Introduction

The Entering Student Program (ESP) focuses on assisting entering first-year and transfer students with successfully transitioning to The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). To help students develop their UTEP Edge, ESP offers several opportunities to participate in Edge High-Impact Practices (HIPs). The first HIP is UNIV 1301 Seminar in Critical Inquiry, a core curriculum course in UTEP’s Component Area Option. ESP teaches UNIV 1301 sections designated for first-year students with fewer than 30 semester credit hours and also offers UNIV 1301 sections for transfer students who are in their first or second semester at UTEP and who have earned 30 or more semester credit hours. ESP also offers learning communities (linked courses), a second Edge HIP, to help students make academic and social connections in their first year at UTEP. Another key component of ESP is the peer leader program, which prepares and supports students who serve as members of the instructional team for UNIV courses. Peer leaders work in the classroom as on-campus student employees, a third UTEP Edge HIP.

In the summer, ESP administers UTEP Prep, a summer bridge program designed to help first-year students’ transition from high school to UTEP during the summer following their high school graduation. In UTEP Prep, students learn to use campus resources and become engaged university students while enrolled in 2 required courses taught in a 6-week summer term. To learn more about UTEP Prep, please visit (https://www.utep.edu/utepprep/).

Two additional programs ESP administers are Miners on Track and the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) (http://camp.utep.edu/). Both programs are funded by U.S. Department of Education grants and are designed to support student success in the first-year of college and beyond.

University Course

University 1301 Seminar for Critical Inquiry is a 3-credit hour core curriculum course created to help students make a successful start at UTEP. Entering students will build on their talents, skills, and experiences in UNIV 1301 to successfully transition to the University. This course is designed to engage students intellectually in a specific academic topic, which will further develop their knowledge and skills, as well as their connection with the UTEP community. Students should read the description for each UNIV 1301, and then register for the section with a theme that interests them. Although the themes vary from section to section, all UNIV 1301 sections will help students achieve the following:

• Develop and apply elements of leadership through effective individual participation and meaningful team collaboration to empower them to be agents of change.
• Examine the roles and responsibilities crucial for their success in college and beyond.
• Identify, assess, and build on their strengths and experiences to develop academic and transitional strategies necessary for success in their academic, career and life goals.
• Engage in research and critical thinking activities that demonstrate their ability to effectively integrate their learning within, across and beyond academic settings.
• Engage in campus and community activities to increase their sense of academic and social belonging.

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Entering Student Program Learning Communities

The Entering Student Program also coordinates learning communities for entering students. Learning communities connect students through linked courses. Students enrolled in learning communities attend two or three courses together; for example, a "community" of students might be enrolled together in an English and a history class. Sharing courses in this way increases students’ opportunities to make friends, form study groups, work closely with faculty, and connect ideas across courses. Learning community courses are identified in class schedule each Fall Semester.