

SPRING 2021

EAGLE FLIGHT PLAN

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WHAT'S NEW AT WINGS COLLEGE

Students are now engaging in an online world. To support this adjustment, Wings College has created a five-day welcome back event for Spring 2021. Read more about our initiative [here!](#)

ABOUT OUR INSTITUTION

Wings College

Wings College is a four-year liberal arts institution with a student population of 2,500. Each year, we welcome around 500 new students into our nest.

Here at Wings, we believe in the power of connection. To foster community within our program, we are partnering with a variety of offices across campus. Orientation Leaders serve as primary facilitators and peer leaders throughout the program as a pre-established connection to the college community for first-year students.

In light of expanded virtual opportunities, we aim to provide students with a meaningful week of programming and social connection in order to enhance their sense of belonging to Wings College.



OUR WHY

Students are craving connection during this virtual college experience. In order to connect them to each other and to campus resources, something must be done. Eagle Flight Plan is designed as a "choose your own adventure" style program in which students can pick and choose the sessions that will best serve their needs.

Each day will have a central theme that will help students engage with their peers while building skills to be successful.

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

- Provide students opportunities to strengthen their sense of belonging on campus through peer interaction
- Equip students with the knowledge of how to be successful
- Showcase the avenues for making friends on campus
- Connect students with resources to establish long-term connections to peers and Wings College
- Ultimately, a student who attends this program will be able to identify resources as well as build their skills and confidence to build relationships on campus

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Our program's social media campaign will utilize multiple communication networks to reach Wings College first-year students. Knowing that these students were previously added to a GroupMe with their Orientation Leader (OL) and the other first-year students in their Orientation group during Summer 2020, we will encourage the OLs who will be facilitating this program to reach out to their Orientation group and encourage their students to register and participate. The OLs will also be offered the opportunity to participate in a day-long social media "takeover" via the college's official Snapchat where they will share insight into the upcoming program and their role in it.

Each institutional office and student organization that plans to partner with us on this program will also promote the program on their own social media pages across multiple platforms including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok. These social media posts will feature the promotional video created by the program's organizers and the registration link for the program with the official program hashtag #HowlSoar heavily featured throughout. Because every student who registers for the program before its start date will receive a swag bag with a Wings College t-shirt and other promotional items, first-year students will have a tangible incentive to register and participate in the program.

MONDAY: CHARTING YOUR COURSE

GUIDING PRINCIPLE - COLLEGE STUDENT SENSE OF BELONGING

Students are “products of many years of complex interactions with their family of origin and cultural, social, political, and educational environments. Thus, some students more than others are better prepared academically and have greater confidence in their ability to succeed. At the same time, what they do during college—the activities in which they engage and the company they keep—can become the margin of difference as to whether they persist and realize their educational goals” (Kuh et al., 2006, p. 3).

FLOCK TIME

Our nightly Flock Times are the introduction to each night's activities. Led by the student's Orientation Leader, these small group meetings serve as an opportunity for connection throughout the week. These times provide space for students to reconnect with their Orientation group from Summer 2020 and have a constant group of peers with whom they can engage.

INCORPORATING LIFE DESIGN

Designing Your Life by Bill Burnett and Dave Evans served as our college's Fall 2020 common read. We plan to incorporate life design concepts and activities into our nightly Flock Time. The included activities are the Life Design Dashboard, Build your Compass, Good Time Journal, Mindmapping, Design Your Life Paths, and Prototyping. More information about these activities is available at <https://designingyour.life/resources-authorized/>.

OVERVIEW OF THE WEEK

During this time, the Orientation Leader will provide an overview of the week and its scheduled programming. They will also answer any questions students have about the week.

ICE BREAKERS & TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES

The remainder of Monday night will serve as an opportunity to connect as a small group through a variety of ice breakers, team building, and other get-to-know-you activities planned and facilitated by the Orientation Leader.

TIMELINE

6:00 - 6:30 PM
FLOCK TIME

6:30 - 7:00 PM
OVERVIEW OF THE WEEK

7:00 - 7:30 PM
**ICE BREAKERS / GETTING
TO KNOW EACH OTHER
ACTIVITIES**

7:30 - 8:00 PM
TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES

TUESDAY: TENDING TO YOUR WINGS

INFLUENCING

Students will go into breakout rooms with other students (5-6 per group) to talk about their hobbies and interests, perhaps "influencing" others to learn about a new hobby. One returning student will be present to offer advice on how to do those things on campus. They will also have a list of student organizations to connect their interest with.

AFFINITY GROUPS

Affinity groups, run by current students, will help first-year students talk about their experiences on campus and build connections to their flock. There will be a breakout rooms for the following groups: BIPOC, LGBTQ+, First- Gen, Out-of-State, and In-State

EXERCISE

Virtual group exercise class for everyone to learn skills to repeat in their own spaces. Each breakout room will feature a different type of exercise: physical, mindfulness, and emotional.

TIMELINE

Each 30-minute block will give students the opportunity to interact with different wellness topics: fun, community, and exercise.

6:00-6:30
FLOCK TIME

6:30-7:00
WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN (INFLUENCING)

7:00-7:30
BUILDING COMMUNITY WITH AFFINITY GROUPS

7:30-8:00
LET'S GET ACTIVE!

BACKING IT UP WITH RESEARCH

Research shows that building a supportive community will help students adapt to transition (Schlossberg, 1981). By having different options to build this community through wellness topics, we are ensuring all students will have the opportunity to engage. We interpret "wellness" to mean building support on campus through influencing, community, and exercise.

Schlossberg's transition theory (1981) shows that when people experience a transition (event/non-event) they need to build coping skills to better handle the next transition. They also tend to cope better if they have a community of support. This session will allow for community and skill-building.

Renn and Reason (2012) shared that "students engaged in educationally and developmentally meaningful activities will benefit accordingly" (p. 198).

Students who were able to create stronger support among their peers through and having more diverse viewpoints increased their cognitive growth (Mayhew, et al., 2016).

Elfman (2020) explains that having a supportive environment and quality interaction are indicators that show a strong positive correlation to persistence.

WEDNESDAY: WHAT'S YOUR WHY?

GUIDING THEORIES - SELF-AUTHORSHIP AND LIFE DESIGN

According to Baxter Magolda's theory of self-authorship, many students come to college with their personal and professional pathways dictated by external authorities, and they have not yet been pushed to reflect on whether these values and goals are really their own until they face a developmental crossroads (Patton et al., 2016). First-year students may or may not have reached a similar crossroads before coming to college, but the activities outlined below are aimed at helping students reflect on their values and goals and will be beneficial to students who are at various stages of self-authorship development.

Similar to self-authorship theory, life design encourages students to break free from the expectations of others and to create a life that aligns with their own values and skills (Burnett & Evans, 2016). This is done by bringing design thinking principles including curiosity, bias to action, reframing, awareness, and radical collaboration to one's personal and professional development (Burnett & Evans, 2016). The group activities outlined below will utilize these strategies to help students develop their collegiate goals.

CREATE YOUR OWN ELI EAGLE

"We all have different reasons for pursuing this major but are still part of the same community!"

Students will be put into breakout rooms in which their assignment will be to create a collage representing the life of their college mascot if they were a student within their major. Students will draw on their own experiences and interests using guiding questions as prompts to create their version of Eli Eagle. Students will then share out in the main room and participate in a discussion facilitated by their OL.

MAP YOUR PATH TO SUCCESS

"Sometimes we all struggle on the way to our goals, but by reaching out for help, we can keep moving forward!"

Students and their OL will be joined by a student tutor from the Learning Commons who will give a brief overview of the services they offer. Students will be put into new breakout rooms in which they will be given a scenario involving a student who is struggling. Together, they will create a plan for success for their student before coming back to the main room to share.

PROTOTYPING 101

"Anything you want to try, whether it is a new major, extracurricular activity, or career path, can be explored in 15 minutes with under \$15 using prototyping!"

Students and their OL will be joined by a staff member from the Career Center who will introduce the concept of prototyping. Students will be put into new breakout rooms to brainstorm what they would like to prototype and how they would do it. Students will then be brought back to the main room to share out and have the opportunity to have a Career Center staff member follow up with them at the end of the month.

TIMELINE

Students will be separated into Zoom rooms based on their major, including a Zoom room for undecided students. An Orientation Leader (OL) within the same major will lead each activity.

6:00 - 6:30 PM
FLOCK TIME

6:30 - 7:00 PM
CREATE YOUR OWN
ELI EAGLE

7:00 - 7:30 PM
MAP YOUR PATH TO
SUCCESS

7:30 - 8:00 PM
PROTOTYPING 101

THURSDAY: GETTING INVOLVED

WHY GET INVOLVED?

Join us for a student leader panel to hear from your peers!

We know that peer engagement is key and who best for new students to learn from than their involved peers! This panel will feature students from a variety of organizations across campus. The following questions will be included, while also saving time for first-year students to ask questions as well:

- In what organizations are you involved?
- What made you get involved in your organization? (connection to student involvement theory and agency)
- How has your involvement impacted your sense of belonging to campus?
- What do you wish you would have known before getting involved?

TIMELINE

6:00 - 6:30 PM
FLOCK TIME

6:30 - 7:00 PM
WHY GET INVOLVED?

7:00 - 8:00 PM
CHOOSE YOUR FLIGHT: STUDENT ORG EDITION

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Join breakout rooms to learn more about various types of student organizations!

There will be a number of representatives from various student organizations including academic-based groups such as honor societies/clubs, fraternity and sorority life, identity-based groups, club sports, and special interest groups. These representatives will be broken into categories so that, for example, if a student is interested in fraternity and sorority life, they can join that room and learn about all of the councils at Wings College and ways to get involved.

Each student organization category will be given a breakout room and student participants will have the opportunity to bounce from room to room depending on their interests. Each breakout room will be tasked with coming up with an engaging activity to not only share about their type of student organization, but also to build community in that space as well.

GUIDING THEORY: STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

Student involvement theory "emphasizes active participation by the student in the learning process" (Astin, 1984, p. 301). Students have agency when it comes to student involvement and how/if they choose to get involved. We wanted them to have choices on this night of our program to capitalize on this concept.

Strange and Banning (2015) believed that there were connections between a student's getting involved and fitting in on campus. Thursday night's programming is centered on this notion and aims to help students establish or strengthen some connections to others in order to help them feel a greater sense of belonging.

FRIDAY: LATE NIGHT PROGRAMMING

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



To close out our Eagle Flight Plan program, we are inviting Ashanti Branch to be our keynote, motivational speaker.

Ashanti Branch is on a mission to change the way that students interact with their education and the way schools interact with students. After being featured in The Mask You Live In documentary, Ashanti launched the #MillionMaskMovement to connect people all over the world in a self-reflective experience that helps people visualize and realize, "I am not alone."

Mr. Branch will speak about how to help our young people, adults, and community gain a deeper understanding of how much we have in common. People all over the world can understand the concept of wearing a mask and working hard to ignore those things in our lives that we don't think people would understand. More information about Ashanti Branch and his organization, Ever Forward, is available at <https://everforwardclub.org/>.

STUDENT ORGANIZATION PROGRAMMING

Wings University student organizations will have the opportunity to plan a program or event in addition to Thursday's Choose Your Flight program. This additional programming opportunity gives students the chance to explore additional student organizations they may not have had time to connect with before.

LATE NIGHT VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING

Our final evening of programming includes a variety of interactive and social activities including virtual caricatures, trivia, and a paint-along session.

TIMELINE

6:00 - 6:30 PM
FLOCK TIME

6:30 - 7:30 PM
**CLOSING KEYNOTE
SPEAKER**

7:30 - 9:00 PM
**STUDENT ORGANIZATION
PROGRAMMING**

8:00 - 10:00 PM
**LATE NIGHT VIRTUAL
PROGRAMMING**



We grounded our program in concepts of design thinking and student development theory in order to create a transformational social experience.

CONNECTION TO SUPPLEMENTAL SOURCES

We believe that life design is a valuable framework for promoting students' personal and professional development. It involves five key mind-sets that emphasize bringing design thinking principles to the creation of a life that aligns with one's values and skills (Burnett & Evans, 2016). These mind-sets include curiosity, bias to action, reframing, awareness, and radical collaboration (Burnett & Evans, 2016). In the hands of students, these mind-sets become tools for them to reflect on their goals, question their assumptions about themselves and the world, and forge new paths forward when they come up against barriers. By integrating life design into our program, we aspire to help students chart their course from their first year to graduation.

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