



# The First Year Experience Community Update

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## Cornerstone Faculty Feature



**Dr. Sara Dustin**

Professor of English and  
Cornerstone Experience

### **What do you enjoy most about teaching the Cornerstone Experience course?**

I've most enjoyed building bridges between my classes and learning more about our students here at FSW. I've been surprised how many times a topic that students introduced in my SLS class transferred over to my Composition II classes and vice versa. I also enjoyed having the opportunity to attend the Critical Thinking lectures with my students and to hear their responses in class later. My favorite memory of the semester is watching my students have fun with the engaging musical exhibit at the Rauschenberg Gallery.

### **Why did you choose to teach SLS 1515?**

As a long-time composition instructor, I have been very rooted in working with first-year students by teaching writing and research skills. I wanted to branch out to meet other first-year students that I might not have the chance to meet in my composition classes and learn more about their challenges and successes. I also appreciate the wonderful variety of topics that the course offers to enhance our students' experience not just in the classroom but also in their personal lives.

### **How did the course change you?**

I think I am learning as much as the students are! My SLS colleagues have been very generous in providing a treasure trove of additional information in the areas of financial literacy, stress and wellness management, and more. As a result, my students and I have benefitted and increased our awareness of these key concepts. I have also learned even more about the many support services offered to students at our college, and my classes have enjoyed visits with Career Services, Library Services, and the Writing Center.

## A Peer Architect's Perspective

### **What skills have you developed through completion of Cornerstone Experience class and by serving as a Peer Architect that will help you in the future?**

One skill that I was able to acquire being a Cornerstone student was the idea of financial literacy. With the assistance of Suncoast Credit Union, I was able to develop a strong habit of financial comprehension through saving and investing my earnings. As a Peer Architect, time management is a valued skill I acquired through my position. Being a full-time student and working two jobs, I struggled with scheduling and was not able to be an efficient student. Through my position as a Peer Architect, I was able to receive more training on time management and began to schedule accordingly which I will use in my future career and when working on my bachelor's degree this spring at Florida State University.

### **What have you enjoyed most about serving as a Peer Architect?**

The most rewarding part of this position was having the opportunity to learn alongside Cornerstone students in my assigned Cornerstone classes. As a Peer Architect, my job is to guide students to achieve and become successful during their first semester. I was able to equally absorb information and success tips from Cornerstone instructors and students.



**Junior Pierre-Louis**

Peer Architect

Fall 2016

# F Y E Programming

This fall, the Office of First Year Experience had upwards of **6,000** students sign-in for FYE Programming including academic workshops helping students build competencies in areas such as learning skills and techniques, academic technology, transition knowledge and skills, and key cognitive strategies. Over **1,500** students attended the Critical Thinking Lecture Series, and more than **900** students completed online workshops.



Critical Thinking Challenges



Emaze Presentation Tool Workshop

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**Growth Mindset, Critical Thinking Lecture with Professor Heather Olson**

Through FSW's Critical Thinking Lecture Series, community leaders, as well as faculty representing various disciplines, reached over 1,500 students. Below are several quantitative and qualitative measure of the fall 2016 lecture series.

### Student Participant Survey Data

**93.70%** of surveyed student participants "strongly agree" or "agree" that the speaker(s) were interesting and understandable.

**81.66%** of surveyed student participants "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that attending this event encouraged me to think critically about the topic under discussion.

N=1,047

### Student Testimonials

*"Engaging and educational, I liked how he related the topics to us and improving health at FSW."*

*"I liked how the speaker made it interactive and acted like we were part of an ancient civilization."*

*"The presentation was relatable on every level; personally, academically, and mentally. Truly inspiring!"*



**Critical Thinking in Ancient Egypt presented by Mr. Adrian Kerr**



**Critical Thinking: Healthy Team, Healthy Business with Mr. Scott Kashman, Lee Health**



**Critical Thinking in the Natural Sciences: How to Apply Science in Any Career**