

**Foundations of Excellence Phase I Participation  
Lane Community College  
May, 2005**

In spring 2005, Lane participated in Phase I of the Foundations of Excellence project sponsored by the Policy Center on the First Year of College out of the University of South Carolina and funded by the Lumina Foundation for Education (<http://www.fyfoundations.org/>). During Phase I each participating community college (80 from across the U.S.) formed a campus Task Force to review and critique an initial draft set of Foundational Dimensions developed by the Policy Center. Feedback from this review will result in a national set of Dimensions developed specifically by and for two-year colleges.

The Foundational Dimensions will constitute a model that provides institutions with a means to evaluate and improve the first year of college. As an evaluation tool, the model enables institutions both to confirm their strengths and to recognize the need for improvement. As an aspirational model, the Dimensions provide general guidelines for an intentional design of the first year. The Dimensions rest on four assumptions:

- The academic mission of an institution is preeminent;
- The first college year is central to the achievement of an institution's mission and lays the foundation on which undergraduate education is built;
- Systematic evidence provides validation of the Dimensions;
- Collectively, the Dimensions constitute an ideal for improving not only the first college year, but also the entire undergraduate experience.

**Lane's Foundations of Excellence Phase I Task Force:**

Kate Barry	Director, Women's Program
Margaret Bayless	Faculty, Language/Literature/Communication
Jill Bradley	Coordinator, Women's Program
Ellen Cantor	Faculty, Language, Literature, Communication, Coordinator, Reading Together
Sonya Christian	Vice President, Instruction and Student Services
Liz Coleman	Coordinator, Tutoring
Tina Davis	Faculty, Health and P.E.
Helen Garrett	Registrar and Director of Enrollment Services
Autumn Green	Administrative Support Specialist, Science
Jerry Hall	Faculty, Science
Kyle Hammon	Division Chair, Science
Patrick Lanning	Associate Vice President - Instruction
Bert Logan	Director, Student Financial Services
Rosa Lopez	Advisor, Counseling Department
Shirley Lukacs	Advisor, Counseling Department
Anne McGrail	Faculty, Language/Literature/Communication, Coordinator, Learning Communities
Judy McKenzie	Faculty, Academic Learning Services
Katie Morrison-Graham	Faculty, Science
Garry Oldham	Faculty, Social Science
Mary Parthemer	Director, TRiO Learning Services, Co-Chair, SAGA

David Shellabarger	Faculty, Math
Craig Taylor	Director, Institutional Research, Assessment and Planning
Dan Timberlake	Director, Counseling Department, Co-Chair, SAGA
Jennifer von Ammon	Faculty, Language, Literature, Communication, Service Learning Coordinator

## **Lane's Revised Foundational Dimensions**

Dimension 1: (Philosophy) Foundations Institutions design and implement first year experiences for students in ways that are intentional and based on a philosophy that supports students and drives relevant institutional policies and practices. The philosophy is explicit, clear, consistent with the institutional mission, widely disseminated, and reflects engagement of affected campus constituencies. The philosophy is the basis for first-year organizational practices, structures, leadership, department philosophies, and resource allocation.

Dimension 2: (Organization) Foundations Institutions develop and build on existing organizational structures and policies that support an integrated, coordinated approach to first-year student experiences. These structures and policies are responsive to varied student needs and guide all efforts aimed at first year experiences. Coherent first-year experiences are realized and maintained through effective partnerships among instruction and student services and other college areas. Ongoing faculty and staff development activities and sufficient budgetary arrangements enhance these experiences and relationships.

Dimension 3: (Learning) Foundations Institutions deliver intentional curricular and co-curricular learning experiences that engage students in order to foster intellectual and social growth. First year experiences help students develop empowering attitudes and behaviors and learn the knowledge and skills necessary for successful goal achievement. All first year experiences are aimed at enhancing students' engagement, developing their confidence, fostering critical thinking and ethical awareness, and promoting life-long learning.

Dimension 4: (Faculty and Staff) Foundations Institutions recognize and support faculty and staff in making first year experiences a high priority. These institutions acknowledge that the best quality experiences emerge when faculty and staff collaborate to achieve a common purpose. Faculty and staff understand that first year experiences are critical for student success. The faculty take active responsibility for engaging students in the learning process; staff engage students in supportive activities that promote student success. (Faculty and Staff)

Dimension 5: (Transitions) Foundations Institutions recognize that in community colleges there are many entry and exit points for students. Institutional policies and practices are geared toward ease of movement through these transitions. Support for educational success is offered at every juncture of students' experiences: beginning with their first contact with the college, through enrollment processes and continuing with curricular and co-curricular experiences to goal-attainment. The college clearly communicates to students its responsibilities, policies and practices, as well as students' responsibilities to themselves and the institution. Curricular and co-curricular alignments are created and maintained with secondary schools, four-year schools, employers and the community.

Dimension 6: (All Students) Foundations Institutions serve all first-year students according to their varied needs. The process of anticipating, diagnosing, and addressing students' needs is ongoing and is subject to assessment and adjustment throughout their first year and until goal attainment.

Institutions provide instruction and services with respect for individual student abilities, backgrounds, interests, and experiences. Institutions ensure a campus environment that is inclusive and safe for all.

Dimension 7: (Diversity) Foundations Institutions welcome, value and promote diversity among students, staff and the community. The institution cultivates a respectful, inclusive and accessible learning environment. First year experiences are structured so that students interact in an open, civil community with people from backgrounds and cultures different from their own, explore their own cultures and the cultures of others, and develop the capacity to understand issues of difference, power and privilege.

Dimension 8. (Roles and Purposes) Foundations Institutions help students understand the importance of higher education for individual and social transformation. The institution fosters this transformation by helping students acquire knowledge, critical thinking skills, self-awareness, and self-efficacy, and by preparing them for careers, civic engagement and community involvement. First-year experiences are designed to educate students about the range of possibilities and educational paths open to them at this institution and beyond. Curricular and co-curricular activities are structured to help students recognize their own value, develop self-confidence, and envision success at achieving their own goals and making contributions to society.

Dimension 9. (Improvement) Foundations Institutions commit to a culture of assessment of programs, services and learning in order to achieve ongoing improvement. Assessment of first-year experiences is linked systemically to the institutions' overall assessment. Assessment results drive institutional planning, resource allocation, decision-making, and ongoing improvement of programs and policies as they affect first-year students. Foundations Institutions maintain associations with other institutions and professional organizations, and utilize current and emerging first-year best practices.

### **Summary:**

Participation in the Foundations of Excellence Phase I project provided a forum for a diverse group of faculty and staff to discuss ideas about what it means and what is required to provide quality educational experiences for new students at Lane. It was exciting to have the opportunity to formulate collective ideas about these important issues. We established common language and understanding in a short period of time that will benefit the college as we develop a more comprehensive, integrated new student experience.

Lane is applying to participate in Foundations of Excellence Phase II. Ten Community Colleges will be selected to work directly and intensively with the Policy Center in 2005-06.