EXPLORE YOUR INNER PIRATE

# COAD First Year Transition

2016 COAD Pilot









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### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the COAD study was determine the impact of COAD 1000 on First Year students. Specifically, the COAD Pilot was to provide formative data about the experiences of first year students at ECU who are participating in COAD 1000 related to their transition to college in their first semester. Throughout the semester COAD instructors assigned papers that reviewed the students' transitions based on their completion of Nancy Schlossberg's Transition Guide Book. The purpose of the COAD Syllabi review was to determine if all Core Competencies of COAD are covered in each COAD course as well as the consistency among syllabi. An on-line Qualtrics rubric was developed and used to review all syllabi. The syllabi timeline of the COAD instructors participating in the COAD Pilot was also reviewed to determine timing of topics covered which was then considered for the findings in the COAD Pilot.

### **METHODOLOGIES**

#### **COAD PILOT**

- Sampling: A stratified sampling strategy was utilized to ensure that representation was provided from the 6 separate group types within the study. Initially, there were 10 COAD classes utilized and within the 10 COAD classes, the number of population classes were as follows: 2 general student, 1 transfer, 2 first generation, 2 nursing, 2 Major Advisement Program (MAP), and 1 veteran. In total, there were 190 students within the pilot. One class, MAP, was removed from the study due to the paper instructions differing from the study instructions. With this extraction, 9 COAD classes were part of the pilot with 177 students in total. Nineteen students were chosen from the participants in the study with the stratified sampling; 2 MAP, 4 first generation, 2 veteran, 3 general, 2 transfer, and 6 nursing students. Within the sample, there were 10 females and 9 males.
- Process: After the sampling process was determined, each student was given a letter and number identification code to increase anonymity. The letter was determined by the class and number determined by the number they were associated with on the roster. Each class sample was put through the Excel randomizer and the student codes at the top of the randomized list were chosen as samples. The number of samples chosen from each list was identified according to the number needed in the stratified sample. In addition, female names may have been pulled from the sample to be replaced by male samples as a 60/40 proportion was needed in order to be representative of East Carolina University's population. Following this procedure, the Identification Papers and Final Papers were pulled from the identified sample of students. When papers were printed for review, names of the students and instructor names were removed with whiteout. The papers were then given identifiers with student codes. Papers were reviewed individually and holistically. When reviewed, the papers were graded through the Transition Guide rubric, and notes were taken on themes, quotes, changes, and any other notable occurrences within the papers in an Excel sheet so that themes could be derived from the qualitative data. This procedure was done with both the Identification Paper and Final Papers. The Final Paper of each student was read directly after their Identification Paper to gain an understanding of the arch of the transition of the student overall. Once all papers were reviewed, overall data (rubric grades, notes, changes, and quotes) were reviewed to derive themes from student papers.
- Rubric: Developed by Melissa Allay. See Appendix.

- Limitations: As a formative qualitative assessment project designed with "trustworthiness" criteria, there are two general limitations:
  - 1. Because this was a pilot study, there were issues in processes and procedures in the study including instructor training on Transition Guide and paper instructions, rubric implementation, along with rubric development trial and errors.
  - 2. These findings offer "information rich" insights regarding the transition within the first year experience of students who are attending ECU for the first time although the sample size was limited to 177 participants, and it is unlikely that "saturation" or no new examples were achieved.
  - **3.** With one study of 177 individuals, findings may be "representative" of the first year student transition. However, findings cannot be generalized to the entire first year population.

### **COAD PILOT SYLLABI TIMELINE REVIEW**

- Sampling: The COAD syllabi which were part of the COAD pilot were reviewed for an understanding of when topics were typically covered in the COAD 1000 course.
- ➤ **Process:** A Qualtrics rubric for the COAD syllabi was created so that all syllabi would be reviewed consistently. A graduate assistant was trained to utilize the rubric and reviewed the 10 syllabi with this rubric. The graduate assistant was requested to indicate when topics fell on a monthly timeline and select the month that it first appeared in the timeline. All quantitative data was processed by Qualtrics while all qualitative data was reviewed and themes were created based on the responses.
- Limitations: As a formative qualitative assessment project designed with "trustworthiness" criteria, there is a general limitation:
  - 1. Because some of the core competencies were not mentioned verbatim in some of the syllabi, the graduate assistant had to use her best judgement to determine if an item applied to the core competencies reviewed.
  - 2. The number of COAD syllabi reviewed in this review were very limited (22% of all COAD classes) and cannot generalized across all 46 COAD 1000 classes.

#### **COAD SYLLABI REVIEW**

- Sampling: Out of 59 COAD instructors, 46 syllabi were reviewed (78% of COAD instructors). COAD instructors were requested to email their syllabi and timeline to the lead person of COAD.
- Process: A Qualtrics rubric for the COAD surveys was created so that all syllabi would be reviewed in a consistent manner. A graduate assistant was trained to utilize the rubric and reviewed all syllabi with this rubric. The graduate assistant was also requested to make general notes on anything that stood out or became a theme throughout the syllabi as she was reviewing the syllabi to further inform the study. After a majority of COAD instructors provided their syllabi, the graduate assistant completed the rubric for each of the syllabi provided by the COAD instructors. All quantitative data was processed by Qualtrics while all qualitative data was reviewed and themes were created based on the responses.
- Limitation: As a formative qualitative assessment project designed with "trustworthiness" criteria, there is a general limitation:
  - **4.** Because some of the core competencies were not mentioned verbatim in some of the syllabi, the graduate assistant had to use her best judgement to determine if an item applied to the core competencies reviewed.

#### **COAD IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- > Sampling: The COAD Impact Assessment was to be administered to all COAD students.
- ➤ **Process:** The COAD Impact Assessment was provided to all COAD instructors to request their students to complete the assessment. Out of 1217 students, 299 students (25%) took the survey.
- **Limitations:** As a formative qualitative assessment project designed with "trustworthiness" criteria, there is a general limitation:
  - 1. Because a small number of COAD students took the survey, the information is not as generalizable as it would be if the number of students took the survey was higher.
  - 2. The statements listed on the COAD Impact Assessment were not directly pulled from the COAD Core Competencies. They were pulled from University of South Carolina's first year seminar competencies, which provided a list of competencies that, based on their research, should be included in first year seminars. The statements were recoded to fit the core competencies of ECU's COAD based on the description of the statements on the original document provided by the University of South Carolina.

# **MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS**

### COAD PILOT

#### **Self-Transformation**

At the beginning of the semester, a majority of students noted they doubted themselves. As the semester progressed, students conveyed an increase in self-confidence and inner strength by the end of the semester. They were able to define what the best study techniques were for them; which coping mechanisms best worked when they were stressed; and how to better choose friends.

### Independence

Students related to the following terms throughout their reflections: freedom, responsibilities, independence and adulthood. Independence was seen as a "positive stressor" where it is something they are excited about and looking forward to in their transition. Independence was noted as the driver of the students becoming personal advocates, taking initiative, making better choices, and having overall better decision making skills. The more time passed the easier it was for students to balance their priorities.

### **Alteration of Relationships**

At the beginning of their transition, family and friends from home were their main supports. Family remained supports throughout the semester but slowly became less prominent as the semester continued. As the semester went on, students began to lean more on their new supports such as on-campus friends, student organizations, and resources.

#### **COAD PILOT SYLLABI REVIEW**

Within the COAD Pilot's syllabi review (N=10), it was found that campus and academic engagement were predominately discussed in September while Student Learning became a focus in October. Personal Development was the least listed in the COAD Pilot's syllabi.

### **COAD SYLLABI REVIEW**

Overall in COAD 1000 classes, Academic Engagement was the most focused on with having 5 topics most discussed in a semester. Personal Development had the most themes noted as the least discussed in the classroom, 4 themes in total. For the common assignments and requirements (Career Paper, Common Read, Large Group Presentation, COAD 1000 Textbook, and Resiliency Module), each assignment or requirement had between a 20-

30% were they were not noted in the syllabus. The exception was the *Just Mercy* textbook requirement, where 41% of syllabi did not have the text required in the syllabi.

### **COAD IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Overall, students agreed or strongly agreed that their participation in COAD improved one of the four core competencies at similar percent averages. The responses were related to the statements stemmed from: "My participation in COAD 1000 improved..." The four competencies were rated with the following percentages: Academic Engagement, 83% agreed to strongly agreed; Campus Engagement, 83% agreed to strongly agreed; Student Learning, 83% agreed to strongly agreed, and Personal Development, 86% agreed to strongly agreed.

# **COAD PILOT FINDINGS: Major Themes**

# CORE STORY: When students first attend ECU, they lack the insight on self in order to confidently transition into an independent role while altering existing relationships.

The "transition" of students in their first year is more complex than transitioning into college. It is transitioning into an independent role beyond college life. Independence incorporates being a college student but being a college student is only a portion of "self". The question of "Who am I?" comes to the surface when considering the student is now attending college and redefined as a college student, as someone independent of their family and other people they have known, and as an "adult", which is why finding self is a key element and the foundation of successfully transitioning. Throughout the Final Papers, an emphasis on defining self was an important element in the students' transition. Many students noted that they learned about themselves throughout the transition. These elements were related to what worked for them in the college setting and personally such as what to look for in a friend, how to study in order to get the best grades, how to balance time in order to fit their priorities and social activities they wanted to do into their schedule, and what coping mechanisms worked best for them when they came upon a stressful situation. When they were able to gain this insight, they became more confident in their transition and about being independent. As they became more confident, they became personal advocates, took initiative, and were able to make better decisions whether it was related to friends, setting goals, or time management. As the semester progressed, their confidence and their ability to be independent simultaneously increased. In addition, as they became more independent, their relationships altered. For instance, at the beginning of the semester most students relied on their family but as the semester progressed, their reliance shifted to their peers. Not only did this shift occur, but the type of support received and expected also shifted. Students' noted that their family's support meant their family was becoming more trusting of the decisions they were making in college. They also noted that they were no longer going to their family to discuss their stressors in college rather they were going to their college peers. In addition, for most students, the relationship between the family and student became stronger as the semester progressed. The alteration of their relationships is part of the redefining of "self". In summation, the redefining of "self" is pivotal in relation to their transition which incorporates becoming an independent adult and the alteration of their relationships.

#### > Self-Transformation

- At the beginning of the semester, a majority of students noted they doubted themselves. As the semester progressed, students conveyed an increase in self-confidence and inner strength by the end of the semester.
- Self-confidence was linked to the feeling of the semester getting easier as it progressed.
- Students gained more insight on self as the semester progressed. Students noted they were able to better define themselves and were able to get to know themselves throughout the semester. A

- student noted "Only a select few attend college and even a smaller amount of those people graduate, I've known about these statistical facts for a while, yet it's finally sinking in. I'm finally understanding why. College is meant to push you....college is meant to help you become a better version of yourself."
- Because they started to get to know themselves better, they were better able to define what the best study techniques were for them; which coping mechanisms best worked when they were stressed; and how to better choose friends. A quote from a Final Paper demonstrates the importance of knowing yourself as it is related to making friends: "Getting to know new people has taught me that first impressions are difficult to make great if you don't know who you are." Another quote from the Identification Paper shows the struggle of not knowing which coping mechanisms work for the student: "Normally as an individual I experience hardly any stress if at all, so it's hard for me to tell just how much I'm struggling."
- A change in mindset was noted by the students. One student notes, "College was very different than expected, and I had to change my vision to accept the reality of how it actually is." Others noted changes in mindset related to becoming more positive, perspective on stressing about school, and having a wider perspective on other people.
- In their transition, they began seeing themselves in the future beyond the college atmosphere. They reflected on how what they are doing now impacted their careers.

### Independence

- Students related to the following terms throughout their reflections: freedom, responsibilities, independence and adulthood. When mentioning adulthood, a student said "At 18 my parents and the law and society expect very different things from me than they did previously."
- Participants noted independence as the top stressor from the beginning to the end of the semester. Although it was noted as a stressor, it was seen as a "positive stressor" where it is something they are excited about and looking forward to in their transition.
- Independence was noted as the driver of the students becoming personal advocates, taking initiative, making better choices, and having overall better decision making skills.
- The idea of independence incorporated responsibly balancing social and academic life. Learning
  how to balance the college experience between due dates for assignments, getting involved in
  student organizations, and attending school events were noted as important when considering
  this balance.
- The more time passed the easier it was for students to balance their priorities. One student said "In a month it became easier to manage time and stress has decreased some."
- The pressure of "having" to make A's and B's is mentioned as their main responsibility in college and is a large independent responsibility of being a college student.
- As students reflect back on their semester, they feel as if they have become more mature and have grown. Students relate this back to the skills they have gained from being independent such as decision making.

#### > Alteration of Relationships

At the beginning of their transition, family and friends from home were their main supports.
 Family remained supports throughout the semester but slowly became less prominent as the semester continued. If the friends from home were in college, their support remained the same but if they were not attending college, the support changed because students felt as if their friend could not understand "college life". To describe this motivation for separation, a student said

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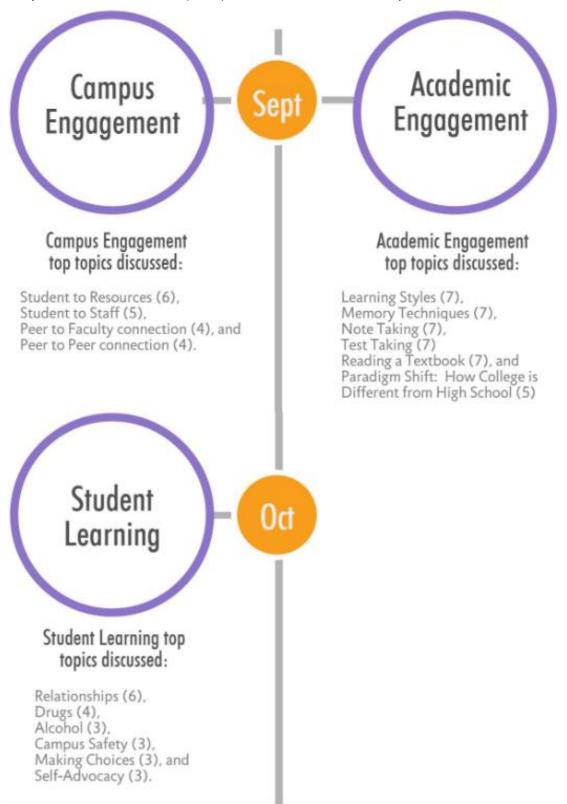
- "Missing home is definitely normal, but there is a certain time period during college, where you have to forget what you miss, and focus on what you could miss."
- As the semester progressed, the support from their family at home changed. The students' supports began to be redefined in the type of support they were seeking and getting from their family. For example, students noted these changes as family members being able to trust and support their individual decisions and not going to family members about stressful situations. If a family member was someone attending college, the support remained the same.
- Although students noted that their support changed with their family, most also noted their relationship with their family members strengthening.
- As the semester went on, students began to lean more on their new supports such as on-campus friends, student organizations, and resources. With their new friends, they were able to relate to each other on the stressors of attending college. On-campus resources they most frequently mentioned using were focused on academics such as the Pirate Academic Success Center.

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# **COAD PILOT SYLLABI TIMELINE REVIEW: Major Themes**

The syllabi of those instructors (N=10) who were involved with the pilot were reviewed.



# Topics Most Discussed in the Semester

Campus Engagement Academic Engagement Student Learning

Feel a part of ECU (7) Student to Resources (6) Learning Styles (7), Memory Techniques (7), Note Taking (7), Reading a Textbook (7), and Test Taking (7) Relationships (6) and Time Management (5)

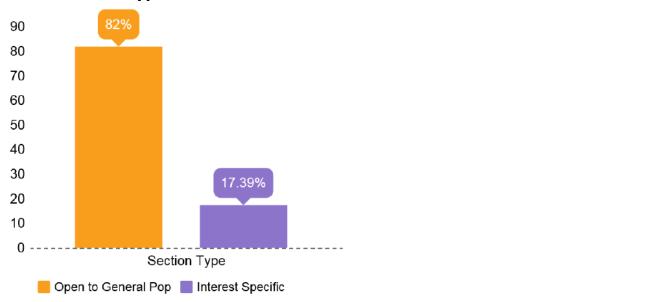
\*Personal Development competencies are the least frequently listed in the instructors' syllabi.

# Top Competencies Listed as "Not in Syllabi"

# **COAD SYLLABI RUBRIC FINDINGS: Major Themes**

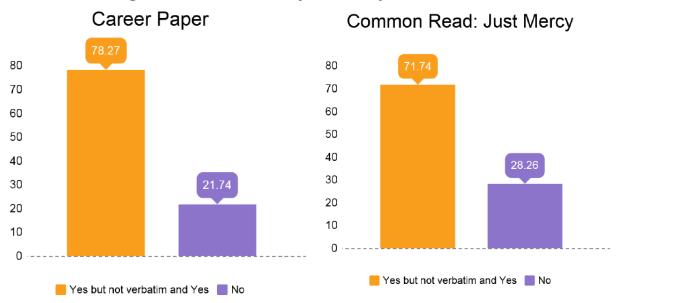
Forty six COAD syllabi were collected and reviewed with the COAD syllabi rubric. The following are the results:

**COAD Section Type Indication** 

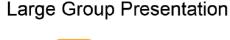


Types indicated on the syllabi were as follows: Biology LLC, Education, MAP/Undecided, Nursing, and Public

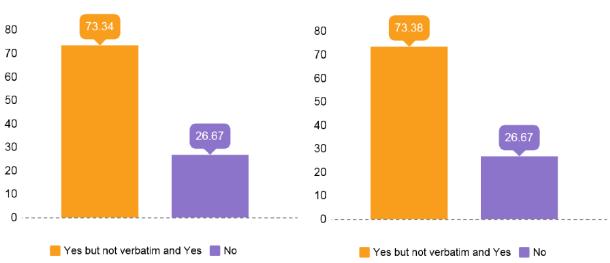
**Common Assignments & Other Syllabi Requirements** 



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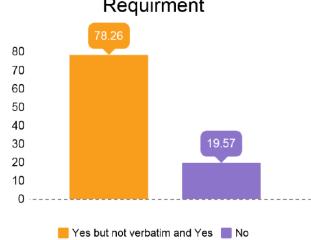


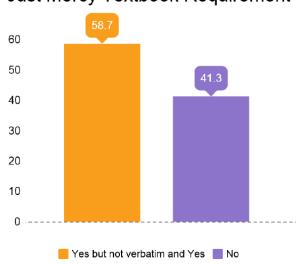
### Resiliency Module



# COAD 1000 Freshman Semiar/First Year Programs Textbook Requirment

# Just Mercy Textbook Requirement



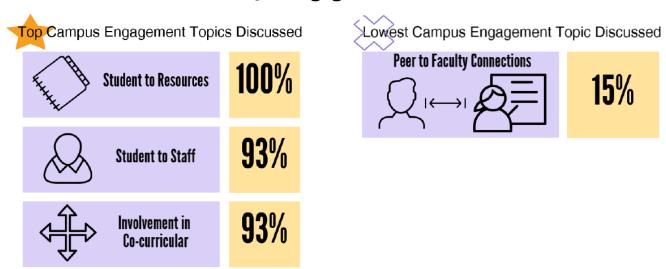


The following themes surfaced during the syllabi review:

- There were 6 syllabi which covered all of the assignments and incorporated all of the additional requirements.
- Three of the syllabi mentioned "Just Mercy" in the syllabi but it was not listed as a required textbook. In other syllabi, it was said that it would be covered but it was not mentioned in the timeline.
- There were three instances where they syllabi were not thorough such as a brief class description was provided, only examples of an assignment was provided, or no points were given to assignments. In some of these instances, the syllabi would state that the instructor would talk more about these in class.
- Three of the syllabi were only the courses' timeline which made these difficult to review with the rubric.
- In two instances where the Career Paper was not listed as an assignment, there were Career Services presentations.

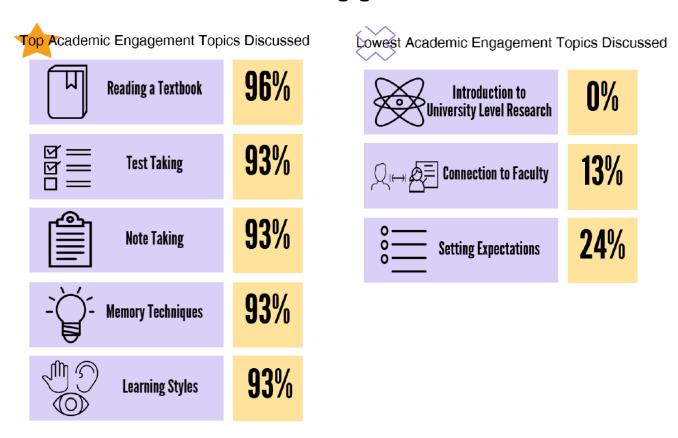
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# **Campus Engagement**



Topics which were listed in the COAD syllabi more than 90% of the time are mentioned as a "Top Campus Engagement Topic" and topics mentioned below 20% of the time are listed as the "Lowest Campus Engagement Topic". The following are the additional Campus Engagement topics but were not included in the above information due to being outside of the set percentage ranges: Peer to Peer Connections (89%) and Feel a Part of ECU Community (76%).

# **Academic Engagement**



Topics which were listed in the COAD syllabi more than 90% are mentioned as a "Top Academic Engagement Topic" and topics mentioned below 25% are listed as the "Lowest Academic Engagement Topic". The following are the additional Academic Engagement topics but were not included in the above information due to being outside of the set percentage ranges: Paradigm Shift: How College is Different from High School (83%), Goal Setting (83%), Academic Rules and Regulations (78%), and Analytical and Critical Thinking Skills (54%).

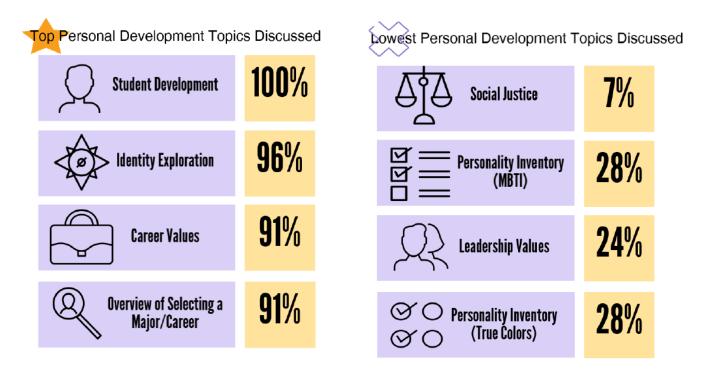
# **Student Learning**



Topics which were listed in the COAD syllabi more than 90% are mentioned as a "Top Student Learning Topic" and topics mentioned below 55% are listed as the "Lowest Student Learning Topic". The following are the additional Student Learning topics but were not included in the above information due to being outside of the set percentage ranges: Relationships (89%), Time Management (89%), Stress Management (76%), Making Choices (accepting responsibility) (70%), Money Management (65%), Alcohol (59%), and Drugs (59%).

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# **Personal Development**



Topics which were listed in the COAD syllabi more than 90% are mentioned as a "Top Personal Development Topic" and topics mentioned below 30% are listed as the "Lowest Personal Development Topic". The following are the additional Personal Development topics but were not included in the above information due to being outside of the set percentage ranges: Goal Setting (78%), Leadership Skills (67%), Appreciate differences (65%), and Civility (39%).

### **Guest Speakers**



### **Additional Notes**

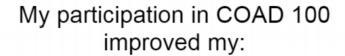
- The "No Class" notation was typically on dates that were university holidays or breaks. On the few that had more than 3 "no class" notations, there was an out of class assignment due.
- Although most syllabi included many of the academic skills outlined within the rubric within the syllabi's
  goals and objectives, often times some of those goals/objectives were not included or linked to the
  assignments/talking points of the class. In other words, sometimes there was not a clear connection
  between goals/objectives and assignments/lectures, etc.
- A common issue that was found with the Just Mercy (Pirate Read) assignment was that it would be mentioned within the syllabus, but would not be mentioned within "required materials" section. Or vice

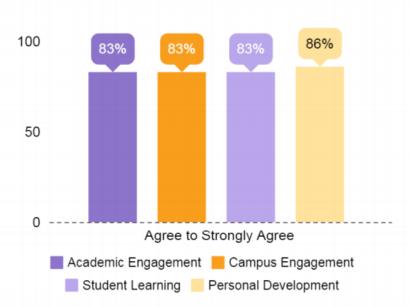
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versa, would be included within "required materials" but would not be mentioned throughout the rest of the syllabus.

### COAD IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Two hundred ninety nine COAD students took the COAD Impact Assessment for Fall 2016. Below are the results in which students agreed or strongly agreed that their participation in COAD improved their skills as related to COAD's four core competencies.



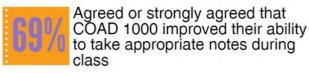


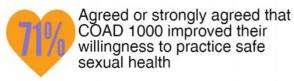


of students agreed or strongly agreed COAD 1000 improved their:

- Knowledge of ECU's academic integrity policy
- Knowledge of ECU's financial aid procedures
- Understanding the importance of establishing personal goals

### Least improved upon...





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### IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

The following implications for action emerged from student suggestions and the data analysis process:

### **COAD PILOT & PILOT SYLLABI TIMELINE STUDY**

- Incorporate Schlossberg into COAD Instructor Training
- Pilot information to be discussed with all Fall 2017 COAD instructors at the training
- Develop a syllabi template with CORE competencies being required to be instructors' syllabi and distribute at COAD instructor training
- Request syllabi from all COAD instructors and create a Blackboard link to submit syllabi on Blackboard
- Provide a detailed syllabi to COAD instructors at the training
- Request pilot study COAD instructors at training:
  - o Request 35 instructors to be a part of the study
  - Need 1,400 transition guides
  - Provide all information about the processes of the pilot to instructors

### **COAD SYLLABI RUBRIC REVIEW**

- Develop and implement survey for instructors to gain feedback on: common assignments, COAD textbook, and Pirate Read.
  - o Potential Questions:
    - 1) What are your thoughts on the Large Group Presentation as a Common Assignment?
    - 2) Are you using the COAD textbook in your class?
      - No what stops you from using the COAD textbook?
      - If the COAD book were more of a workbook and there was an ability to tear out the pages to use as a assignment, would you be more likely to use the textbook?
    - 3) Do you have a required Pirate Read assignment in your COAD class?
      - Why do you not use the Pirate Read as an assignment?
    - 4) Do you require your students to purchase the Pirate Read textbook?
      - No Why do you not require your students to purchase the Pirate Read textbook?
    - 5) To demonstrate COAD as a robust course, we have required that the 4 common assignments be a part of all COAD courses. What are your thoughts on each of the current common assignments (large group presentation, Common Read, Career Paper, and Resiliency Module)?

- 6) What other common assignments do you believe would be helpful to the students, if any?
- Provide lesson plans for Pirate Read and have instructors choose from the assignment options related to Pirate Read.
- Training:
  - Include a conversation on the Pirate Read book including purpose and why its important
  - Discuss the themes in the Pirate Read book with instructors and where to find them; tie in the COAD core competencies to the book
  - o Add how research can be discussed in COAD i.e. library and literature review
  - Get English 1100 assignment on Pirate Read book from Dr. Tracy Morse to show COAD instructors (to ensure no duplication occurring)
- Add Pirate Read to the front page of the syllabi
- Have Dowdy Student Store list the textbooks (Pirate Read and COAD Textbook) as required for COAD
- Pull lowest core competencies and make them common assignments
- Place core competencies on syllabi; potentially, have a syllabi template with core competencies
- Review current learning outcomes on COAD syllabi to determine if they are still applicable

# REPORT INQUIRIES

This document review project was exploratory in nature and provides formative data to inform program policy and practice in support of first year student transition. The data also provide grounding for future inquiry. This report will be posted to the Student Affairs Assessment, Research, and Retention website at <a href="http://www.ecu.edu/cs-studentaffairs/saassessment/">http://www.ecu.edu/cs-studentaffairs/saassessment/</a>. Questions about this report may be directed to: Melissa Allay Student Affairs Assessment, Research and Retention East Carolina University

Mendenhall Student Center 23

Greenville, NC 27858
252-737-6237

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Final Paper Excellent	More Exploration Paper  Good	Identification Paper  Developing	Comments
<ul> <li>First year transition to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding. (3 pts)</li> </ul>	First year transition to be considered critically is stated but description is ambiguous. (3 pts)	First year transition to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description. (3 pts)	
<ul> <li>Information is taken from the Transition Guide with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. (3 pts)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Information is taken from the Transition Guide with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. (3 pts)</li> </ul>	Information is taken from the Transition Guide without any interpretation/evaluation. (3 pts)	
<ul> <li>Thoroughly analyzes own areas of strength and areas needing improvements.</li> <li>(3 pts)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Identifies own areas of strength and areas of needing improvement but does not provide a thorough analysis.</li> <li>(3 pts)</li> </ul>	Shows an emerging awareness of present areas of strength and areas of needing improvement.     (3 pts)	
<ul> <li>Carefully evaluates the supports and strategies that can be used in their first year transition. (3 pts)</li> </ul>	Lists the supports and strategies that can be used in their first year transition but does not provide an evaluation. (3 pts)	<ul> <li>Shows an emerging awareness of supports and strategies that can be used in their first year transition.</li> <li>(3 pts)</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>Specific perspective on self and their first year takes into account the complexities of the transition. Limits of perspective are acknowledged. (3 pts)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Specific perspective on self and their first year acknowledges different difficulties of the transition. (3 pts)</li> </ul>	Specific perspective on self and their first year is stated, but is simplistic and obvious. (3 pts)	
<ul> <li>Conclusions and related plan (consequences and implications) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation. (3 pts)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Conclusion and related plan are logically tied to student's reflection and are identified clearly. (3 pts)</li> </ul>	Conclusion and related plan are inconsistently tied to student's reflection and simplified. (3 pts)	
Grammar & Spelling (2 pts)	Grammar & Spelling (2 pts)	Grammar & Spelling (2 pts)	
		Total Points: 20	Student Score: