Foundations of Excellence is a comprehensive, externally guided self-study and improvement process for the first year that enhances an institution’s ability to realize its goals for student learning, success, and persistence. The centerpiece of Foundations of Excellence is a model for first-year excellence comprised of a set of principles, Foundational Dimensions, developed by the Policy Center on the First Year of College and vetted by over 300 four- and two-year institutions. These principles will guide the measurement of Morgan’s efforts and provide a model for the entirety of the beginning college experience from initial contact with potential students through admissions, orientation, and all first year curricular and co-curricular experiences.

As we welcome the class of 2011, Morgan State University is beginning a broad assessment of all components of our approach to the first year experience. Over the past 25 years, many colleges and universities have acknowledged the importance of the first year of college to student persistence. We are excited that the University is participating in the Foundations of Excellence process which will help us develop a more comprehensive approach to the Morgan student’s first year.

What does this mean for your sons and daughters? It means that Morgan State University is committed to providing Morgan students with a first year experience that will provide a foundation for their academic excellence and persistence to their ultimate goal of earning an undergraduate degree. We hope the Foundations process will be a springboard for a more effective Morgan freshman/sophomore experience. This issue will highlight the Foundations of Excellence process and some of our student first-year experiences that have already been successful.

Our staff, Dr. Tiffany Beth McMillan, Director, Ms. Sarah D. Adams, Retention Specialist, Dr. Denicia Fowler, Retention Specialist, Ms. Diane Wise, Administrative Assistant, and the retention specialists in each of the schools and colleges continue to strive to provide you with the information that you need to support and assist your student from matriculation to graduation. As always, we look forward to receiving your comments and suggestions!
Committee has begun with a campus audit of the first year (the Current Practices Inventory), will continue with a nine- to twelve-month process of evaluation using the Foundational Dimensions and related performance indicators, and culminate in the development of an action plan for campus improvement. The benefits of Morgan's participa-
tion in Foundations of Excellence include:

- undertaking a broad assessment of all components of our campus’s approach to the first year of college
- experiencing the benefits of “task-force/committee-based assess-
ment” which uses a variety of data sources including the professional judgment of task force members
- building a comprehensive improvement and action plan for the first year that acknowledges both institutional strengths and weaknesses
- working directly with leading experts in the field of student success and student retention
- having the opportunity for net-
working with other participating campuses

The campus environment – how an institution structures the new student experience – plays an important role in determining how students spend their time, how they engage in learning, and whether they decide to return for the second year or even the next semester. The first year of college for students is critical to persist-
ence to graduation. The Foundations of Excellence process for Morgan State University will enable Morgan to thoroughly examine our campus environment and to consider findings to students, student level input and outcomes data. By focusing on what we control, we can take immediate steps to build on our strengths and improve upon our weaknesses. As a comprehensive process, Foundations of Excellence goes beyond limited analysis of dis-
crete components of the first year; instead it acknowledges the inter-
connected nature of many compo-
nents of the student experience. Some of the expected outcomes of the process for Morgan are:

- revitalization of our approach to the first year of college
- movement away from a piecemeal approach to the first year toward an intentional comprehensive approach
- increased involvement of faculty, in addition to other constituent groups, in first-year reform efforts
- a plan for change leading to significant first-year improvements
- and, ultimately and most importantly, an increase in the retention of Morgan State University students to graduation.

Yes, we are excited about our par-
ticipation in the Foundations of Excellence process! It is part of our continuing efforts to make Morgan State University, Maryland’s premier Public Urban University. We hope you will be excited also!

**OFFICE OF RESIDENCE LIFE (ORL) ACADEMIC ENRICH-
MENT PROGRAM (AEP) -STU-
DENT SUCCESS IS OUR GOAL!!**

The Office of Residence Life (ORL) Academic Enrichment Program (AEP) makes services and support available for students to build and maintain their academic standing and progress. The AEP pro-
vides free tutoring, computer labs, academic workshops and events especially for the students residing in the residence halls. Students may visit computer labs in O’Connell Hall, Cummings House, Bloant Towers and Harper-Tahman House to use a computer, find quiet study space or receive tutoring on a drop-
in basis. Regular computer lab hours for tutoring in all subjects are:

Sunday-Thursday, 12 noon to 12 midnight
Friday and Saturday, 12 noon to 3pm

From 8am to 10am in Bloant Towers and O’Connell Hall, students can have an AEP tutor proofread their papers and print them. This support is especially helpful to first-year students who often live away from home for the first time. The experience of adjusting to new classes, new professors, new room-
mates, new responsibilities, etc. can be overwhelming. Having upper-class stu-
dents, as well as University staff, avail-
able in the residence halls to advise, assist and tutor them is invaluable to their acculturation.

AEP tracks the grades of residen-
tial students in order to respond to stu-
dent needs. New and returning resi-
dential students who earn GPA’s below 2.0 are mandated to receive tutoring services from AEP staff during the Spring semester. This help is in place to ensure that students are eligible to reapply for housing the following Fall semester. (Applying for campus hous-
ing does not guarantee placement. Housing is extremely limited.)

**AEP SCHOLARS GROUP**

The AEP Scholars Group is a program that begins in the summer for students who are ineligible to reapply for housing due to a GPA that is below 2.0. This group will be eligible to receive housing assistance