

**FOCUS**

# ON THE FIRST YEAR

**MON  
MAY  
15  
2023**

**A REGIONAL  
CONFERENCE ON  
THE FIRST-YEAR  
COLLEGE  
EXPERIENCE**

 **FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE**



**Southern Connecticut State University**

*Dear Colleagues,*

*We are excited to welcome you to our first Regional Conference on the First-Year College Experience, supported by an SCSU Faculty Development grant. Joining us this year are colleagues from over 20 Connecticut colleges and universities, as well as colleagues from New York, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. Our participants include faculty, administrators, and students, representing multiple areas in student affairs, academic affairs, and enrollment management. This range is no surprise to us because the best FYE programs are imagined, created, built, and sustained not by single units, but by representatives from nearly every campus division. That is certainly true at Southern, where we could never have built our comprehensive and nationally-recognized program without the dedication and participation of our colleagues and students from across this campus.*

*In this spirit of this collaboration and for the purpose of getting to know each other, we have included a list of colleagues who are with us today (both on-ground and in-person) in your folder.*

*At Southern, we are committed to identifying and addressing systemic barriers to equity, access, and success for all members of our community. We are a university committed to social justice – diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racist practices— so we begin today with a keynote on inclusive pedagogy, in the classroom and the university at large. Following our keynote, we offer four concurrent sessions on a range of topics, with some lunch and conversation built into the day. All sessions take place in Engleman Hall (EN), and remote participants can click on links to join.*

*We're so glad you've joined us,*

*Nicole Henderson, Professor of English, Director of the First-Year Experience  
Dyan Robinson, Associate Director of the First-Year Experience  
Andrew Parzyck, FYE and Communications Faculty*



# PROGRAM

**8:30-9:15AM**  
**EN C 105 (FYE OFFICE)**

CHECK IN & BREAKFAST

**9:15-9:30AM**  
**EN C 112 [CLICK TO JOIN REMOTELY](#)**

OPENING REMARKS

Southern Connecticut State University

**9:30-10:20AM**  
**EN C112 [CLICK TO JOIN REMOTELY](#)**

**Examining Inclusive Pedagogy and Practice for the First-Year Experience**

KEYNOTE

*Kelvin Rutledge, Associate Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion*  
*Southern Connecticut State University*

Inclusive teaching practices and curricular pedagogy are critical to the first-year experience as the demographics of colleges and universities are quickly changing. This session examines how the practical application of an inclusive environmental approach can help enhance the curricular and co-curricular experience. This session will use various inclusive teaching and pedagogical practices (e.g., Harro's Cycle of Socialization, Inclusive Climate Techniques, etc.) to examine how instructors, practitioners, and university administrators can leverage the first-year experience to build critical inquiry, community, and engagement for students

**10:30-11:30AM**

**CONCURRENT SESSION #1**

**Promoting First-Year Student Engagement and Intrinsic Motivation through  
Autonomy-Supportive Teaching**

**EN B216 [CLICK TO JOIN REMOTELY](#)**

WORKSHOP

*Cheryl Durwin, Professor of Psychology*  
*Southern Connecticut State University*

This workshop will provide an overview of evidence-based practices used in autonomy-supportive teaching and give participants hands-on experience at applying this approach to their first-year course. The workshop may include: participant self-reflection (through brief surveys), case studies, think-pair-share, and group discussion of teaching practices. Participants will come away with practical tips for improving first-year student engagement, motivation, and achievement through autonomy-supportive teaching practices.

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## Building Community using Restorative Practices

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EN C115 [CLICK TO JOIN REMOTELY](#)

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### WORKSHOP

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*Patricia Gagliardi, Director of Education and Restorative Justice  
Southern Connecticut State University*

Attendees will participate in a community building circle using the Restorative Practice method, so they can be confident in facilitating similar circles within their classes.

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## Innovation from Loss: Building Community through Student-Centered Advising Programming

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EN C140 [CLICK TO JOIN REMOTELY](#)

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### PRESENTATION

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*Wes Boucher, Assistant Director of Academic Advising  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute*

As we continue to navigate a new landscape of Higher Education in a post pandemic world, our campuses sit at a crossroads of returning to our roots and “how we used to do things” or embracing the “pivots” we made as lasting change. Concurrently, campuses across the nation are also grappling with the decline student mental health and feelings of helplessness. What can we as professionals do to be better? Innovation from Loss: Building Community through Student Centered Advising Programming will review the process of establishing a student and family-based program to ease student transition anxiety and disseminate key information. Through conversation and sharing space together in this session, participants will reflect upon their campuses’ current support structures regarding advising incoming students, and how they might consider updating their practices.

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## First-Year Seminar Instructor’s Perceptions of Interactions with Generation Z Students: A Narrative Study

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EN B218 [CLICK TO JOIN REMOTELY](#)

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### PRESENTATION

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*Andrew Parzyck, Faculty, Communications and FYE  
Southern Connecticut State University*

The purpose of this research is to understand how first-year seminar instructors make sense of their expectations and perceptions of Generation Z students as adult learners. This research examined instructor’s experiences implementing the characteristics from the conceptual framework of andragogy.

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11:40AM-12:40PM

### CONCURRENT SESSION #2

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## Connecting with the Future: Designing a Course for Transitions

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EN C140 [CLICK TO JOIN REMOTELY](#)

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### PRESENTATION

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*Lizzy Cantor, Assistant Director, Student Leadership & Community Engagement  
Joyce Morgan, Director, Ross Center for Disability Services  
Rachel Puopolo, Director, CLA First  
UMass Boston*

Join us to discuss “Connected Futures”, a one-credit course developed at UMass Boston, that focuses on relationship-building, networking, and finding mentors. We will discuss curriculum adaptability for a variety of different transitions (high school to college, first to second year, transfer students, and senior to post-grad). Two particular benefits for first-year students are the in-class mentorship and resource exposure opportunities. We will workshop how to adapt the curriculum to the needs of your student body.

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## How Major is Your Major - Supporting Exploratory Students

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EN B218 [CLICK TO JOIN REMOTELY](#)

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### PRESENTATION

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*Morgan Cottrell, Coordinator of Academic Advising for Major Exploration  
Southern Connecticut State University*

Choosing a majors can impact career, academic and post graduate success, but not always in the ways that students and families think. With so much misinformation about majors out there, SCSU puts focus on helping students start with the facts, and then prompts them through a step by step process to make a meaningful major decision. In this session participants will learn how SCSU is creating a culture of exploration to support ALL students (not just exploratory students) in making an academic major decision based on the facts. This session will include an interactive sample of a workshop created to help students begin the process of major exploration in their first semester.

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## Decolonizing the First-Year Experience

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EN C115 [CLICK TO JOIN REMOTELY](#)

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### WORKSHOP

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*Daphney Alston, Assistant Director of Student Involvement and Leadership Development  
Southern Connecticut State University*

This session will analyze the colonized lens that is present within higher education to ensure we are addressing the needs of our growing multicultural student population.

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## Transitions: What Do Students Need To Be Successful at Learning and Interacting in Post Secondary Education?

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### PRESENTATION

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*Barbara Cook, Associate Professor, Communication Disorders  
Southern Connecticut State University*

In this session, discover how to integrate the following strategies that are proven to increase success for students: skills to self-monitor (goal setting); routine setting (organization and planning), visual reminders, self-reward, and engagement in self-advocacy. Participants will be shown how to introduce and embed these strategies in a course across a semester and will be invited to share their ideas. Professors at Play will be included as a resource for engaging students in learning.

**12:40-1:30PM**

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**LUNCH - EN B121**

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Grab a bite, talk with your colleagues, and explore a display of student posters from the First-Year Research & Artistry Experience (FYRE).

1:30-2:30PM

## CONCURRENT SESSION #3

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### Eastern's FYE in Transition

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EN C140 [CLICK TO JOIN REMOTELY](#)

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#### PRESENTATION

*David Pellegrini, Professor of Theatre / Coordinator of the First-Year Program*

*Jessica Ruddy, Associate Director, Advising Center/Academic Success Center*

*Casey Kensey, Director of New Student and Family Programs*

*Eastern Connecticut State University*

The FYE, the cornerstone of Eastern's Liberal Arts Core (LAC), is undergoing a transformation aligned with the upcoming implementation of a new Core (ELAC) in 2024. We will discuss how the new model is designed to better integrate Orientation, Peer Mentors, academics, and student life.

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### DEI is More Than a Program: Infusing and Embedding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Orientation

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EN B216 [CLICK TO JOIN REMOTELY](#)

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#### PRESENTATION

*Sal Rizza, Director of Orientation, Transition, and Family Engagement*

*Southern Connecticut State University*

Southern Connecticut State University is striving to be a Social Justice Institution. Introducing students to the values of diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism through orientation are of paramount importance. In this session, we will discuss the ways in which we have infused DEI in all aspects of orientation including in staff recruitment, retention, and specific programs and activities.

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### A Required First-Year Course — “College & Career Success” at Connecticut State Community College

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EN C115 [CLICK TO JOIN REMOTELY](#)

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#### PRESENTATION

*Jill Rushbrook, Interim Coordinator, College & Career Success*

*Connecticut State Community College*

This session will outline what the new “College & Career Success” course is that will be required of all CT State Community College students beginning in Fall 2023. Information about the course will be shared as well as resources that were developed for instructors.

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### Lighting the FYRE Within

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EN B218 [CLICK TO JOIN REMOTELY](#)

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#### PRESENTATION

*Amy Johnson, Faculty, FYE*

*Southern Connecticut State University*

This presentation will explore how the FYRE project, particularly the “burning question” portion, asks students to focus on themselves: What interests them? What would they like to learn about? It will also explore the importance of giving students the space to focus inward not only for their benefit, but also for the benefit of society.

2:40-3:40PM

**CONCURRENT SESSION #4**

**Student-to-Student: Peer Mentors in the First Year Seminar Classroom**

**EN C140 [CLICK TO JOIN REMOTELY](#)**

**ROUNDTABLE**

*Elizabeth Haas, Director of General Education Seminars & Cohort Instruction*

*Kelli Meyer, Assistant Dean of Students*

*Craig Lennon, Dean of Students*

*University of Bridgeport*

We would like to invite discussion of and develop plans of action on the topic of incorporating Peer Mentors into the First-Year Seminar classroom. We will look at this enterprise from the perspective of all stake-holders — FYS faculty, FYS students, Peer Mentors — and invite participation from anyone involved in a Peer Mentor FYS classroom program at any stage of development. Subtopics will include: Peer Mentor training, FYS faculty and Peer Mentor relationship, academic preparation/course content for Peer Mentor prior to FYS classroom assignment, Peer Mentor qualifications, and learning outcomes for Peer Mentor experience.

**Supporting the Needs of First-Year Adult Learners**

**EN B218 [CLICK TO JOIN REMOTELY](#)**

**ROUNDTABLE**

*Britt Conroy, Coordinator of Veterans & Adult Learner Support Services*

*Andrew Parzyck, Faculty in Communications and FYE*

*Southern Connecticut State University*

This roundtable is a space to inform, converse, and gather ideas based on three burning questions. 1) Who are adult learners? 2) What programs and services do we have at our institutions? 3) What additional services and programs should we develop?

**Getting to Know Your First Year Class**

**EN C115 [CLICK TO JOIN REMOTELY](#)**

**PRESENTATION**

*Brianna Kirk, Coordinator of First-Year Experience*

*Robbin Smith, Associate Professor and Department Chair, Political Science/Faculty Liaison to the First-Year Program*

*Central Connecticut State University*

In this session, we will discuss the importance of getting to know your incoming class, the tools we used to do so, and how we used the data to begin building the foundation of our First-Year Experience Program.

**3:40-4:00PM**

**COFFEE AND CONVERSATION**

**EN C105 • FYE OFFICE**



Supported  
by an  
SCSU Faculty  
Development Grant

 **F**IRST-YEAR **E**XPERIENCE



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