

## **The University of the West Indies, Mona**

### **First Year Experience (FYE) Principles for Facilitators**

**2020/21**

These concepts underpin the design and delivery of FYE approaches, content and delivery strategies. When considered, they can make your interactions with participants more engaging, meaningful and successful.

#### **FYE Principles**

- Community should be established early in order to promote a sense of belonging and to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.
- Programme content should be tailored to the specific needs of the students in each group. (Consider the realities of students studying and engaging remotely)
- FYE should be an active, engaging, and enjoyable learning experience
- Sessions, activities, methods and strategies should be purposeful and firmly aligned with the common learning outcomes.
- Each student should receive an appropriate balance of challenge and support. The goal is to create students who are confident and independent and who will seek help when necessary
- FYE should allow students to reflect on and process the content of the topics discussed as well as their experiences, rather than simply giving them information.

#### **Flexible Methodology**

FYE facilitators are not necessarily trained in student affairs and as such:

The goals and learning outcomes of the programme were carefully formulated to ensure relevant, sustainable, and dynamic course design. The learning outcomes provide a degree of consistency across groups while also allowing facilitators to customize their section. The broad nature of these outcomes signifies that no one approach may be appropriate for all groups. The content, topics, and methods to achieve the outcomes should be tailored to the needs of the students in a given group and to the strengths and expertise of the facilitator.

The goal is that all students have an equivalent experience regardless of the group in which they are placed.

#### **Topics That Can Help Achieve the Outcomes**

Facilitators should be intentional in helping to meet the learning outcomes. It is important to note that an outcome is not the same as a session, 'lesson' or a specific piece of content. Individual sessions or topics may be applicable to numerous outcomes.

These are some topics that could achieve some of the FYE outcomes:

- Academic strategies in dual learning or online mode
- Campus involvement (remotely and virtually); Students must feel engaged with the Campus
- Accessing campus resources online
- Online and Campus safety
- Career development
- Diversity (Especially as the world of work changes with online capabilities)
- Financial literacy
- Goal setting
- Stress, anxiety and mood management
- Time management
- Values clarification
- The benefits of higher education

### **Embracing Online Engagement**

Facilitators can no longer heavily rely on face to face educational methods such as community service, service-learning, cultural event participation, beyond-the-classroom experiences and campus partner presentations to achieve the outcomes,. New ways must be developed for achieving these outcomes online.

### **Outreach & Culture**

FYE not only orients students to beyond the classroom learning, but helps students articulate the significance of those experiences and how they contribute to overall learning.

Each FYE group must participate in and reflect on at least one outreach project and one cultural event. One suggestion is to do an online benefit, online awareness campaign or online promotion of a cause. Online cultural events, even at the global level, are accessible.

Beyond the classroom experiences may be completed by students individually, but facilitators should consider that a group experience provides an even greater opportunity to facilitate reflection on learning.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Community service (online)
- Online leadership programmes or workshops
- Campus non-academic lecture (online)
- Diversity events, such as those sponsored by the International Students Office
- Cultural event such as online theatrical performance, dance and/or music recital
- Campus club/organization meeting/event (virtual)
- Residence hall programme (virtual)

- Outdoor Recreation program (where safe to do so)

### **Reflection – Key to Deep Learning**

Reflection activities become particularly important in a first year's life and because of remote engagement is usually how they will assess their learning. Examples of reflection activities include, but are not limited to:

- A written reflection describing an event they took part in (online or in person), what was learned and how it related to any one of the FYE learning outcomes.
- Group/small group discussions of any event or virtual engagement attended event, national and global events culminating in a group list of "lessons learned"
- Reflecting weekly on feelings, thoughts as part of an on-going journal for the group