

A 10-Step Plan for Implementing a *Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ (GFSF) Initiative in Your Colleges and High Schools

The inspiration for the *Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ model came from The George Washington University Freshman Transition Initiative's (FTI) Standards for a Freshman Transition Course, a visionary outline for systemic redesign that is helping to assure student success in programs across the country. Using an adaptation of the FTI 10-Step Plan, the following step-by-step process will help you create, implement, and sustain your *Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ Initiative.

Each local effort starts with one individual or a handful of people who believe in the goals and methodology of the *Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ Initiative. Follow this roadmap and utilize the *optional* resources listed to create a comprehensive, whole-school program that will enrich and transform the lives of your students.

***Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ Initiative Goals**

For high school students

- Increase engagement, academic achievement, and attendance of ALL students
- Reduce suspension, expulsion, and dropout rates
- Increase the percentage of students that graduate from high school and continue their education at a college or university

For college students

- Enter post-secondary institution college- and career-ready—without the need for remediation
- Enter college with an *informed* major and *researched* Education Plan
- Have the motivation and information necessary to complete their post-secondary studies in an expedient manner

Since 2009, Santa Barbara City College has collaborated with the Carpinteria and Santa Barbara School Districts to deliver a successful Dual Enrollment Freshman Transition (DEFT) course on high school campuses. Today, the student-centered 10-year Plan developed in this course is a graduation requirement for the Santa Barbara high schools. It was determined that to most effectively impact student success, structured annual updates to each student's online 10-year Plans were desirable and, in 2012, the expansion of efforts to the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades began.

This past fall, the first cohort of DEFT students to graduate brought their 10-year Plans to SBCC. They will be used for academic coaching and counseling to inform student education plans (SEPs) and help students stay on track for timely completion of a degree, certificate, or transfer to a university.

Real-world Lessons to Help Instructors Meet the Common Core State Standards

Course materials meet the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, providing capacity-building for instructors as they transition to these new requirements and teaching methods that are shown to promote student learning.

By implementing a sequence of the *Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ freshman course followed by integration of the three hybrid modules into academic courses, you'll assure that students have:

- *Researched and chosen* an appropriate career path (program of study)
- An *informed* declared major
- A *meaningful* 10-year Career and Education Plan

Phase 1 ~ *Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ Awareness and Stakeholder Buy-in

Step 1: Gather Your Resources

RESOURCES

Print and Video Resources

1. This quick-start guide: *A 10-Step Plan for Implementing a Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ Initiative (available at www.getfocusedstayfocused.org/quickstart)
2. Standards for a Freshman Transition Course (available at www.freshmantransition.org/fts.php)
3. Select videos highlighting *Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ programs in action
4. *Freshman Transition Leadership Manual: Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ Edition
5. *Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ Instructor's Manual
6. *Instructor's and Administrator's Guide for Career Choices and My10yearPlan.com*®, 7th Edition (2013)
7. Access to the curriculum materials:
 - *Career Choices* series textbook and *Workbook & Portfolio*
 - My10yearPlan.com®
 - *Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ Student Workbooks for Follow-up Modules 1, 2, and 3

Online Resources to Help You Customize Your Plans

1. www.getfocusedstayfocused.org
2. www.academicinnovations.com/gfsf
3. www.careerchoices.com/lounge

Step 2: Create a Vision

As with any new endeavor, getting buy-in from all stakeholders is a **critical step** for successful adoption and implementation. Conduct initial meetings to determine if there is the energy and commitment in your school to make a *Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ initiative not only successful, but also sustainable.

RESOURCES

Self-Directed Suggestions

1. This quick-start guide: *A 10-Step Plan for Implementing a Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ Initiative (available at www.getfocusedstayfocused.org/quickstart)
2. *Instructor's and Administrator's Guide for Career Choices and My10yearPlan.com*®, 7th Edition (2013)
 - Section 1: Quick Start
 - Section 6: Freshman Transition: Create A Vision of What's Possible
3. Archived overview webinar presented by Dr. Lauren Wintermeyer, *Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ co-creator (available at www.getfocusedstayfocusd.org/pastwebinars.php)

Workshop or Consulting Opportunities

NOTE: For your efforts to be successful, it is essential to have your school's "decision-makers" on board.

1. Send school leadership and team members to:
 - A Launch Your Freshmen Workshop—One-day events are held throughout the country. For information, visit www.aiworkshops.com/freshmen.

- *Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ Conference—Held at Santa Barbara City College each January, this event will provide resource materials to facilitate the development and expansion of your efforts. For information, visit www.getfocusedstayfocused.org/conference.
 - Focus on Freshmen Conference—Held in Los Angeles each July, this conference offers a variety of professional development institutes to advance your efforts. For information, visit www.focusonfreshmen.com.
2. Bring a certified trainer to your location to meet with your team. To receive additional information on this option, complete the request form at www.getfocusedstayfocused.org/request_pd.php.

***Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ Membership Opportunity**

Hoping to become a certified *Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ program? Submit an "Intent to Join" form to start the process. You'll receive members-only alerts when additional resources are created and professional development opportunities are scheduled. Details on membership requirements are available at www.getfocusedstayfocused.org/join.

Step 3: Form a Team of Champions to help finalize your plan and buy-in strategies

Form a committee of innovative instructors, administrators, and community members to help plan and lead your GFSF effort. Divide the members into action-oriented committees.

RESOURCES

1. For suggested strategies, planning documents, and sample job descriptions, review the following sections in *The George Washington University's Freshman Transition Leadership Manual: Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ Edition
 - The Role of the Principal
 - Step 3: Form a Team of Champions: Recruiting your coordinating committee members
2. The Freshman Transition Leadership Institute at the Focus on Freshmen Conference—Held in Los Angeles each July, this conference offers a variety of professional development institutes to advance your efforts. For information, visit www.focusonfreshmen.com/ftli

Dual Enrollment and/or College Sponsorship?

If your program includes high school/college collaboration, be sure that leaders from both institutions are on the steering committees.

Research Dual Enrollment as an Option for Your *Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ Initiative

If dual enrollment opportunities are available for high school students in your area, review the video presentations about Santa Barbara City College's Dual Enrollment program at www.getfocusedstayfocused.org/howto_strategies.php. You'll also want to become familiar with the college text *Career Choices and Changes*.

Checkpoint

Before you begin the execution of Step 4, you should have a *preliminary* plan for your GFSF efforts ready to share with your school and community.

Step 4: Generate School and Community Buy-in for the new courses and the 10-year Plan

RESOURCES

1. For suggested resources, including sample meeting agendas, review the following sections of the *Instructor's and Administrator's Guide for Career Choices and My10yearPlan.com*®, 7th Edition (2013)
 - Section 5: Getting Buy-in
 - Section 13: Getting Parents and the Community Involved

Get Focused...Stay Focused!™ Membership Opportunity

Hoping to become a certified *Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ program? Having a plan that meets the *Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ membership requirements and stakeholders who buy in and support your efforts will go a long way in assuring the success of your program. Details on membership requirements are available at www.getfocusedstayfocused.org/join.

Phase 2 ~ Freshman Course Planning and Implementation

It starts with rigorous standards: the Standards for a Freshman Transition Course and the Common Core State Standards

Step 5: Structure Your Freshman Course using the *Career Choices* series and *My10yearPlan.com*® (and begin looking ahead to the follow-up modules)

Having curricula/tools that meet the Standards for a Freshman Transition Course from The George Washington University is vital to the success of a GFSF initiative. The *Career Choices* series curriculum and *My10yearPlan.com*® are used by Santa Barbara City College's *Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ Initiative.

RESOURCES

1. Don't re-invent the wheel. Planning resources in the *Instructor's and Administrator's Guide for Career Choices and My10yearPlan.com*®, 7th Edition (2013) will help you structure a successful program:
 - Section 2: Overview of the Curriculum
 - Section 3: Where to Use the Curriculum? Who Should Teach It?
 - Section 7: Program Planning Resources
 - Section 8: Integrating Academics and Technology
2. Introduce the curriculum and tools for your GFSF initiative as you continue to generate buy-in. Allow stakeholders to flip through copies of the texts to move them beyond the theoretical with the practical, proven tools that make the GFSF vision tangible. To order 60-day review sets, call (800) 967-8016 or visit www.academicinnovations.com/60day.html.

NOTE: Ideally, the three Get Focused...Stay Focused!™ follow-up modules would be implemented in 10th, 11th, and 12th grade. However, if students complete a freshman transition course in 8th grade, use of the follow-up modules should be adjusted appropriately. See the Get Focused...Stay Focused!™ Instructor's Manual for details.

Step 6: Recruit Your Most Experienced Instructors to Conduct the Courses

This is a make-or-break step. Without an enthusiastic, high-functioning instructor who has the higher-order teaching skills of a facilitator of learning, the tools (i.e., workbooks and My10yearPlan.com®) will be less likely to produce the desired outcomes. The resources below provide strategies to assist with this critical step.

RESOURCES

1. *Freshman Transition Leadership Manual: Get Focused...Stay Focused!™ Edition*
 - Step 6: Recruit Your Most Enthusiastic Teachers to Conduct Your Course
2. Select videos of teams from successful schools discussing the topic of teacher recruitment at the Focus on Freshmen and *Get Focused...Stay Focused!™* conferences (available for viewing or sharing at www.getfocusedstayfocused.org/quickstart)

Step 7: Provide Professional Development and Course Planning Time

RESOURCES

Professional Development

Once you've recruited your best instructors, there are a variety of resources available for self-directed learning so that instructors can launch a superior course from the first day class. Review the professional development options available at www.aiworkshops.com as you create your professional development plan.

1. For the freshman course instructors, we recommend beginning with:
 - A two-day *Career Choices* Implementation Workshop held in your area or available at the annual Focus on Freshmen conference
2. If timing doesn't permit attendance at a formal in-person training prior to the start of the semester/term, instructors who are new to the curriculum can prepare to confidently launch their course by working through the Self-Study Quick Start Guide (*Instructor's and Administrator's Guide for Career Choices and My10yearPlan.com®*, pp. 1/20 to 1/22)
3. For an overview of professional development options, review the *Instructor's and Administrator's Guide for Career Choices and My10yearPlan.com®*, 7th Edition (2013):
 - Section 12: Curriculum Support and Professional Development Options

Course Planning

Pre-course lesson planning and pacing are critical to student success and instructor satisfaction. Careful pacing help ensure that the course culminates with each student creating their comprehensive online 10-year Plan.

1. It starts with reading the following sections of the *Instructor's and Administrator's Guide for Career Choices and My10yearPlan.com®*, 7th Edition (2013):
 - Section 4: Lesson Plan Suggestions for Each Activity
 - Section 9: My10yearPlan.com®
 - Section 10: Lesson Planning and Pacing
 - Section 11: Instructional Strategies
 - Section 12: Curriculum Support and Professional Development Options
2. Download and edit one of the pacing spreadsheets found on The Teachers' Lounge to customize for your course goals (available at www.careerchoices.com/lounge/cupboard_lesson.html)
3. Details on creating a professional learning community for your course instructors are available in the *Career Choices Lead Administrator & Lead Teacher Manual*, which is provided as a part of the Lead Administrator & Lead Teacher institute offered at the annual Focus on Freshmen conference. For information, visit www.focusonfreshmen.com/lti.

Phase 3 ~ Planning and Implementation for a *Get Focused...Stay Focused!*™ School-wide Initiative

Implementing follow-up modules in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades, and using the online 10-year Plan for counseling, advising, and academic coaching

Step 8: Make Your GFSF Initiative a School-wide Initiative

Each year, it is important that students revisit their 10-year Plan (started in freshman year) and update it with refined goals as they learn more about themselves. In addition to facilitating this process, the three 16-lesson follow-up modules provide activities and guidance on:

- Researching career and education options
- Researching and applying to post-secondary education and training
- Creating a skills-based education plan
- Planning for the transition from secondary to post-secondary life including educational and career pursuits

By integrating these Common Core-based lessons into academic courses in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades, students will graduate with:

- A carefully researched and considered career path
- An informed declared major or program of study
- A carefully considered post-secondary path—college, training, or an entry level job
- A skills-based education plan that will help ensure a smooth transition into the workforce

Identify a Lead Teacher or Lead Administrator as Your GFSF Point Person

Identifying a key visionary to champion your goals will help to streamline training efforts. This person, possibly an administrator in charge of curriculum and instruction or a lead teacher of the curriculum, can organize the necessary training for a school-wide initiative.

Hold a School-wide Launch Your Freshmen Training

The point person should identify how best to introduce GFSF to the entire school campus. Suggestions for launching your school-wide initiative include:

- Use an in-service day for a half- or full-day presentation by a GFSF Certified Trainer
- Arrange a webinar so that all staff can be introduced to GFSF at the same time
- Have the point person trained to present a Launch Your Freshmen workshop to their colleagues. (For resources and videos, call (800) 967-8016.)

NOTE: A school-wide initiative requires scheduled and on-going professional development to sustain momentum. Plan ahead for success!

Provide Follow-up Training and On-going Professional Development

1. For teachers implementing the freshman course
 - Teachers need regularly scheduled planning time each year with other freshman course teachers. Refer to Step 7 for additional planning and training suggestions.
2. For teachers implementing the follow-up modules
 - As the freshman course is launched (year one), the point person should meet with colleagues to plan where the follow-up modules will fit in the master schedule

- The point person and Module 1 teachers should meet regularly during year one implementation of the freshman course to:
 - ◊ Plan for integration of Module 1 into 10th grade
 - ◊ Train the instructors on the content of Module 1 and instructional strategies
 - The point person and Module 2 teachers should plan during year two for implementation of Module 2 in year three
 - The point person and Module 3 teachers should plan during year three for implementation of Module 3 in year four
3. For counselors (see Step 9)

RESOURCES

1. *Get Focused...Stay Focused!™ Instructor's Manual*
2. *Get Focused...Stay Focused!™ Student Workbooks for Follow-up Modules 1, 2, and 3*
3. *Freshman Transition Leadership Manual: Get Focused...Stay Focused!™ Edition*
 - Step 8: Make Your Freshman Transition Initiative a School-wide Initiative

Step 9: Share All Students' 10-year Career and Education Plans for Counseling, Advisory, and Academic Coaching Purposes

The real value of the online 10-year Plan is its instant availability to counselors, advisors, and academic instructors as a data-driven tool for personalizing their work with their students. All students' plans are available to authorized teachers, counselors, and administrators. As a result, everyone in the school community can have access to each student's self-identified and articulated goals.

For more information on this important tool and strategies for utilizing the 10-year Plan in counseling and advising capacities, be sure to review the resources listed.

RESOURCES

1. *Freshman Transition Leadership Manual: Get Focused...Stay Focused!™ Edition*
 - Step 9: 10-year Educational and Advisory Plans
2. Arrange for faculty to participate in a Caring Conversations Workshop with Freshman Transition Initiative founder Dr. Rebecca Dedmond
3. Watch an actual academic coaching session to see how the 10-year Plan drives the process (available at www.academicinnovations.com/childress/index.html)

Step 10: Evaluate, Invigorate, and Celebrate

Assessment is vital, not only for each student but also for the program as a whole. Using the resources and tools below, develop a formal assessment process so you can continually evaluate and upgrade your work with your students.

And don't forget to celebrate! If you implement with fidelity, following the path outlined in this document and taking advantage of the resources provided, you and your students are sure to experience success. Showcase your achievements (a.k.a. student outcomes) to the school community, parents, community stakeholders, and fellow educators!

RESOURCES

1. *Instructor's and Administrator's Guide for Career Choices and My10yearPlan.com®*, 7th Edition (2013):
 - Section 14: Assessment

- Section 15: Sustainability and Funding
- 2. *Freshman Transition Leadership Manual: Get Focused...Stay Focused!™ Edition*
 - Step 10: Recognize, Reward, and Assess

Get Focused...Stay Focused!™ Membership Opportunity

Hoping to become a certified *Get Focused...Stay Focused!™* program? Submit an "Intent to Join" form to start the process. You'll receive members-only alerts, including details regarding the study being conducted by the UC Educational Evaluation Center to measure and compare students within the study cohort in an effort to demonstrate the level of the program's effectiveness. Details on membership requirements are available at www.getfocusedstayfocused.org/join.

Student Pre-/Post-Survey and Online Scoring Tool

Available through both My10yearPlan.com® and The Teachers' Lounge, an online rubric helps instructors streamline the evaluation, assessment, and reporting process. Students take this short survey when they log onto My10yearPlan.com® for the first time and again once they complete their initial 10-year Plan. Teachers can then use the online scoring tool to objectively evaluate student growth.

Online Data Reporting Tool

Designed to demystify data collection, this online tool provides a worksheet to direct your efforts. After entering the data points and writing a brief narrative about your program, the system compiles the information and formats a report to empower not only your decision-making and planning process but also to assist with your reporting requirements to funders and reviewers. Visit www.whatworkscareerchoices.com/dataproject for additional details.

Get Focused...Stay Focused!™ Program Information

www.getfocusedstayfocused.org

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Get Focused...Stay Focused!™ Product Information

www.academicinnovations.com/gfsf

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