

Bridging the First-Year Experience Through Student Leadership Roles

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Cabrini College

- Small, Catholic, Liberal Arts college outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Undergraduate population of approximately 1400 students
- Comprehensive First-Year Experience
 - Beginnings – Summer Orientation
 - New Student Orientation
 - Pre-Orientation Experiences
 - Learning Community Program (Both LLCs and LCs)
 - Peer Mentor Program
 - Engagements with the Common Good Writing Curriculum
- Close connection between Faculty and Student Engagement – Bridge between AA and SD

Pre-Fall of 2007

- » Minimal Academic Support Services
- » Absence of coordinated first-year experiences
- » Lack of leadership development opportunities (LEADStrong)
- » Recruiting larger classes; poor retention rates (mid-60s)
- » Support from the Dean for Academic Affairs on securing Title III grant and developing specific initiatives

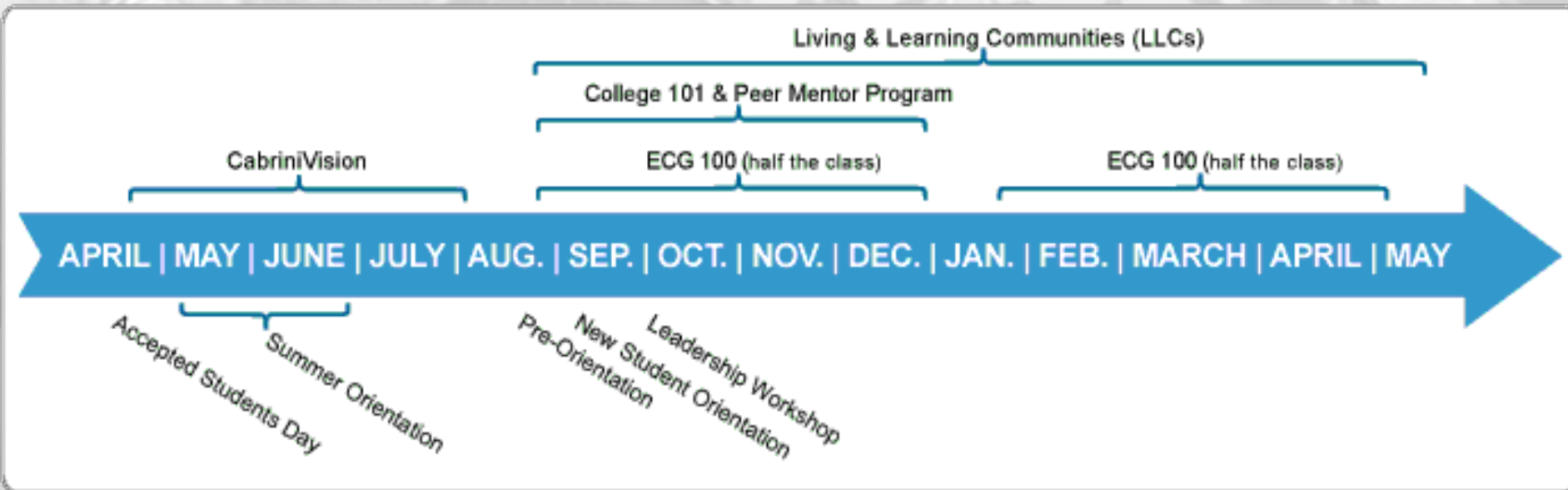
Title III Grant

- Living and Learning Communities
- Center for Teaching and Learning
- Development of a First-Year Experience Steering Committee

First-Year Experience Student Leaders

- Peer Mentors
- Orientation Leaders
- Master Learners
- Resident Assistants
- Classroom Coaches
- Peer Tutors

First-Year Experience Timeline



Beginnings

- Summer Orientation for all first-year students
- Introduction to the first-year summer reading
- Completion of placement exams
- Overview of the College's core curriculum
- Opportunity to connect with faculty/staff
- Promotion of Learning Communities and Pre-Orientation

Experiences

- **Peer Mentors** play a pivotal role in the structure and fluidity of this program

Summer Communication

- Learning Community Acceptance letters are sent out to students in July welcoming them to their learning community (if they applied into one)
- This is an introduction to the Faculty and Master Learner - upperclass mentor/tutor - and Resident Assistant first-year students will be working with through the academic year
- Co-Curricular Opportunities are highlighted here

New Student Orientation

Orientation Leaders:

- Orientation Leaders work in pairs to help new students transition to college life and Cabrini in particular
- Master Learners (MLs) are required to serve as Orientation Leaders (OLs) and participate in all training activities
- Master Learners then serve as Orientation Leader for their LC/LLC with another OL not affiliated with LC/LLC
- All other OLs are assigned to affiliated groups, where possible
- Virtual presence of OLs and Master Learners prior to August Orientation
- Growth of the OL position

Residence Life

Resident Assistants (RAs):

- Residence Life sends list of selected RAs to Director of FYE
- Intentional placement of RAs in LLC communities they participated in as first-year students
- RAs assist in promoting the theme of the LLC through programming initiatives and in consultation with Master Learner
- RAs hold their first building and floor meetings during the August Orientation program, so they connect early with students
- Residence Life partners with the Orientation team to encourage attendance at all August Orientation programs

Learning Community Program

Master Learner

- Lives on the LLC Residence Hall and collaborates with the Resident Assistant (RA)
- Model behavior and habits of mind of engaged students
- Academic mentor/tutor to LC students
- Encourage and engage FY students to connect across campus through a variety of leadership opportunities
- Partner with LC faculty to build and offer an integrative curriculum that includes co-curricular programming.
- Shape the ideas presented in and across connected courses.

Peer Mentor Program

- **Peer Mentor**

- Team teaches a one-credit college success seminar alongside a faculty member
- Directly connected with the college's LCs
- Works in partnership with the Master Learner to offer LC students a seamless FYE
- Co-facilitates dialogue pertaining to topics that include academic honesty, the college's core curriculum, financial literacy, and major and career exploration

Center for Teaching and Learning

Classroom Coaches/Peer Tutors

- Collaborate directly with Master Learners and Peer Mentors
- Equivalent to a teaching assistant in the classroom for one, 3-credit course
- Provide academic support via supplemental instruction and one on one tutoring
- Communicate with Faculty, Master Learners, and Peer Mentors regarding potential at-risk students

Retention

Table I-C: First-Time, Full-Time Student Cohort Retention Rates

Year	Cohort	Retention Fall to Fall
2007-2008	513	65.5%
2008-2009	503	65.8%
2009-2010	357	67.8%
2010-2011 ⁷	338/337	73.3%
2011-2012 ⁸	325/322	73.9%
2012-2013 ⁹	383/382	71.2%
2013-2014	303	76.9%

Next Steps

- Increase of High Impact Practices (especially LCs)
- The Cabrini Promise is that by 2020:
 - 100 percent of undergraduate students will have participated in a learning community
 - 100 percent of undergraduate students will have experienced two or more High-Impact Educational Practices in their first year.
 - LCs, Undergraduate Research, Diversity/Global Learning, Service Learning/Community-Based Learning, Internships,
 - By graduation, all of our students will have experienced four or more of these practices

Presidential Inauguration of Donald B. Taylor, Ph.D.

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