Westfield State University sees the first year as a time of transition and growth in which new students find their place as engaged members of the diverse academic, civic and social communities at the University.

During this transition, students’ primary task is to come to understand the process and goals of college education, and to develop the skills and dispositions needed to succeed in college and beyond. Through liberal arts and sciences core curriculum and introductory majors’ courses, students build a broader understanding of different forms of knowledge. They deepen their ability to question their own knowledge and beliefs, becoming more nuanced critical thinkers. They learn to assess their own needs, access resources, and advocate for themselves in overcoming challenges in a new environment.

For many of Westfield’s new students, the transition to college is also a time of increased independence and interaction with people of diverse backgrounds, requiring new levels of personal responsibility, social awareness, and civic engagement. Co-curricular activities and residential experiences support students in strengthening their understanding of their roles in the university community and beyond.

We strive to foster and promote a collaborative and dynamic climate, one that honors and supports the contributions, perspectives, and needs of each first-year student. In this environment, we facilitate the intellectual, social, and ethical development required for successful transition to college by providing the following:

- Sustained and supportive engagement with staff, faculty, advisors and peers

- Intellectually challenging academic programs in the liberal arts and professional disciplines where the relationship between both is honored
- A range of pedagogical approaches to learning including both individual and collaborative strategies

- Academic advising and career guidance that invite students to explore academic and professional opportunities

- A residential program that provides students a safe and independent living experience were civic responsibility and engagement are encouraged and expected

- Student governance organizations, community service and service-learning opportunities that promote civic engagement

- A dynamic and enriching co-curricular environment offering services and programs that invite student engagement as contributors and leaders in a variety of educational, social, and governance activities