



SOAR: Students Obtaining Academic Rewards

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Executive Summary

The purpose of SOAR is to improve student learning and engagement for incoming first-year students. This will be accomplished through the introduction of cohort scheduling for the restructured Learning Assistance Program and the First-Year Experience courses.

SOAR is a bold, new initiative that expands the traditional Learning Assistance Program to better meet the needs of student who enter college under-prepared and improves the first year experience of all student by revamping the first-year experience courses. SOAR's scheduling paradigm is based on ability grouping applied to an enhanced Learning Assistance program while integrating the developmental student in the to larger college community via a new Gardner-model Freshman Seminar course called BPC110. Students who score below 430 on the SAT are required to the Accuplacer College Placement Exam, which will be used o structure the ability level groupings. Students who are found to be under-prepared for college-level mathematics are placed in either BPC 97, Essential Mathematics, or BPC 99, Fundamental of Algebra. BPC 97 is a new course created to address the needs of the student who requires mathematics support at the level of arithmetic. Students who are found to be deficient in reading comprehension and/or writing are placed in BPC 96, College Reading, or BPC 98, College Writing. BPC 96 is a new course designed to address the need for additional reading remediation. Because best pedagogical practice requires that reading and writing be taught concurrently, these course are linked. The cohort scheduling aspect of SOAR is planned for two semesters and three semesters for students who fail a course.

The Freshman Seminar, required of all incoming students, has been significantly restructured and the credit-hour designation has been increased from on credit to three credits. The needs of SOAR students will be further addressed by the addition of a required study skills course, the two-credit BPC 100. Learning outcomes for the SOAR initiative include successful completion of the developmental courses, an improvement in study skills, an increase in student engagement in college, and secondarily, increased retention and graduation among who enter the College through the developmental program.