

H. Quality Focus Essay

Introduction and Rationale

The Quality Focus Essay (QFE) presents Foothill College the opportunity to identify areas in which the college can innovate, using regular and established institutional processes, to improve student learning outcomes at an institutional level.

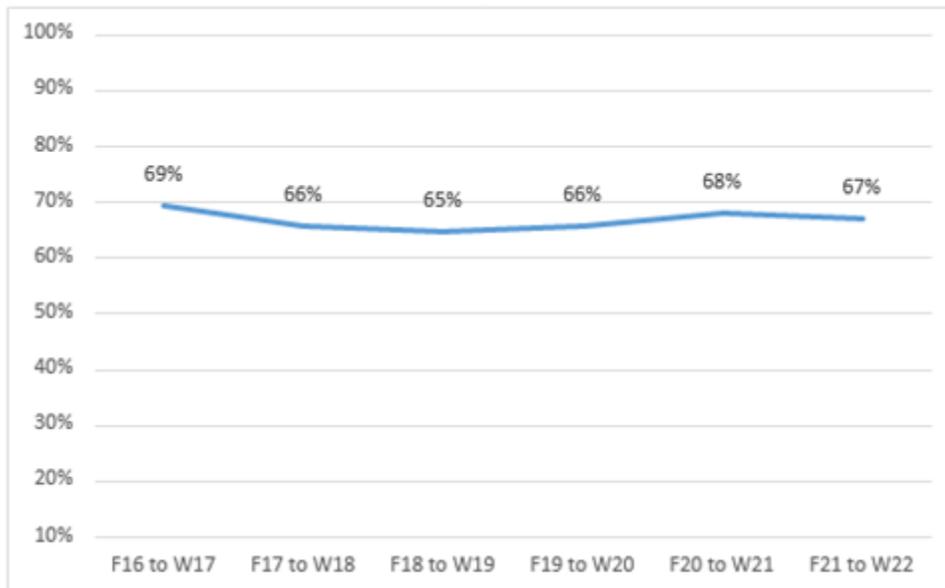
Utilizing the College's [Strategic Vision for Equity \(SVE\)](#); [Equity Plan 2.0](#); the [Guided Pathways](#) Initiative, and ongoing college-wide dialogue around the ways in which the equity gap persists in student learning and achievement at the College, Foothill has identified retention as the focus of three action projects across a five-year period of time. All two projects are grounded in the College's long-term, ongoing, and continuous efforts to foster inclusive and equitable opportunities for learning for all students. Aligned with the College's mission statement, these three projects represent the culmination of years of equity efforts across all constituencies and the greater campus community.

Campus-wide events were held to engage the entire college community in the selection of project topics. Throughout the course of the selection process, topics under consideration included: Enrollment, Retention, Transfer Level English and Math, and Completion. The College, through robust dialogue and deliberation, decided to focus on retention as the theme connecting the action projects. Rationale for this focus on retention is also aligned with issues identified in the Strategic Vision for Equity that describe ongoing challenges that should be addressed.

Focusing on retention will allow Foothill College the opportunity to address the need for improved communication and messaging to students; for a defined infrastructure to reach and support students, and for longer-term strategic planning around retention efforts.

Current data demonstrates a need for increasing the number of students who persist from quarter to quarter at the college:

Figure XX. Fall to Winter Persistence, 2017-18 to 2022-23.



Percent of students from fall term who enrolled in the following winter term.
 Excludes students who completed an award or transferred.
 Source: CCCC Student Success Metrics Dashboard

While there is a slight increase in persistence over time, Foothill College intends to focus efforts to increase the number of students who persist quarter over quarter via the efforts of the projects identified below.

Project 1: Explicitly Race-Conscious: A Review of Course Outlines of Record

Introduction and Rationale

As stated in Foothill College’s Strategic Vision for Equity:

“Racism exists in every field, career path, and industry, and all our students are and will be immersed in these racialized environments when they leave us. A survey of the curriculum at Foothill suggests that many disciplines are taught as if they are race-neutral, and they fail to identify the explicitly racist historical and societal context underlying the epistemology of their discipline, as well as ongoing implicit biases in their fields,”

Aligned with its commitment to creating a college community where success is not predictable by race, Foothill College will implement Project 1 to ensure that Course Outlines of Record (CORs) are race-conscious at the institution, in alignment with the Strategic Vision for Equity, the College’s Equity Plan, and the Guided Pathways Initiative. CORs define the content, objectives, learning outcomes, methods of instruction and evaluation, and identity instructional materials for any course at Foothill College. The college’s Strategic Vision for Equity outlines a plan to dismantle oppressive systems (structural, cultural, and individual)

and create a more equitable learning environment for all students. Project 1 is an important step in the college's efforts to achieve these goals.

Anticipated Impact on Student Learning and Achievement

In an education system that grants access to all who want it but that was not created to serve students of color, Project 1 will ensure that faculty examine the foundations of all courses to make them race-conscious and thus more equity-minded. As the basis and guidelines for how both faculty and students approach a course, from learning outcomes to required texts, ensuring equity-mindedness in CORs is critical to students' sense of belonging at Foothill College.

Addressing issues of race explicitly in each discipline through the CORs will prepare students of color to better disrupt the disciplines that have historically oppressed them while also allowing them the opportunity to become an integral part of their classroom communities and the greater campus.

Project 1 is expected to have the following impacts on student learning and achievement:

- **Increased student engagement and motivation:** When students see themselves reflected in the curriculum, they are more likely to be engaged and motivated to learn. Project 1 will help to create a more inclusive learning environment for students of color by centering race and ethnicity in the curriculum.
- **Improved academic performance:** Studies have shown that students who are exposed to diverse perspectives and learn about different cultures tend to perform better academically. Project 1 will help to prepare students of color for success in college and beyond by providing them with the knowledge and skills they need to navigate a diverse world.
- **Increased sense of belonging:** When students feel like they belong, they are more likely to persist in school and achieve their academic goals. Project 1 will help to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for students of color by addressing issues of race and ethnicity in the curriculum.

In addition to the above, Project 1 is also expected to impact student learning and achievement in the following ways:

- **Reduced stress and anxiety:** Students of color are disproportionately affected by stress and anxiety. Project 1 will help to reduce stress and anxiety among students of color by creating a more inclusive and supportive learning environment in every classroom.
- **Increased self-esteem:** Seeing themselves reflected in curricula can help to boost students' self-esteem. Project 1 will help to increase self-esteem among students of color by centering race and ethnicity in the curriculum.
- **Improved critical thinking skills:** When students are exposed to diverse perspectives, it can help them to develop critical thinking skills. Project 1 will help to improve critical

thinking skills among students of color by providing them with the opportunity to learn about different cultures and perspectives.

- Increased community engagement: When students feel like they belong, they are more likely to be engaged in their communities, which is critical to accomplishing the college’s mission of encouraging global citizenship. Project 1 will help to increase community engagement among students of color by creating a more inclusive and welcoming environment.

Overall, Project 1 is expected to have a positive impact on student learning and achievement by creating a more inclusive and equitable learning environment for students of color.

Outcome Measures

After the college-wide implementation of guidelines as described in the Action Plan below, Foothill College, its constituents, and community will expect to see that 100% of the Course Outlines of Record will become race-conscious over a five-year period.

Project Action Plan

Currently, the college-wide College Curriculum Committee (CCC) reviews and discusses Course Outlines of Records (CORs) prior to sending a course for approval to the Foothill De Anza Board of Trustees. Given this important role in the curriculum process, this decision body can develop COR guidelines which can then be approved by the Academic Senate. Discussions on how to introduce a race conscious COR started in the academic year 2021-22. In the academic year 2022-23, CCC will take the lead in creating the guidelines for course authors and elicit feedback from constituents for suggestions and revisions for approval by the end of the academic year. Implementation will begin starting the academic year 2023-24 with the goal of 20% of the college’s CORs subject to the new guidelines. Every academic year thereafter, an additional 20% will be subject to the guidelines, with the goal of achieving 100% at the end of the fifth year of implementation.

Activity	Responsible Party	Resources Required	Timeline
Academic Senate Meetings – vet guidelines	Academic Senate Chair	Academic Senate and Office of Retention Services	Yearly beginning Spring 2023 and through 2023-24
CCC Meetings to review and approve guidelines for CORs	Curriculum Committee Chair	Instructional Divisions	Spring 2023 and through 2023-24

Deans and Instructional Managers Meetings	Vice President of Instruction	College Curriculum Committee and Division Curriculum Representatives	Ongoing
Workshops and Trainings Developed by the Office of Professional Development	Associate Vice President of Instruction; Faculty Professional Development Coordinator; Dean of Online Learning	Professional Development	Ongoing

Project 2: Development of Annual Academic Course Schedule

Introduction and Rationale

The data that led to developing an annual academic course schedule (as opposed to the current quarterly course schedule) stemmed from students who are unable to successfully navigate all discipline coursework within two years as full-time students or within six years as part-time students. Reducing time to completion would position the college to fulfill the goals of Guided Pathways while also addressing that in California Community Colleges, not all students are succeeding at comparable rates, thus meeting the State Chancellor’s Office’s localized Vision Goals to simplify paths for students and do everything possible to help them enter, stay on, and complete the goals as related to their chosen paths.

Anticipated Impact on Student Learning and Achievement

Project 2 seeks to align practices to policies in place to decrease the average number of units accumulated by all associate degree earners to reduce students’ time to completion.

By knowing what classes, they need to take and when they will be offered, students will be less likely to take unnecessary classes or to fall behind in their chosen studies. Secondly, a Future Academic Course Schedule will help students to stay on track. By having a clear plan for their education, students will be more likely to persist and complete their degrees. Finally, the ability to plan in advance will help students to more easily transfer or pursue future paths after their time at Foothill has concluded.

Outcome Measures

In alignment with the SVE Issue 13, Goal 54 and with Guided Pathways Pillar “Stay on the Path” Practice E, Foothill College has sought to decrease the average number of units accumulated by all associate degree earners by 10%. reducing their time to completion of their goals and allowing them to better plan their lives from one quarter to the next.

By engaging in academic schedule planning one year ahead, students will be able to take the classes they need when they need them and avoid taking classes that result in an accumulation of units outside of their target pathway or educational goals.

Project Action Plan

Year 1: Develop guiding principles of how to implement future scheduling process

Year 2: draft tentative annual schedule

Year 3: draft annual schedule, finalized annual schedule, complete all required trainings for various parties; post entire year calendar

Activity	Responsible Party	Resources Required	Timeline
Planning Meeting with stakeholders	Vice President of Instruction	Collaboration between key stakeholders/groups: 1. Enrollment Services 2. Guided Pathways Coordinators 3. Learning Communities (Puente, Umoja, Honors) 4. Instructional Deans 5. Dual Enrollment 6. Athletics 7. Scheduling staff	Publish Academic Year Course Schedule for 2025-2026 by Spring Quarter 2024
Retreat with instructional deans	Associate Vice President of Instruction	-Attendance of stakeholders -Clerical staff to schedule retreats	Winter 2023 -February 1st -March 2nd -March 31st
Training for department chairs and department schedulers	Associate Vice President of Instruction	-Attendance of stakeholders -Clerical staff to schedule meetings	Spring 2023