



e2i

**EXCEPTIONALISM
IN EDUCATION INITIATIVE**

STUDENT HANDBOOK

What is E2i?

The Exceptionalism in Education Initiative (E2i) at North Carolina A&T State University (NC A&T) is a program designed to provide support to students in their academic journey, with a focus on developing study, leadership, and professional skills. The primary objectives of the initiative are to:

- create a transformative educational experience that positively impacts students' future and
- enhance student GPAs, retention rates, internship placement, graduation rates, and employment prospects.

The E2i program was launched in the Spring of 2023 and specifically designed to support first- and second-year students in the College of Engineering and the Deese College of Business and Economics to build study, leadership, and professional skills and improve student GPAs, retention rates, internship placement, graduation rates, and employment. E2i recognizes the immense potential within each student and aims to provide a personalized support system to foster their personal, academic, and professional growth. By tailoring interventions and resources to meet the unique needs of each student, E2i aims to empower them to unlock their full potential and thrive throughout their educational journey at North Carolina A&T State University.

The E2i website is ncate2i.com.

Benefits

Participation in the program will include:

1. Group sessions to discuss self-efficacy, leadership, and career planning
2. Skills building to prepare students for their academics and professional careers
3. Social outings to build peer relationships and community on campus
4. Community impact projects to earn community service hours and expand connections to the greater Greensboro community
5. An assigned mentor who is a professional to provide one-on-one support throughout their academic career
6. Opportunities to apply for internships within the program and support to secure internship opportunities both within and outside of the program

The E2i Model

The E2i model was designed to include the following components across the course of the program:

- Ubuntu: I Am Because We Are
- The Goals of Ubuntu: I Am Because We Are include:
- Facilitating workshops and programs that promote bonds with current students and Alumni
- Developing formal and informal programs that help students get to know one another
- Facilitating programs and events that promote students becoming more acclimated to NC A&T History and Traditions, especially points of pride in industry-specific achievements
- Promoting brotherhood and sisterhood bonds by encouraging and uplifting each other through peer support

Student Success/Academic Planning

Goals for Student Success component include:

- Facilitating workshops/activities that assist students in developing basic academic skills
- Facilitating professional mentoring sessions
- Encouraging students to focus on goal mapping, self-responsibility, self-motivation, self-management, self-awareness, self-esteem, and interdependence
- Facilitating workshops and programs that enrich students' transition to life in college and after college
- Encouraging major selection and career exploration and planning
- Encouraging networking events with Alumni and community partners

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion/Global Awareness

The Goals of Diversity & Inclusion/Global Awareness include:

- Facilitating workshops and programs that enrich students' global perspective and universal awareness
- Facilitating programs that encourage sensitivity and understanding of equity and diversity issues
- Encouraging programs and conversations around social justice and social change
- Encouraging programs that promote study abroad/domestic exchange
- Encouraging community standards that promote inclusion and acceptance of all students

Community Service/Service Learning

Community Service/Service Learning Goals include:

- Enhancing the academic mission of the college by integrating service learning and community service with the academic course work
- Facilitating workshops and programs that enrich students' leadership experience by linking students to the Community Service Learning Program
- Providing opportunities for students to gain leadership experience through service-learning initiatives with campus and community partners
- Capstone: embracing "learning by doing" to ensure students master the skills they're taught in the classroom. During the capstone experience, called iMPACT, students have experiential learning opportunities and are challenged to put their learning to work on real community needs and partner with organizations in the Triad that promote the growth and development of the local community.

Academic Success

Goals for Academic Success include:

- Facilitating workshops and programs that enrich students' academic experience by linking curricular learning to co-curricular learning
- Encouraging a love for learning by bringing in academic support services within peer groups
- Encouraging the utilization of the halls as group meeting and study space

Gender Empowerment

Goals for Gender Empowerment include:

- Facilitating workshops and programs to educate students on how social structures and public policies maintain an inequitable world for women and LGBTQIA+ populations and learn how to combat those ideologies
- Encouraging discussions around existing racial and gender disparities in business, economics, and engineering
- Encouraging discussions around inter-generational poverty cycles and understanding historical inequities
- Wellness & Well-being
- Goals for Wellness & Well-being include:
- Facilitating workshops and programs to educate students on a variety of spiritual endeavors as well as meditation/reflection exercises
- Facilitating workshops and programs that enrich students' physical wellness with the intent of promoting a well-balanced lifestyle

Overall Outcomes

The overall outcomes of the E2i program are that by participating in E2i, students should:

- develop their identity from the perspective of gender;
- increase self-awareness by acknowledging personal strengths and weaknesses;
- identify career and personal goals;
- demonstrate leadership skills;
- demonstrate abilities to maintain balance between academic and personal life;
- develop skills for academic and personal health and learn how to prioritize self-care;
- identify ways that social structures and public policies maintain an inequitable world for people with historically marginalized identities and learn how to combat those ideologies;
- expand their knowledge of and be able to identify resources and programs to address those concerns;
- learn how to communicate, both written and orally, effectively; and
- acquire skills to develop meaningful, healthy relationships to sustain them through difficult times.

Standards of Conduct/Group Agreements

- Privacy is key
- Challenge ideas...don't attack people
- Use 'I' Statements (speak from your experience not for entire groups or communities of people)
- Ask questions as necessary
- Engage in active listening
- Have empathy for self and others
- This is a brave space for authentic dialogue
- Have fun! This is about building new connections

The E2i Cohort Structure

- This exclusive program is offered to select first and second-year students at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University with majors in either Business and Economics or Engineering
- The Deans of the two colleges determine eligibility for E2i in December of each year and send invitations to apply to eligible students at the end of the fall semester
- Participants commit to attending regular on-campus programming (6 sessions per semester for 4 semesters) and participating in community service projects with their E2i peers
- Participants will be connected with a professional in their field for one-on-one mentoring with whom they can build an ongoing relationship through graduation
- E2i sponsors at least one social event per semester open to all active participants
- Current schedule available online: ncate2i.com/schedule/

Evaluation

The E2i evaluation focuses on tracking students' progress as well as assessing the program based on the intended outcomes. The evaluation is also used for continuous program improvements by getting input from students in different ways. The design of this evaluation was intentionally created with attention given to the cultural history of HBCUs and the black students they serve including the history of former experiences with research and the cultural focus on storytelling to build an evaluation that will be supportive, not detrimental, to NC A&T University and its students. The evaluator built off of successes learned through the Campus Equity Project with NCCASA which worked with eight HBCUs in NC to incorporate data collection methods and focus indicators. The first group of evaluation interns have influenced the evaluation to ensure it is student-centered. These interns have given input on the evaluation plan as well as the evaluation methods, data collection tool design, and data analysis.

Internships

E2I STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC)

The SAC is an incredible leadership opportunity for students in the Exceptionalism in Education Initiative. SAC members are empowered to use their voices to shape and inform education decisions that directly impact the E2I program.

This is a one-year service commitment.

SAC interns:

- Serve as listening leaders for their peers, then act as advocates for improved education programming and experiences by sharing concerns with people and organizations in the position to make needed improvements.
- Elevate E2I ideas, practices, and impact to broader audiences by co-planning, hosting, and facilitating virtual and in-person meetings with stakeholders, speaking on panels and collaboratively creating E2I programming and more.
- Serve as thought leaders and agents of change within their classrooms, communities, and world.

Why do students join the Student Advisory Council?

SAC interns gain skills that prove invaluable to postsecondary success:

- Communication
- Leadership
- Advocacy
- Collaboration
- Public Speaking
- Relationship-Building
- Listening

Time commitment: 5-10 hours per month during the semester

EVALUATION INTERNS

Are you interested in having a say in how the E2I program is evaluated? Do you want to learn how to design tools, collect data, analyze data, and create engaging visual reports?

A team of four evaluation interns will work closely with the Lead Evaluator and Evaluation Assistant to actively collaborate on and contribute to the plans for and design of the evaluation. These interns will also provide input and support evaluation tool creation, assist in organizing and entering data, and support data analysis. The reports we create with the analyzed data will include graphs and visuals to represent our results and the interns will have the opportunity to learn data visualization and support the creation of these visuals. When we move into qualitative evaluation such as interviews and focus groups, interns will have the opportunity to co-facilitate focus groups and/or conduct key informant interviews.

Due to the vast amount of opportunities for interns to engage in evaluation, the Lead Evaluator and Evaluation Assistant will work with the interns selected to identify their areas of interest and areas of related experience and divide the work accordingly. All interns will be given support and training and will be required to do some amount of data entry in addition to their other tasks.

Time commitment- 5-10 hours per week during the semester

SOCIAL MEDIA COMMITTEE

A team of four social media interns will lead the charge in marketing the E2I program via social media channels. The team will develop our social media presence by determining the best platforms to reach future prospective students, developing a social media strategy and publication calendar, and producing and publishing content accordingly. You will work directly with Amy Eller, E2I Marketing and Tech Specialist to establish the brand voice for the program, create posts that align with the E2I brand voice and core values, and eventually train new interns from the next cohort as they join the social media team.

Time commitment: ~3 hours per week during the semester