Equity means ensuring that personal or social circumstances such as protected class or intersecting identities are not obstacles to achieving one’s potential. Equity reflects policies, processes, and practices that both acknowledge that we live in a world where not all members are afforded the same resources, treatment, and opportunity, while also working to remedy this fact.

Ohio Strong Start to Finish

Ohio Strong Start to Finish (OhioSSF) is a coordinated effort between the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE), the Inter-University Council (IUC), the Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC), and 18 community colleges and 12 universities in Ohio that are dedicated to the project.

The overall goal: Is to significantly increase the number of students completing gateway mathematics and English courses as part of a guided pathway within their first academic year¹.

State of Ohio

- Currently, slightly more than 20,000 (33%) first-time students at participating colleges and universities complete college-level mathematics and English in their first year
- OhioSSF is committed to increasing that number to just over 31,000 (50%) by 2021
- OhioSSF is also committed to reducing equity gaps for:
  - Economically disadvantaged students (48% by 2021)
  - Students of color (51% by 2021)
  - Rural students (51% by 2021)
  - Students over age 25 (37% by 2021)

Each participating campus has agreed to undertake institutional efforts that will contribute to the overall OhioSSF goal. Specifically, they have committed to a) developing institutional goals, including specific goals to reduce equity gaps; b) assembling an institutional leadership team; c) participating in convenings and technical assistance activities; and, d) integrating the following four priority action areas on their campus²:

1. Ensuring that clearly structured programs of study exist for all majors;
2. Aligning redesigned gateway mathematics and English courses to all programs of study;
3. Implementing co-requisite remediation at scale in mathematics and English;
4. Building advising structures to ensure all students register for coursework in sequences to meet the goal.

Participating campuses are supported in their work through the OhioSSF Learning Network through Sova Solutions who will provide guidance on campus engagement practices needed to move change of this magnitude through an institution. Campuses will also be supported by sub-grants (Campus-Level Action and Success Supports, CLASS) to meet individual campus needs (e.g., institutional coaching, faculty/staff release time, or technical assistance from exemplars in Ohio or nationally)³.

¹-⁹ Data provided by ODHE Strong Start to Finish: https://www.ohiohighered.org/SSTF
¹⁰ Education Commission of the States: https://www.ecs.org/initiatives/strong-start-to-finish/
Facts to Note

⇒ Students should begin taking credit-earning courses in their first year of college. However, nationally, 50 percent of students at public two-year colleges and 40 percent of students at public four-year colleges failed to complete their developmental coursework within six years⁴.

⇒ Only 35 percent of four-year students in developmental education graduate within six years⁵.

⇒ Less than 10 percent of two-year students in developmental education graduate within three years⁶.

⇒ Strong Start to Finish is a network of like-minded individuals and organizations from the policy, research, and practice spaces who’ve come together for one reason – to help all students, not just the select few, find success in postsecondary education⁷.

⇒ Completion of credit-bearing work—with appropriate support—is key to equity⁸.

⇒ Recent research shows that many more students can succeed in college-level gateway courses than have historically been placed into them⁹.

⇒ Education Commission of the States and Strong Start to Finish work in coordination with diverse postsecondary leaders and practitioners to guide the initiative’s overall research and knowledge development activities¹⁰.

Our Workgroup

Kate Dailey (Lead), Associate Dean/Associate Professor, Firelands-Institutional Research

Theodore F. Rippey, Senior Vice Provost, Academic Affairs/Professor, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs

Brigette S. Gibson, Associate Director, Institutional Effectiveness, Office of the Provost

Cynthia Louise Roberts, Assistant Director, Services, Office of Student Retention

Tonisha L. Gordon, Assistant Director, Office of Multicultural Affairs

Lee Nickoson, Chair/Professor, English Department

Neil Baird, Associate Professor/Director of UWP, English Department

Kitty Burroughs, Teaching Professor/Associate Director of UWP, English Department

Michelle R. Heckman, Director of Math Emporium, Math and Statistics Department

DeVona Smith, Academic Advising, College of Arts and Sciences

Jeffrey W. Mangette, Assistant Registrar, Registrar

Victoria Ampiaw, Director, TRIO Programs

Megan M. Green, Assistant Teaching Professor, Firelands-Humanities

Andrew C. Hartke, Assistant Teaching Professor, Firelands-Math

¹⁻⁹ Data provided by ODHE Strong Start to Finish: https://www.ohiohighered.org/SSTF
¹⁰ Education Commission of the States: https://www.ecs.org/initiatives/strong-start-to-finish/