

Abstract Submitted
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Advancing Successful Physics Majors - The Physics First Year Seminar Experience. JASON DEIBEL¹, DOUGLAS PETKIE², Wright State University — In 2012, the Wright State University physics curriculum introduced a new year-long seminar course required for all new physics majors. The goal of this course is to improve student retention and success via building a community of physics majors and provide them with the skills, mindset, and advising necessary to successfully complete a degree and transition to the next part of their careers. This new course sequence assembles a new cohort of majors annually. To prepare each cohort, students engage in a variety of activities that span from student success skills to more specific physics content while building an entrepreneurial mindset. Students participate in activities including study skills, career night, course planning, campus services, and a department social function. More importantly, students gain exposure to programming, literature searches, data analysis, technical writing, elevator pitches, and experimental design via hands-on projects. This includes the students proposing, designing, and conducting their own experiments. Preliminary evidence indicates increased retention, student success, and an enhanced sense of community among physics undergraduate students. The overall number of majors and students eventually completing their physics degrees has nearly tripled.

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