

Title: First Year Success Badge Program Proposal

Introduction: The First Year Success Badge Program is designed to guide first-year students through essential milestones in their academic journey. Modeled after the structured achievements of Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts, students earn badges by completing tasks that enhance their academic preparedness, engagement, and long-term planning. This initiative fosters a sense of accomplishment, community, and proactive learning while ensuring students are equipped with fundamental skills for collegiate success.

Program Objectives:

1. **Enhance Student Engagement** – Encourage active participation in academic planning.
2. **Develop Essential Skills** – Provide structured learning experiences to support student success.
3. **Promote Academic Confidence** – Empower students with knowledge to navigate university resources.
4. **Increase Retention and Completion Rates** – Guide students in making informed decisions about their academic pathways.

Structure of the Badge Program: Students will earn badges by completing various academic and personal development tasks throughout their First Year. These badges will be digital, displayed on student portals, and celebrated in semesterly recognition events.

Badge Categories and Requirements:

1. **Orientation Expert Badge**
 - Attend orientation
 - Meet with an academic advisor
 - Complete a campus resource scavenger hunt
2. **Audit Reader Badge**
 - Access and review degree audit
 - Identify degree requirements
 - Attend a workshop on course selection
3. **Graduation Planner Badge**
 - Develop a four-year graduation plan
 - Choose a tentative track or pathway
 - Meet with a career advisor to discuss long-term goals
4. **Campus Connector Badge**
 - Join at least one student organization
 - Attend two campus events
 - Engage in a mentorship program or peer support group
5. **Academic Resilience Badge**
 - Visit a tutoring center or writing lab
 - Attend a time management or study skills workshop
 - Reflect on academic challenges and submit a strategy plan
6. **Financial Literacy Badge**

- Attend a budgeting or financial aid workshop
 - Understand the cost of attendance and financial aid options
 - Submit a simple personal budget for the academic year
7. **Wellness Warrior Badge**
- Attend a mental health awareness session
 - Participate in a wellness activity (e.g., yoga, fitness class)
 - Identify campus wellness resources

Implementation Plan:

1. **Development Phase (6 months before launch):**
 - Collaborate with academic advisors, student affairs, and faculty to finalize badge requirements.
 - Develop an online platform for tracking progress.
 - Create promotional materials and training for program ambassadors.
2. **Pilot Phase (1 semester):**
 - Implement with a select group of First Year from spring NSO.
 - Use less badges that can be easily completed during the spring semester.
 - Gather feedback and make necessary adjustments.
3. **Full Rollout (Year 1):**
 - Launch with full fall ME NSO with incentives for completion.
 - Conduct ongoing assessment and improvement.

Assessment and Success Metrics:

- Tracking student engagement and badge completion rates.
- Surveying participants on perceived benefits.
- Comparing retention rates of participants vs. non-participants.
- Evaluating impact on academic performance and preparedness.

Conclusion: The First-Year Success Badge Program serves as an innovative and engaging way to guide new students through critical milestones in their first year. By offering structured goals and recognizing achievements, the program ensures that students build essential skills, form lasting connections, and take ownership of their academic success.