that denotes they may need additional support to help them retain at the university (i.e. low index scores, low math scores, low GPA etc.). The SRS committee brings together individuals from different units across the university that provide support to students recommended for support, including programs like Financial Aid, Key Communities, and Community for Excellence. When looking at students that are currently SRS and being served by support programs provided through the university, there was a gap in students who were not a part of any support program. To fill this gap, the idea to provide first-year seminars for these students was introduced.

This idea was then brought to the First Year Academic Experience Cohorts committee which worked toward creating the vision for First Year Academic Experience, pairing an in person New Student Seminar with an All-University Core Curriculum requirement such as Composition 130 or 150 or Journalism and Technical Communication 100 to provide more continuity to students' classroom experience during the time of COVID-19. At first, the FYAE Cohorts committee focused only on SRS who had not declared a major. In this iteration, the New Student Seminar curriculum explored students' skills, interests, strengths, and identities, focusing on academic support resources and advice to succeed in college and not major exploration.

The FYAE Cohorts committee identified specific sections of courses to be paired and, through the leadership of Orientation and Transition Programs, worked with Undeclared Student Advising to identify and register SRS students in paired courses during summer Ram Orientation. Due to the timing of advisors receiving the Directed Self-Placement scores for Composition and whether students had declared a major during Ram Orientation, it was decided to expand the focus to include students who were undeclared in their major as a target indicator for FYAE.

Originally, all students intended for FYAE would be enrolled in a newly created First-Year Success course, but due to challenges with recruitment, students were enrolled in clusters for both the newly created First-Year Success course and existing New Student Seminar: Exploring Major Tracks course.

A team of individuals were pulled together from several departments (Orientation & Transition Programs, Undeclared Student Advising, University Housing, Student Success) in Summer 2020 to operationalize the FYAE experience. During the summer this group worked to help design curriculum, recruitment strategies, and overall logistics of the program.

#### **Implementation:**

As part of the First Year Academic Experience for fall 2020, the number of IU 172 courses expanded from 9 New Student Seminar: Exploring Major Tracks courses (one being for Engineering Interest students) to include 12 sections of the *New Student Seminar: Exploring Major Tracks* course and 4 sections of the

*New Student Seminar: First-Year Student Success* course. 8 sections of the *New Student Seminar: Exploring Majors Tracks* course were paired with CO 150, and 1 section was paired with JTC 100. 2 sections of the *New Student Seminar: First-Year Student Success* course were paired with CO 150; 1 section was paired with JTC 100 and 1 section with CO 130. Below are components that comprised the implementation of the courses:

- IU 172 Course Structure:
  - 1 credit, 8-week course (first 8 weeks of semester)
  - Meets twice weekly
  - 50-minute sessions
  - Course Capacity: 19 students in each section
  - 1 Instructor, 1 undergraduate Peer Facilitator
- Administrative Oversight & Coordination, Instructors and Peer Facilitators:
  - The Associate Director and Coordinator for Transition Programs in Orientation and Transition Programs in the Collaborative for Student Achievement led the administration and central coordination of the IU 172 courses as part of the FYAE experience. This included curriculum development, instructor development and support, training, and planning meetings, marketing and recruitment of the seminars, assessment, and administrative oversight of registration for the seminars and provided direct supervision, training and development of undergraduate Peer Facilitators. Additionally, staff from University Housing and Student Success also were involved in the curriculum development for the *New Student Seminar: First-Year Student Success*.
  - Instructors were provided from Undeclared Student Advising, The Career Center, University Housing, Student Success and Orientation and Transition Programs.
  - New Instructors for the courses were recruited from University Housing and Student Success.
  - Weekly, the *Exploring Majors* and *First-Year Success* instructors met in separate teams to discuss upcoming curriculum and the experiences of students in the courses.
  - OTP recruited, hired, and supervised the Peer Facilitators for the course. Many of these students were former student leaders within OTP. Peer Facilitators go through training, have every other week team meetings and one on ones with their supervisor. Peer Facilitators work on average 5-8 hours per week and provide transition and mentoring support to new students in the seminar via co-facilitating the course and conducting one on ones and outside of class outreach to students.
  - Both the Instructor and Peer Facilitator would work together to decide on how curriculum would be taught weekly in the course.
- Overview of courses:
  - All IU 172 courses include reflection on personal values, identity, strengths and interests/skills as they relate to students' goals for the CSU experience.
  - In the *New Student Seminar: Exploring Majors Tracks* course, new first-year students learn about academic and career options within the various major tracks at CSU. Experiential opportunities allow students to explore academic options in determining how students' interests and abilities fit with these options. Students will also be introduced to exploring their professional and educational goals and the achievement of these goals for their success at CSU and begin to develop a network within the CSU community.
  - In the *New Student Seminar: First-Year Student Success* course, new first-year students learn about creating a successful transition to CSU. Through self-awareness, reflection, and planning, students will explore different aspects of the transition to college

including academic success as well as personal and professional goal setting. Through these opportunities, students will be exposed to planning for their success at CSU and beyond. This course will provide a support network for new students to aid in building their community to enrich the first semester transition.

- Additional Components:
  - **Rams Read-** The FYAE initiative supported the new Rams Read program by referencing and in some of the courses utilizing the text *Citizen* as part of the curriculum of the course. With the limited lead time to integrate into the course, Instructors and Peer Facilitators were given the option for assigning the text as part of the course, however all instructors discussed the book and made connections to the content of the book as part of the curriculum in the courses.
  - **DEI Module-** As part of the continued pilot of the DEI Module, in partnership with University Housing, all students enrolled in the New Student Seminar: First-Year Student Success course and the New Student Seminar: Exploring Major Tracks courses completed the online Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Module as an assignment prior to the class session on identity. All the instructors and Peer Facilitators integrated discussion of the module into their curriculum and individual conversations with students.
  - **Academic Coaching/Instructor/Advisor Connections-** Students admitted to the University with Recommended Support were also assigned an Academic Coach to offer small group and one-on-one academic support in their first year, referring students to campus resources, helping set academic goals, and reinforcing academic messaging and skills. As part of the administration of both the Exploring Major Tracks and the First-Year Student Success seminar, all course instructors were connected via email with ASCs/Advisors and Academic Coaches to encourage communication that would provide more holistic support for students in their first 8 weeks.
  - **Post IU 172 Course Engagement Until Fall Break (Week 13)-** After the seminar ended, Peer Facilitators offered post-seminar engagement for students that they were able to design based off the individual needs of their students which included the following:
    - Additional optional one-on-one's- Students that engaged in additional one-on-one's had specific questions about involvement opportunities and study strategies.
    - Weekly individual text messages- Check-in texts, sent messages about upcoming events in the CSU and Fort Collins (i.e. Career Fair, Diversity Symposium, etc.). Some Peer Facilitators received no responses from students, while other Peer Facilitators received responses from up to half of their students
    - Weekly Newsletter- Covered a different topic each week (i.e. college resources, tips for studying, self-care, preparing for finals during remote learning, identity, major and career). Many peer facilitators that sent out newsletters did not receive direct feedback or responses from students
    - Weekly office hours- Some peer facilitators had a few students drop in, while others had no students participate.
- Funding:
  - Funding of approximately \$43,000 was provided from the Provost Office to provide supplemental pay for instructors, peer facilitators, and course materials (i.e. StrengthsQuest codes for students).

## Enrollment:

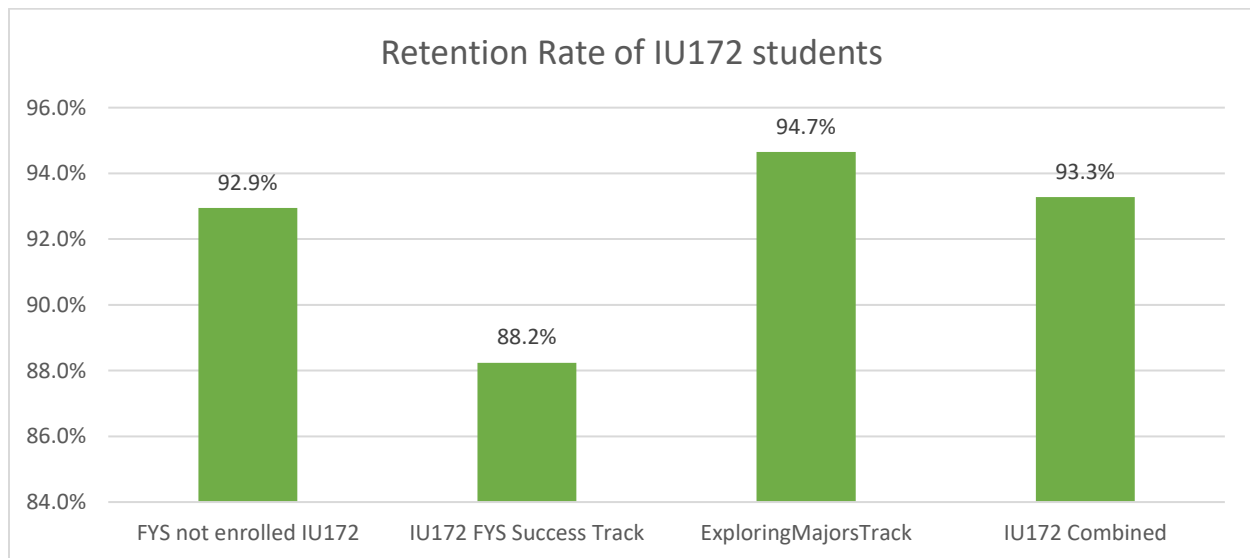
New Student Seminar: Exploring Major Tracks	New Student Seminar: First-Year Student Success
<b>187</b> students total	<b>51</b> students total
74 Students Recommended with Support enrolled	39 Students Recommended with Support enrolled
46 identified as Racial Minority	7 identified as Racial Minority
31 identified as First Generation	10 identified as First Generation

## Success Indicators into Spring 2021: (Retention Data)

### Overall:

In SP21, 222 out of 238 (**93.3%**) students enrolled in IU172 continued into the Spring 2021 semester. Of the 222 students, 45 out of 51 (88.2%) students in FYS success Track, 177 out of 187 (94.7%) in Exploring Major Tracks. This compares to 92.9% of the first-year students who were not enrolled IU172.

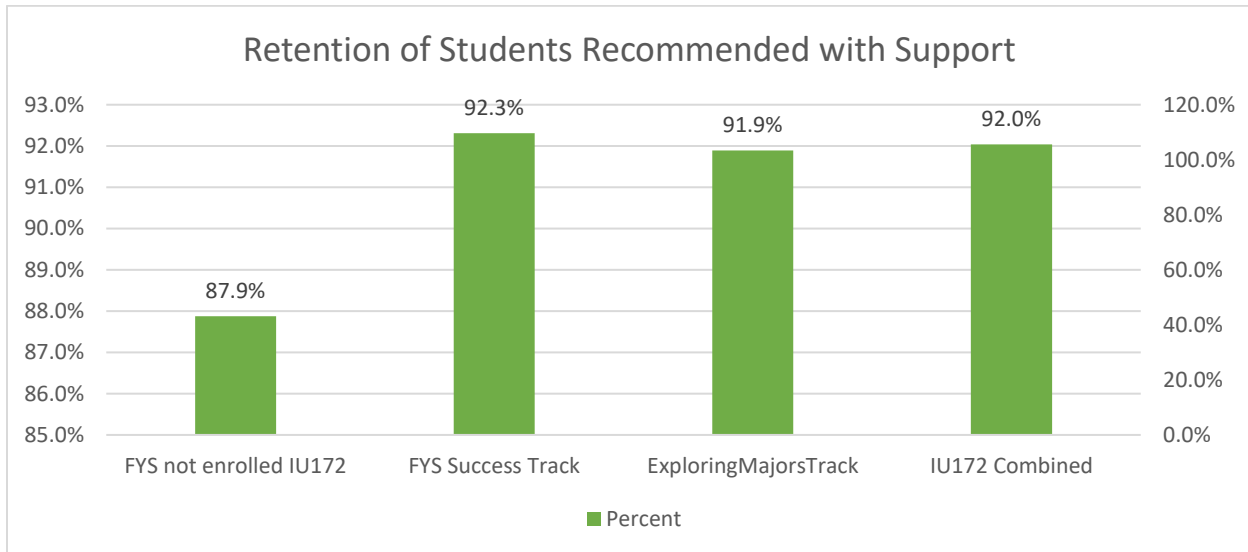
Group	Started FA20	Continuing SP21	Percent
FYS not enrolled IU172	4255	3955	92.9%
IU172 FYS Success Track	51	45	88.2%
Exploring Majors Track	187	177	94.7%
<b>IU172 Combined</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>93.3%</b>



### Students Recommended with Support:

For the group students are recommended with support and enrolled IU172, the retention rate is 92% compared to 87.9% of the first-year students who are not enrolled IU172.

Group	Subgroup	Started FA20	Continuing SP21	Percent
FYS not enrolled IU172	SRS	767	674	87.9%
FYS Success Track	SRS	39	36	92.3%
Exploring Majors Track	SRS	74	68	91.9%
IU172 Combined	SRS	113	104	92.0%



**First-Year Student Success Course Pre/Post Quantitative Survey Data\*:**

First Year Student Success						
	All Students		On Campus		Off Campus	
	Pre (n=48)	Post (n=26)	Pre (n=40)	Post (n=25)	Pre (n=4)	Post (n=1)
I feel confident in identifying my goals for my CSU experience.	79.17%	96.15%	82.50%	96.00%	50.00%	100.00%
I feel confident and motivated to engage with campus resources and opportunities to support my transition to CSU.	81.25%	84.62%	82.50%	84.00%	100.00%	100.00%
I feel as if I have developed connections with my peers, and faculty/staff to support my transition to CSU.	68.75%	88.46%	67.50%	88.00%	75.00%	100.00%

I have reflected on how my interest/skills, identity, values and personal strengths relate to my goals for my CSU experience.	75.00%	96.15%	72.50%	96.00%	75.00%	100.00%
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First Year Student Success						
	All Students		On Campus		Off Campus	
	Pre (n=48)	Post (n=26)	Pre (n=40)	Post (n=25)	Pre (n=4)	Post (n=1)
I feel confident in identifying appropriate campus resources that will contribute to my transition to CSU	66.67%	92.31%	67.50%	92.00%	50.00%	100.00%
I feel confident in my ability to be academically successful at CSU.	87.50%	96.15%	85.00%	96.00%	100.00%	100.00%
I feel confident in managing my wellbeing while at CSU (mental, physical, and social health)	87.50%	96.15%	85.00%	96.00%	100.00%	100.00%

First Year Student Success						
	All Students		On Campus		Off Campus	
	Pre (n=48)	Post (n=26)	Pre (n=40)	Post (n=25)	Pre (n=4)	Post (n=1)
I believe my social identities will impact my experience at CSU.	70.83%	73.08%	75.00%	72.00%	25.00%	100.00%

I can identify my core values.	83.33%	96.15%	82.50%	96.00%	100.00%	100.00%
I feel a sense of belonging at CSU	81.25%	92.31%	80.00%	92.00%	100.00%	100.00%
I am committed to staying at CSU	93.75%	92.31%	92.50%	92.00%	100.00%	100.00%

First Year Student Success						
	All Students		On Campus		Off Campus	
	Pre (n=48)	Post (n=26)	Pre (n=40)	Post (n=25)	Pre (n=4)	Post (n=1)
I would recommend this course to future, first-year students:		96.15%		96.00%		100.00%

\*intersectional data points available by request.

### New Student Seminar: Exploring Major Tracks and First Year Student Success Qualitative Post-Survey Comments (selected RamsRead and DEI Module Comments Separated out Below)

Students who enrolled in the Exploring Major Tracks and First-Year Student Success seminars were asked to complete pre-and post-seminar surveys to capture their learning and understanding of the experience. The post-survey questions were nearly identical, with Exploring Major Tracks students being asked one additional question related to possible major/minor choice at the end of the seminar, and respondents' responses to the qualitative post-survey are captured below. Please note: Exploring Major Tracks students' responses are in black font, while First-Year Student Success students' responses are captured in gray font to delineate between the experiences.

When asked to describe the ways in which students believe their social identities will impact their experience at CSU, student responses varied from believing their social identities will not have an impact on their experience at CSU to naming the impact their social identities will have on their own awareness, degree choice and involvement opportunities, and creating connection with others. Examples include:

**Not at all**

- I don't believe my social identities will affect me at CSU. They have never affected me throughout my life and I don't think they would start to impact me now.
- I don't think my social identities will have a huge impact on my experience at CSU. I think CSU is very welcoming to every gender, race, and social class.
- I don't believe they will affect my experience here at all
- I feel like we're all equal and social identity shouldn't change how people are treated/impacted

**Increased Awareness**

- Because I'm a white male, I understand that I have privilege in this world, and at CSU I hope to learn more about other peoples' perspectives.
- I need to be open to everyone.
- I feel like me being white will make me blend in, also from being in lower class I feel like I have a better sense of purpose at CSU than the average person
- I'm bisexual therefore, I know there are some people that don't accept my lifestyle.

**Degree Choice and Involvement Opportunities**

- My social identities will give me the opportunity to thrive at CSU and move on with a degree.
- I believe they will help me find a major that is right for me along with finding friends and associates to help me progress.
- They will help me figure out college
- I believe my social identities will impact my experience at CSU by driving what motivates me to be successful and by driving how I get involved on campus.

**Creating Connection/Belongingness with Others**

- It will help me push myself to get out of my comfort zone.
- My social identities will impact my experience at CSU by helping me find a sense of belonging and a group of good people that have the same identities as me.
- I believe I can make an impact to help motivate people and feel like they belong.
- I believe my identities will impact me because I am around a more diverse community so I will learn about others identities and become more understanding of the impact that has on people.

When asked to identify at least three campus resources that will contribute or have contributed to students' transition to college, Exploring Major Tracks seminar students most frequently named ASC/Advisors, their New Student Seminar Instructor and Peer Facilitator and the Career Center as helpful resources. First Year Student Success seminar students most frequently named Campus Recreation and Morgan Library as helpful resources. The graphic below shows the resources by number of references in the post-survey.



Referenced 20+ Times	Referenced 5-19 Times	Referenced Fewer than 5 Times
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•SLICE/Student Orgs</li> <li>•ASC/Advisors</li> <li>•CSU General Catalog</li> <li>•Instructors/Office Hours</li> <li>•New Student Seminar Instructor and Peer Facilitator</li> <li>•Career Center</li> <li>•Lory Student Center</li> <li>•The Writing Center</li> <li>•Morgan Library</li> <li>•TILT</li> <li>•Campus Recreation</li> <li>•Housing and Dining Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The Writing Center</li> <li>•CSU Health Network</li> <li>•Student Diversity Programs and Services</li> <li>•Peers or Upper Division Students</li> <li>•Tutoring</li> <li>•My Majors Tool</li> <li>•U-Turn</li> <li>•PACe Center</li> <li>•Financial Aid</li> <li>•RamWeb</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The Oval</li> <li>•Math Department</li> <li>•The Pavilion</li> <li>•You@CSU</li> <li>•SilverCloud</li> <li>•CSU Bookstore</li> <li>•Registrar's Office</li> <li>•Student Case Management</li> <li>•CSU Website</li> <li>•Canvas</li> <li>•Ram Orientation or Ram Welcome</li> <li>•Informational Emails/Meetings</li> <li>•IT Help Center</li> <li>•Daniels Scholars</li> <li>•CSU Police Department</li> <li>•Education Abroad</li> </ul>

When asked how the course positively impacted their personal and/or academic adjustment to CSU, students pointed to learning about resources, building community, becoming more aware of their strengths, identities, and values, and their ability to narrow down or select a major.

#### **CSU Resources & Community**

- It impacted my personal and academic adjustment by helping me find a sense of belonging of campus when I thought that I was a standout person with nowhere to go on campus.
- It made me start to understand what it means to be a successful student here, and showed me that my teachers really cared about me.
- It helped me know how I can get help when I need it and it introduced me to the different involvement opportunities for me.
- Engaging with classmates, identifying what the CSU community is about and finding resources necessary to help guide me in the right direction academically.
- Freshmen Seminar allowed me to meet other undeclared majors and be able to have a shared experience in college and not feel lost

#### **Goals and Major Choice/Direction**

- It helped me adjust to the work expectations of college and helped me explore what majors and careers I may be interested in. It also helped me connect with people who have given me vital information about majors and how to succeed.
- I feel it helped me figure out not only what I want to study, but how to get there and what track to go on.
- I know what major I was to pursue
- It helped me identify my goals and values.

#### **Self-Awareness**

- The IU 172 course provided me with an escape to self-reflect. It furthered my sense of confidence and motivation within myself
- I was able to identify the things that are important to me and although I am not 100% certain on my major I have a lot better understanding on who I am and what I want to do.

- I feel like I know myself better and I have gained confidence I didn't know I needed from this course.
- It helped me to get out of my comfort zone and talk about my strengths and identities with my peers. It also taught me ways I can be successful at CSU through study habits.

Following this question, students who participated in the Exploring Major Tracks New Student Seminar course were asked to identify at least three majors/minors (areas of study) of relevance. 100% of respondents were able to accurately list three majors/minors of relevance, reflecting interest in all eight of CSU's Academic Colleges.

When asked to share a statement about their first semester at CSU, students' responses vacillated between highly positive, mixed reactions, and a few negative reactions. One student in the First Year Student Success seminar commented, "My first semester so far has been one of the best times of my life. I have met amazing people and have been the happiest I have been in a while." Another in the Exploring Major Tracks seminar commented, "My first semester at CSU so far, has been an interesting experience. I felt like I have grown as an individual and am still finding my place in life. I believe that the resources that have been given to me have been helpful in understanding who I am and what I want to do with my time here at CSU. I am excited to continue to grow and change." Several students have experienced a difficult transition but are starting to find their stride. A few examples include:

- I started out very confused, but I feel very confident about being able to figure things out and not fail my classes too. I really enjoy being able to take classes I actually like too.
- I learned that I need to write things down in order to remember to do them as homework assignments.
- It has been a lot of work but a very accepting community
- It has been a stressful and hectic start, but I'm starting to feel more welcomed on campus and that I have learned everything I need to help myself be successful.

Several students named COVID-19 restrictions as a hurdle in their first semester:

- Weird with covid but not impossible to make friends.
- At the beginning it was really stressful because I haven't done any school related things since the beginning of covid but after the first 2-3 weeks I got into the swing of things.
- It has been better than I thought it would be. Not the same as college without COVID but it's actually been great the way it's been.
- Despite it being challenging with the shift to online learning and covid restrictions, it has been very positive
- It has been really fun and positive, but covid has been difficult to navigate and has made some things harder

And finally a few students named the semester as stressful and challenging, particularly because of COVID-19 restrictions. One student from the First Year Student Success seminar named, "It hasn't been the best but could definitely be worse." And another from the Exploring Majors Track seminar indicated, in part, "I feel like I'm just moving along the conveyor belt to pump out 'educated people'."

When asked about the most beneficial activity or assignment in the course, students in the Exploring Majors Track seminar referenced major and career research, conducting an informational interview, and Clifton Strengths as the most beneficial. When asked about the other end of the spectrum, students indicated activities and assignments related to identities, values and strengths, challenges with individual assignments, and the length of the assigned readings as least beneficial.

When asked about the most beneficial activity or assignment in the course, students in the First Year Student Success seminar referenced Clifton Strengths, reflections, identification of values, and goal setting as the most beneficial. Conversely, when asked what was the least beneficial activity or assignment in the course, students named identities, readings, and the DEI Module as the least beneficial aspects of class.

Students found connections among themselves, self-awareness and growth, and completing their first college course the most rewarding pieces of the New Student Seminar. When asked what was specifically rewarding, they said:

- Discovering my passions, self-identity, and values
- The most rewarding thing about this class was feeling more confident by the end of the class, both in yourself and knowing that you will find out what you want to do.
- I found my major!!
- Finding really cool professors and [Peer Facilitators] that wanted to help me
- Being able to make connections with other students, teachers, and people involved in my major
- Being able to talk and be in a class with students going through the same thing as me
- To see how much I have grown in knowing myself and what I believe and who I am.
- Identifying my strengths and values and connecting it with the CSU community as well as my potential major selection.
- I loved the reflections because it made me think and write about myself
- Gave me the courage to talk to my professors when I was struggling
- Completing my first college course

Overall, students in the First Year Student Success seminar didn't find the course content overwhelmingly challenging. Instead, they were challenged to deeply reflect, remember assignments, and find motivation to attend and actively participate in class under COVID-19 circumstances. When asked what was specifically challenging, they said:

- Honestly, I didn't find anything too challenging compared to my other classes.
- Reflecting on my past experiences and using them to help me find success at the college level and beyond.
- The most challenging was the reading
- It was an easy class. Mostly having motivation to come to class.
- wearing a mask and not really interacting in the class with others due to covid
- The most challenging part of the class was feeling comfortable enough to speak up in class, but with Covid, there wasn't really anything the professor or peer facilitator could do to help the situation much.

Students in the Exploring Major Tracks seminars also named deep reflection, remembering assignments, and motivation as key challenges. Differently from the First Year Student Success seminar students, however, they also named keeping up with assignments and finding a major as challenges in the semester. Specifically:

- the reading quizzes as I am very bad at reading for information
- Finding the time to do the work with my other classes
- The most challenging part of the class was keeping up with the readings just because of how much I dislike reading.
- I had a hard time writing an essay every week. I'm not a strong writer so it takes me about 3-4 hours to write a 1-2 page essay.

- The most challenging part was to look through all of the majors and really find the ones that I could see myself doing.
- The most challenging part was searching for possible majors because it became overwhelming very fast when I was interested in multiple things.
- The most challenging part was honestly just having to actually take the necessary steps to start to figure out what to do with your life. It's scary stuff so this class actually pushed you to do what's necessary.

When asked about their biggest takeaway from being enrolled in the course, students in the Exploring Majors Track seminar most often named self-awareness, confidence, and selecting a major, where students in the First Year Student Success seminars most often named the resources they learned about and the connections made to others through the course. They also named major exploration, self-awareness, and learning about Strengths, values, and goals as learning they will take with them moving forward. Moving into action steps, Exploring Major Tracks seminar students focused on continued research and networking to learn more about possible majors and careers to help them declare a major. They also named involvement, use of their Strengths, skills, and interests to propel them forward at CSU, and reframing to “focus on what I can do to succeed, rather than focusing on what could result in failure.” Lastly, Exploring Major tracks students indicated they would look to resources such as their ASC/Advisor, the CSU Course Catalog, Instructors, the Career Center, Education Abroad and U-Turn for assistance moving forward. First Year Student Success seminar students vowed to use the resources available to them such as: ASC/Advisor, tutoring, CSU Health Network, Library, Instructors. They also want to work toward declaring a major, focusing on wellbeing, and getting involved on campus.

### **Clustered/Paired Courses:**

A subset of students enrolled in paired courses with the same group of peers (IU-172 paired with CO 150, CO 130, or JTC 100). When asked if the intentional course pairing helped build community, 76% of the students in both types of seminar courses indicated it was beneficial:

- Definitely. I actually know and have connections with the people in these classes unlike all my other classes.
- I think having the same people in both classes allowed me to feel more comfortable in both classroom settings. It allowed me to meet and become familiar with other students who are also struggling to find a major.
- I only share it with a few of my peers from this class, however getting a sense of community and being able to connect with more peers than my roommate has been quite helpful.
- It made it easy to meet some new people.
- It was beneficial in some ways because I was able to build connections with a few people in the class through either Comp or Seminar and I was a lot more comfortable talking with these people about assignments and get feedback on papers, etc. because we knew each others values and past experiences and we all got along pretty well.

### **DEI Module:**

Students in IU-172, for the first time, participated in a DEI Module powered by Everfi. The module encourages students to consider diversity, equity, and inclusion in their everyday interactions. When asked about the least beneficial activity, assignment, or discussion, the DEI module was named several times, with one student noting, “I think the least helpful activity we did was maybe the identities

module on everfi. It was important but previously learned a lot of that content in high school.” Other students indicated the length of the module made it inaccessible. That said, instructors and campus partners agree this is an important topic to engage students in, particularly in their first year at CSU.

### **RamsRead:**

IU-172 seminar students participated in RamsRead and read *Citizen: An American Lyric* by Claudia Rankine. Some students appreciated the opportunity to discuss racism on campus, while others struggled to understand how the common read applied to a New Student Seminar. One student indicated the facilitation of *Citizen* and the ensuing discussion was one of the most helpful through the 8 weeks. Others indicated:

- The least beneficial activity was probably reading *Citizen* because I did not read the entire book and I do not like reading in general.
- Reading that book I had no idea how that applied to this class
- I forgot we had a book for a while, so having to catch up on the reading for the quizzes.
- Don't do the book and focus more on major searching than figuring out goals

### **Instructor and Peer Facilitator Feedback:**

Students provided feedback about their Instructor and peer facilitator (including strengths and areas of improvement). Due to volume, select comments are included below for each section:

#### **Exploring Major Tracks**

- My time here with my instructor, Allis, was unmatched. She is by far one of the best, most professional, and extremely friendly instructor I've ever had!
- I feel my instructor [Amy] was really passionate about her job which made the class more engaging
- The experience was over the best! Having someone to listen to you and be so invested in being a guided for you on this journey was emotionally relieving! There are NO improvements that need to be made.
- Caitlin Kotnick is an inspiration and is absolutely amazing at her work.
- [Courtney is] Helpful and supportive and so encouraging. I love your style of teaching and I love that you try to make personal connections with your students.
- Greg was awesome and super understanding and helpful
- [Jen] was so helpful and was very understanding in all of the conversations that we had, it felt like she could relate to us very well.
- I had a great experience with my instructor, [Keith] he was very helpful and engaged with us in class and you could tell that he really cared about us and was invested in our major exploration process.
- I thought Kimberly and Jason were wonderful, and they were always there to talk about all of my questions, even when I had a ton of them.
- My instructor was understanding the whole journey. Paige was understanding, energetic, and motivated and it felt like she was really out to help all of us.
- honestly Rebecca did a great job she's super nice and even once walked me to the pride center when I didn't know where it was. she's very open and I can tell she enjoys helping people.

- I really enjoyed Troy, I think he's very easy to talk to and good at listening and truly understanding if you're struggling. He's an instructor you can tell he genuinely wants the best for all of us.
- Tyler has been a great facilitator and kind and respectful the entire time. I'm glad he was our instructor.
- My Peer Facilitator, Alexa, is super amazing. She knew how to communicate, make you feel comfortable and a genuinely sweet person! She was basically my first friend coming to CSU, I will continue to look up to her.
- Allie was very helpful reminding and connecting everyone in the class on due dates and other activities to get involved in.
- Cody will be someone I probably keep in my life as a mentor, he asked all the right questions to really find what someone is about. Genuinely cares about helping people find their passions, values, and identity.
- My time with my peer facilitator [Corgan] was also legendary, he's a good man and he helped me as well. I'm very thank full for this lad and I wish him the best!
- [Emely] was amazing
- [Jason] was awesome, he related with the students and answered any questions and took suggestions from students as we went through class. I am glad he was there.
- I loved [Jillian], she was so easy to talk to. The one-on-ones were a great use of time
- Kate is/was amazing, made me feel like everything I was going through was normal. A real diamond.
- I really resonated with Katie. I felt that in our one-on-ones she was always genuine and demonstrated concern for what I was going through.
- Kim was just as, if not more, beneficial than any other source I had in this school year. Her 1:1 meetings were incredibly useful.
- [Olivia] was able to give us examples of our experience, which showed us that everything works out eventually. She was very helpful and related to us as well.
- Shruti did a great job as well being a [Peer Facilitator], she had a lot of awesome advice as a student that has had 2 years of experience. It was nice having somebody that experienced CSU for more than one semester in the classroom.

### First Year Student Success

- Génesis and Lia have been great instructors, probably the best I have at CSU, they're nice and helpful
- This class has been so beyond amazing. I was thinking coming in that it was going to be super boring and only focusing on all the different majors CSU has to offer. I am so happy it wasn't because I feel I have grown so much because of [Kacee] and this class and I really want to thank you for that. I can't think of anyway to make this class any better than it already is. Thank you so much!!!! Also, there is nothing that you need to improve! Everything is perfect!
- I think Seth and did a great job. They engage us and all around have a good class. They really welcome us into the ram community and make it feel like we belong here.
- Sydney was bomb, I really liked her and I am positive most of the class would say the same. I don't see any areas she needs to improve in.
- Katie was really helpful in being there for me as a new student as CSU. She let me know that she is here for me even after UI ends.
- Kim was super cool too and did a great job of keeping on top of things in class, be in our 1 on 1 or just in class activities.

- I loved my Peer Facilitator, [Lia]. She was really friendly and easy to talk to and she is definitely a resource I can use if I ever need it.
- I love how caring you are and how much you want to know about us in and out of class. [Megan] made us feel special and like we always have someone to talk to and ask questions. I love how much you wanted us to engage and you made us want to and not like we had to. You made us feel like you were here to be our friend and help us

When asked for any additional feedback for the course, Exploring Major Tracks seminar students shared:

- I recommend that everyone takes this class even if you have a declared major. It really helps you establish who you are.
- I really enjoyed this course and I wish it was a little longer.
- I think I would have liked a little bit more time to research the majors and careers, but every activity was helpful towards finding more about ourselves.
- Have an in person day where everyone can meet each other

First Year Students Success seminar students shared:

- It was really good, I just think our class had more potential to get to know each other but no one took it
- I think splitting the class up between similar exploring majors would be a little better because I would've been able to make more connections with people of similar interest and know that we were all going through the same process, but I didn't get that because I'm exploring engineering and physical sciences while almost everyone else in my class were exploring business majors.

Lastly, when asked to share a bit of advice to new first-year students, Exploring Major Tracks students suggested:

- Overall my advice to you guys is it's okay to not know. It's ok to be completely lost in space and just not have a single clue what to do because you either like everything or don't like anything. There is always something for you, always. You can't give up or get scared because you don't know what you want to major in but when you get into this class it will help you narrow that down so much.
- The countless worksheets and activities we did in class about what your values, strengths, and identities are may seem pointless and boring when you first do them, I thought the exact same, but when it comes to the point of actually choosing a major, they will help you so much more than you would've ever thought. This class is something special that not a lot of classes are like.
- Some advice: A lot of people think or are worried that you can't make a career out of what you're truly interested in. However, this isn't true! You'll read articles in this class that give you real-life examples of how your everyday hobby could end up becoming your career. You shouldn't eliminate something just because you're worried about whether it's possible. I've learned that the things worth doing require a lot of work. Don't just do something because it's easy or safe, do it because it'll make you happy.

First Year Student Success seminar students offered the following tidbits:

- In my class, we didn't just go over the basics of college; we went over the basics of YOU. I was helped to discover my [unique] strengths and weaknesses, values, and talents. A big part of college is learning about yourself more than anything. This class will guide you in a path that

teaches you about who you really are and how you can use what you love and believe in to find success in the college environment.

- Another tip that I have would be make sure that you are going to class. Going to class will give you more insight on the class and go into deeper detail. If you don't go to class you might be missing out on participation points which can have a big impact on your overall grade.
- If you are struggling with anything here at CSU do not be afraid to ask for help, it's not a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength. The math help center is big for math issues. The career center for if you're unclear about anything major related. U-turn if your grades are lacking, someone can help you turn them around! There are also so many more, don't be afraid to reach out to professors or your academic advisor.

## **Recommendations for Fall 2021:**

### *First-Year Students-*

- Continue with 12 New Student Seminar: Exploring Major Tracks courses (one being an Engineering Interest Section) for **first-year, first semester undeclared students. (Emphasize recruitment of students recommended with support)**
- Continue with 4 New Student Seminar: First-Year Student Success courses for **first-year, first semester undeclared students. (Emphasize recruitment of students recommended with support).**
- Cluster most of these courses for undeclared students (leaving 3 sections of EXMT and 1 section of FYSS not clustered) with sections of CO 150, CO 130 and at least 1-2 seminars clustered with ETST 100).
- Continue with 1 section of New Student Seminar: Exploring Health Professions for **first year and transfer first semester students interested in health professions of any major** (Not clustered)
- Pilot 2 sections of New Student Seminar: First-Year Student Success courses for **first-year, first semester students of any major (more specifically students recommended with support)** clustered with a CO section.
- Pilot 1 section of New Student Seminar: First-Year Student Success course for **first-year, first semester students living off-campus of any major** in partnership with Off-Campus Life (Not clustered)
- Pilot 1 section of New Student Seminar: First-Year Student Success course for **first-year, first semester students as part of the AAC STEM grant** in collaboration with the AAC. (Not clustered for Fall 2021, but look to cluster in future).

***\*\*Assuming courses will be capped at 19 students, this would work to increase participation in the FYAE courses for first-year students to serve 399 students if able to fully enroll students in courses.***

### *Additional Populations-*

- Continue with 3 sections of New Student Seminar: Transfer Student Success (with 1 section enrolling transfer athletes and 1 section being AAC Transfer students) for **first semester transfer students of any major** (Not clustered)
- Pilot 1 section of New Student Seminar: Transfer Student Success for **first semester adult learner and student veterans of any major** (in collaboration with Adult Learner and Veteran Services). (Explore the possibility of clustering after doing some research on this population and courses enrolled in this fall)



- Continue with 1 section of New Student Seminar: International Student Success for **first-year and transfer, first semester international students of any major** (Not clustered)

Other Enhancements/Continuations:

- Focus on connections with Curriculum between Instructors of clustered course with the seminar to enhance interdisciplinary connections and learning
- Focus on the development of training for IU 172 Instructors (DEI Module and Content, etc.)
- Maintain integration of DEI Module and Rams Read into the curriculum with more training for instructors and intentionality in building into the curriculum
- Enhance training for undergraduate Peer Facilitators as these students are significant to the design and success of this initiative for new students
- Collaborate with Off-Campus Life on programming and opportunities for off-campus first-year students enrolled in any of the IU 172 seminars
- Continue to partner with University Housing on identifying Instructors in Housing to teach the New Student Seminar: First-Year Student Success courses
- Continue to partner with the Academic Coaching program connecting Coaches, Instructors and Advisors with one another to support students recommended with support in the FYAE initiative
- Continue post-seminar engagement and outreach from Peer Facilitator to students enrolled in the seminar after the course ends until Fall Break (week 13)
- Explore utilization of theoretical framework for grounding New Student Seminar curriculum in equity and inclusion along with Ram Orientation and Ram Welcome
- Pursue additional staffing to support course registration, training of Instructors managing materials for courses, etc.

Additional Pilots to Explore Possibility of:

- IU 172 section for LGBTQA identified first-year and transfer students in partnership with the Pride Resource Center (potentially clustered with a section of CO 150)
- IU 172 section for students interested in Biomedical Sciences but did not get into the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences in partnership with CVMBS
- Partnership with the College of Natural Sciences on revamping their Biology first-year seminar, expanding number of sections, having OTP offer instructor support and training and common university elements to seminar (Rams Read, DEI Module) adding a Peer Facilitator and clustering with a Biology course
- Partnership with College of Natural Sciences on an IU 172 section for Data Science first-year students majors clustered with an AUCC course
- Partnership with College of Natural Sciences on an IU 172 section paired with a Computer Science course (first-year student population for seminar TBD)
- Partnership with the College of Health and Human Sciences on sections of IU 172 for any first-year student in CHHS paired with an AUCC course