CONTENTS

E-Source Welcomes a New Editor

The staff of the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition is happy to welcome Christina Hardin as the new editor of *E-Source for College Transitions.* Hardin will serve a three-year term. She brings a wealth of practical insight to the position, having held both teaching and administrative posts at the college level. Currently, Hardin serves as the director of the New Student Experience at Valencia College in Orlando, Florida, where she has worked since 2006. In addition to this position, she has served the college in a number of roles, including a tenured English instructor at the Osceola Campus, Faculty Association President and Division Coordinator for Communications at Osceola Campus, lead representative for the College's English assessment work, faculty leader for the Quality Enhancement Plan development, and faculty leader of the PRESS for Completion Grant. Hardin holds a bachelor's degree in psychology, master's degree in English language arts education for community college teaching, and a doctor of education in curriculum and instruction from the University of Central Florida. She also earned graduate certificates in community college education and professional writing. Hardin has presented at state and national conferences in the areas of assessment, faculty development, epistemic and ability beliefs, and academic achievement.

The primary purpose of *E-Source* is to provide practical strategies for supporting student learning and success. The new editor welcomes your submissions on a range of topics, including first-year pedagogy; support programs for students in transition or for addressing the needs of special student populations; and strategies for assessing student learning, experiences, programs, and courses, among others.

Intentional Precollege Programs Address College Access and Achievement Gap

Terainer Brown
Program Manager, SoColo
REACH

University of Colorado
Colorado Springs

At alarming rates, students in Southern Colorado are falling behind their peers in the northern part of the state with respect to college matriculation (University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, 2015). In the 23-county region of southeastern Colorado, about 19% of adults have earned bachelor's degrees or higher (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). By comparison, the state's largest metropolitan area, Denver, reports 35.6% of its population are college graduates (Brough, Door, & Jordan, 2009). Additionally, Colorado has a 36% gap in postsecondary degree

Engineering-intent students learn the computer science and technology involved in operating the manikins used by the UCCS Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

attainment between White and Hispanic/Latino citizens, the second largest ethnic group in the nation (Colorado Department of Higher Education, 2009). This disparity has gained the attention of policy makers, educational leaders, and the community at large. For this reason, the University of Colorado System (CU System) has proposed an enhanced use of precollege programing to improve access to and success in college.

Originally funded by a U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) Grant, SoColo REACH was designed to increase access to and awareness of higher education in southern Colorado among nontraditional, first-generation, veteran, and underrepresented student populations. While these efforts are important, programs that create better access and awareness alone are not enough; educators and policy makers must be equally concerned with efforts to ensure that students from underrepresented backgrounds are prepared to do college-level work (Complete College America, 2012).

As such, SoColo REACH has been redesigned to help close the bridge to nowhere (Complete College America, 2012) — that is, to eliminate the need for academic and social remediation in college. These efforts are approached through career exploration workshops, a summer institute that prepares students to focus on a career pathway, a career-focused concurrent enrollment program, as well as ongoing support to monitor and advise students as they transition through high school into the college major of their choice. In addition to the program description, this article shares data collected during a summer bridge program at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS) and discusses how these data were used in the design and expansion of SoColo REACH.

SoColo's 2014 Summer Program

Students who complete college credits prior to graduating from high school have greater college entrance matriculation rates and persist through their first-year experience with greater success (Complete College America, 2012). SoColo REACH was launched as the Jumpstart to College summer program, which provided students with an opportunity to participate in an intense academic strategies course designed to

> "Efforts [to] create better access and awareness alone are not enough; educators and policy makers must be equally concerned with efforts to ensure that students from underrepresented backgrounds are prepared to do college-level work."

give them tools to be more academically successful as they work toward college attendance. With the support of the FIPSE grant, UCCS hosted 23 high school juniors and seniors on campus for a week-long experience as college students. Participants earned one college credit for completing the program. They also received success coaching and academic advising toward their college and career interest from the Office of the First Year Experience. While Jumpstart provided students with exposure to the college environment, its efforts were only the beginning of a series of steps to assist underrepresented student groups in successfully matriculating into the college environment.

In partnership with the UCCS Teach Program and the UCCS Family Development Center, rising 10th graders designed curriculum and presented science lessons to elementary school students.

One of the primary goals of the Jumpstart summer program was to help the students and their families become more possibility-minded around the idea of college entrance and completion. As a result, a pre-program survey instrument was designed to better understand students' attitudes about attending college (University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, 2015). On a 5-point scale, students were asked to rate a series of questions that were designed to measure their attitudes toward college and associated plans of attending college after high school (Table 1).

Table 1
Plans After High School

Plans After High School	% Endorsed
Do not plan to finish	n/a
Get GED instead	n/a
Join military	0%
Apprentice/job training	54%
Attend career/tech school	54%
Attend community college	62%
Attend four-year university	92%
Get/keep current job	100%
Undecided	n/a
Other (Travel)	n/a
Take time off from school	38%

Note. Mean rating is on a Likert-type scale where 1 = not likely at all to do this activity after high school, 2 = somewhat likely, 3 = likely, 4 = very likely, 5 = definitely going to do this after high school. A rating score of 3 or above was considered to be an endorsed item. (University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, 2015)

"SoColo REACH will begin with a four-week summer institute for rising high school sophomores, referred to as SoColo Scholars, who will be supported throughout their high school years and as they transition into full-time, first-year college students."

The mean of the students' scores were calculated by recording responses that were greater than three. In general, students' attitudes toward going to college reflected a positive tendency; either agreeing or strongly agreeing that going to college is important (University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, 2015). These data helped inform Jumpstart's curriculum and programmatic decisions. For example, since a large number of students indicated plans to continue employment while in college, students were strategically exposed to first-year undergraduate students who could speak to their experiences working on campus.

SoColo REACH: Simple, Coherent, and Comprehensive

In its new form, SoColo REACH lays out a simple, coherent, and comprehensive career-focused pathway model designed to increase the rigor and intentionality in early college programing. As a continuation and expansion of the original SoColo work, the SoColo team is particularly interested in affecting two factors associated with the college the transition experience: (a) academic preparation and (b) cognitive development. For this reason, the SoColo team has built a logic model that guides the development of programs and activities supporting the SoColo REACH's theory of change.

Under the redesign, SoColo REACH will begin with a four-week summer institute for rising high school sophomores, referred to as SoColo Scholars, who will be supported throughout their high school years and as they transition into full-time, first-year college students. During the summer program, students participate in a series of support activities noted in Figure 1.
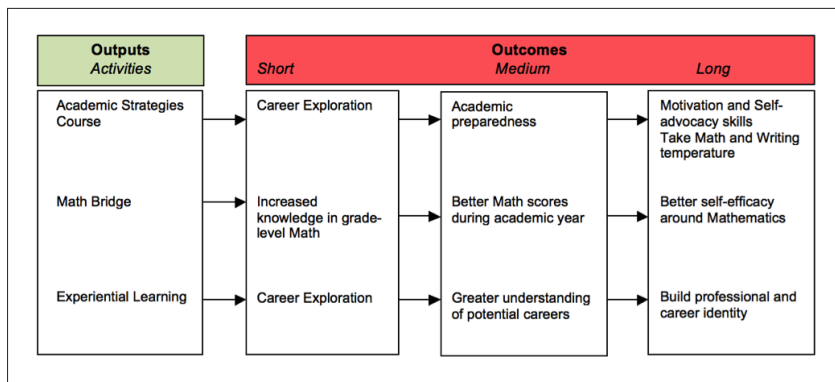

Figure 1. SoColo Summer Institute's outputs and outcomes.

Beyond the summer program, students will enroll in three years of career-focused concurrent enrollment at UCCS based on their college and career trajectory. Classes are either offered in their high school, with UCCS faculty, or at UCCS. At the completion of this three-year program, students will have earned up to 27 college credits while simultaneously earning credit toward high school graduation. Each year, the concurrent

enrollment courses become more rigorous while the student support measures slowly decrease in intensity, allowing for more academic autonomy. Transition coaches are heavily involved in the program and are responsible for reaching out to their student caseload to ensure that measures of support are in place to facilitate student and program success and commitment. The role of the transition coach was adopted from popular success coaching models used widely to retain many first-year college students. Each summer, students will participate in summer academies designed to foster academic readiness and resilience in preparation for their full-time college transition experience.

The primary goal of the SoColo REACH is to prepare scholars to enter their identified major with competence, confidence, and without the need for social or academic remediation. This model can be used as a template to assist in the design of career-focused concurrent enrollment programs or in efforts to bridge the gap between high school and postsecondary education. While many programs are successfully offering concurrent enrollment options, most are not paying attention to the students' individual career trajectory (Complete College America, 2012). This careful attention to the students' individual career and academic plan may prepare students to make the transition into higher education more seamlessly. Strong career-focused concurrent enrollment programs may have the ability to transform students' belief in their ability to attend college and provide subsequent mobility to those who are academically and socially underprepared for postsecondary education.

References

Brough, K., Door, T., & Jordan, S. (2009, November 20). Denver's talent dividend. *Denver Post*. Retrieved from http://www.denverpost.com/headlines/ci_13827829

Colorado Department of Higher Education (2009). *SURDS fall enrollment*. Retrieved from http://highered.colorado.gov/Data/SURDSDoc.html

Complete College America. (2012). *Remediation: Higher education's bridge to nowhere*. Indianapolis, IN: Author. Retrieved from http://www.completecollege.org/docs/CCA-Remediation-final.pdf

U.S. Census Bureau. (2009). *American Community Survey 2006-2008*. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data/pums.html

University of Colorado Colorado Springs. (2015). *FIPSE Project Final Report P116B100139*. Colorado Springs, CO: Author, Office of the Chancellor.

Contact

Terainer Brown
tbrown12@uccs.edu

Related Articles in *E-Source*

Hamilton, L., Jr., & Smith, K. (2012). Summer bridge: A comprehensive college outreach program helps at-risk, first-year students success. *10*(1), 9.

Schreyer, J., & Erickson, J. (2010). Providing avenues for success: Piloting a developmental learning lab for at-risk first-year students. *7*(3), 9.

Strayhorn, T. L. (2009). Bridging the gap from high school to college for at-risk first-year students. *6*(3), 9.

Interdisciplinary Teams Are the Heart of Guttman's First-Year Experience Program

Nicola Blake
Assistant Professor, Liberal Arts and Sciences Coordinator

Stella and Charles Guttman Community College
New York, NY

At the Stella and Charles Guttman Community College, the first new community college in the City University of New York system in 40 years, the First Year Experience (FYE) is designed around interdisciplinary learning communities. These learning communities provide the foundation for achieving Guttman's institutional learning outcomes (GLOs). Modeled after the Lumina Foundation Degree Qualifications Profile and the Association of American College and Univerisity's LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes, the GLOs are (a) Broad Integrative Knowledge; (b) Applied Learning; (c) Specialized Knowledge; (d) Intellectual Skills for Lifelong Learning; and (e) Civic Learning, Engagement, and Social Responsibility. The components of the FYE learning communities allow students to acquire and practice critical reading, thinking, writing, and numeracy skills. Teams of faculty and staff from various disciplines and student support areas form the backbone of the program.

To establish appropriate support structures, Guttman randomly assigns first-year students to one of six learning communities or houses. Each house comprises three cohorts of 25 students. The cohorts are heterogeneous, with some students having demonstrated proficiency in reading, writing, and math, and others needing remedial instruction in one or more subjects. Those in the same cohort take all their courses together, and an instructional team that includes faculty in mathematics, English, and the social sciences teaches classes in the learning community. A dedicated advisor called a Student Success Advocate (SSA) rounds out the instructional team.

The design of Guttman's curriculum hits all of the hallmarks outlined in Bailey, Jaggars, and Jenkins's (2015) guided pathways model, incorporating systematic and collaborative learning facilitation design as a nexus for innovation and student success. A student's first semester schedule includes the following courses:

- **Statistics**, focusing on real-world applications of mathematical reasoning;

- **Ethnographies of Work**, exploring sociocultural ideas about work and engaging students in assignments that focus on job trends, work place culture, and career exploration;

- **Learning About Being a Successful Student** (LaBSS), offering intrusive advising that helps students acclimate to college life by introducing habits of good learning and grit in a graded, one-per-week session; and

- **City Seminar**, integrating college-credit work and development skills practice across four components: (a) Reading and Writing (3 hours per week); (b) Critical Issues (3 hours per week); (c) Quantitative Reasoning (3 hours per week); and (d) Studio (1.5 hour per week) and using problem and project-based inquiry as the primary pedagogy.

Designed by faculty with expertise in different areas, the City Seminar serves as the anchor of the FYE. Each seminar focuses on a unique contemporary issue, for example, food justice, gentrification, and immigration. While it meets for a total of 10.5 hours per week, the course is offered for three college credits.

The instructional team structure epitomizes Guttman's intentional focus on student success and ensures that students remain at the center of the model supported by interconnected services and faculty and staff (Figure 1). The teams meet weekly to discuss student progress and curricular alignment. Librarians and support staff interface with the teams on a regular basis. Faculty members are compensated 1.5 course credits per semester for participating in instructional team meetings. Each house has a team leader who receives an additional 0.5 credit per semester to set agendas, keep notes, and facilitate discussion. There are current conversations about compensating part-time faculty for attending team meetings. Assessment of the team structure is ongoing in Guttman's Center for College Effectiveness through triangulation of data provided in the team notes, early-alert flags, and support service reports.

> "The embedded support provided by the student success advocates encourages students to address social-emotional concerns [before they] have already negatively impacted academic performance."
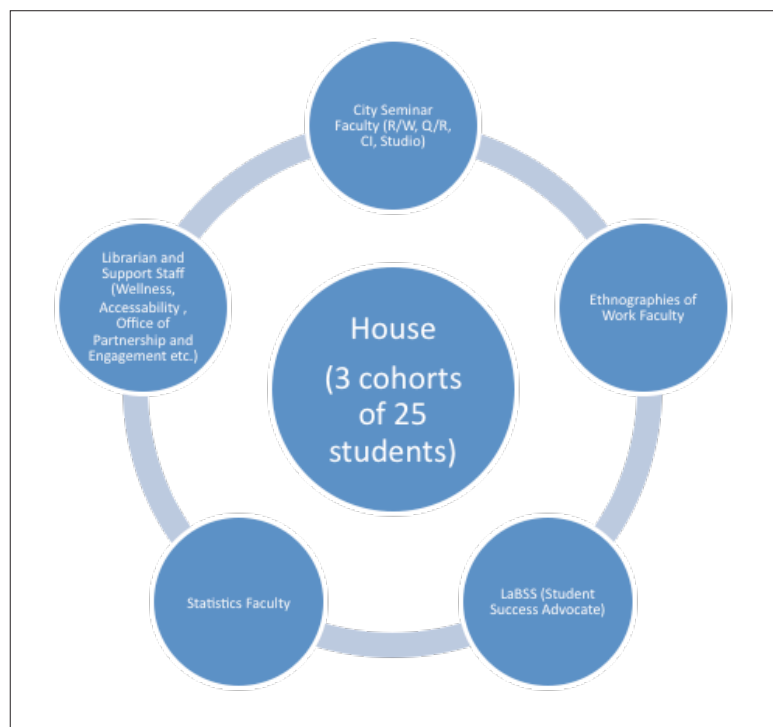

Figure 1. Team structure of the FYE at Guttman Community College.

SSAs are core members of each instructional team. They know each student intimately through their work in the weekly LaBSS sessions and through three mandatory, one-on-one meetings scheduled during the semester. Regular contact with the SSAs through team meetings means that faculty do not wait for structured times in the semester to prepare an

early-alert flag for a student who may need additional support. The embedded support provided by the SSAs encourages students to address social-emotional concerns that otherwise would manifest at the end of the semester when the obstacles have already negatively impacted academic performance.

Recognizing the need for structured, compensated time and space for the teams to meet, the College provides both incentives and opportunities for the faculty and staff on the FYE instructional teams to engage one another. The structured time allows faculty and staff to discuss the whole situation of every student—whether they are emerging learners, learners approaching competency, or excelling learners—and to assess the effectiveness of their curricula and instructional strategies in relation to each student's varying needs. Students benefit from these ongoing structured discussions because they enable faculty to holistically address learning differences as well as identify additional opportunities for students who are excelling in courses.

In addition, the interdisciplinary nature of the teams allows each faculty member to build and enhance their repertoire of instructional strategies. Faculty members in English, mathematics, social sciences, and the sciences discuss and adapt strategies practiced in each other's classrooms. Supplementing these informal exchanges, team members collaborate on designing assignments, developing rubrics, and responding to student work.

Team meetings are most successful when they focus on improving student learning. They ensure that none of Guttman's first-year courses are delivered in isolation and thereby create richer and deeper learning experiences than those using more traditional instruction. Because discussions at team meetings focus on students' strengths and abilities, regardless of their individual starting points, team members are supported in creating learning environments in their individual classrooms that encourage the kinds of intellectual risk-taking that help students make lasting improvements.

Overall, the instructional team structure promotes trust and accountability across the team and the house, enabling faculty, staff, and students alike to grow as learners without compromising academic rigor. We recognize that Guttman is a unique institution; however, other institutions may benefit from developing and implementing a similar model to support student success. e

References

Bailey, T. R., Jaggars, S. S., & Jenkins, D. (2015). *Redesigning America's community colleges: A clearer path to student success.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Contact

Nicola Blake
Nicola.blake@guttman.cuny.edu

Related Articles in *E-Source*

Cuseo, J. (2009). Got faculty? Promoting faculty involvement in FYE programs and initiatives. Part II. *6*(3), 3.

Norwood, M. A. (2013). Major accomplishment: Creating a learning community for undeclared students. *11*(1), 9.

Warren, E. A., (2009). Positive impacts of required learning communities for undecided first-year students. *7*(2), 9.

In the Zone: Reducing Barriers to Successful Registration

Dawna Wilson
Research Analyst

Kimberly Lowry
Executive Dean, Student and
Enrollment Services

Eastfield College
Mesquite, TX

As open enrollment institutions, community colleges serve a wide variety of individuals, including first-time-in-college students, adults retooling job skills, returning students pursuing degrees and technical certificates, and more. Whatever a student's background or experience with higher education infrastructure, a poorly designed registration process evidenced by long lines, misinformation, and circular visits to offices that do not offer resolutions to problems, can drive even the bravest soul to tears. Frustrations can run high among students and college personnel alike. Jaggars, Fletcher, Stacey, and Little (2014) rightly noted, "Things that seem straightforward and reasonable from the practitioner's perspective may not look at all the same from the student's perspective" (p. 2). Indeed, a registration process that makes sense to administrators and staff may overwhelm many students. To streamline the process, Eastfield College employs a zone registration system, which has clarified procedures and reduced barriers to completing the registration process.

What Is Zone Registration?

Eastfield posts Zone information throughout the campus during the peak registration period.

Every semester thousands of students, each arriving with varying degrees of knowledge about how to complete the registration process, descend on Eastfield's campus. They begin at self-designated points, standing in lengthy admissions, financial aid, testing, or advising lines. Often, students choose the wrong starting point only to discover that they have been waiting in line at an office that is unable to assist them due to a registration block that can only be removed by another department. For example, if a student begins the registration process in academic advising and the advisor encounters a registration block due to an outstanding financial balance, the student must leave academic advising, go to the business office, settle the financial obligation, and then return to academic advising to continue registration. Patrick, a veteran academic advisor, explained, "It was not unusual for a student to spend three hours on campus to complete registration."

Zone registration is a streamlined registration process designed to save students time by increasing registration efficiency. Eastfield implemented Zone in 2011 to shorten lines, alleviate waits for unnecessary services, and most importantly, reduce student delays. The key to Zone registration is pinpointing students' needs up front and providing a clear path to completing registration.
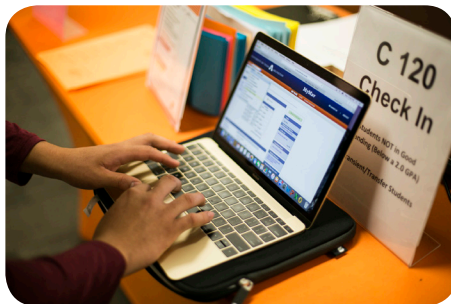
Triage is conducted in the student common area known as the Pit. Specially trained triage staff review students' records for financial holds, academic blocks, missing transcripts, testing and immunization needs, as well as any status that would prevent them from registering. If a student's record indicates a block, the staff provides a registration checklist directing that student to the service window where the block can be removed. Following this initial

The heart of Zone is directing students to specific academic advising locations based on their academic needs.

stop, the checklist outlines step-by-step, in the precise order, what the student needs to do to complete course registration. By following the checklist, students complete the registration process in a timely manner. Students who do not have blocks also receive a checklist outlining steps specific to their academic circumstances that, if followed, will lead them to timely registration completion. To stay on track, students must secure a signature from a staff member validating step completion. An added bonus to the checklist system is that it allows students to leave campus and return at a later time or later date within the Zone registration period and simply pick up where they left off. This triage model helps students know exactly where to go next to begin the registration process.

Academic Advising – Divide and Conquer

Students' checklists also indicate an academic advising stop. Timely and accurate academic advising is a key component of student success (Drake, 2011). Zone facilitates both. Perhaps the heart of Zone registration, and possibly its greatest strength, is dividing students into three distinct advising categories: (a) continuing students, (b) new students, and (c) transfer and probation students. Advisors equipped to meet specific needs of each group staff three separate advising locations.

Continuing Students

Continuing students who do not have financial holds or academic blocks are eligible to self-register. These students begin registration in a computer lab where an advisor facilitates their online self-registration and answers general questions. Of the three groups, continuing students require the least amount of assistance. Advisors emphasize that, barring any financial or academic blocks, online self-registration will remain an option for these students in subsequent semesters, thus eliminating a need to visit campus to register for classes.

New Students

First-time-in-college students or those new to Eastfield report to a second computer lab. Following a brief welcome and overview, students register for a F.A.S.T. (First-time-in-

> "The key to Zone registration is pinpointing students' needs up front and providing a clear path to [completion]."

Specially trained triage staff review students' records and provide individualized checklists outlining exact steps to complete their registration.

college Advising for Successful Transition) Orientation session, a mandatory two-hour presentation designed to outline academic requirements and introduce students to support services and campus life. When students return to campus to attend their F.A.S.T. session, they will complete registration with guidance from academic advisors.

Transfer and Probation Students

Eastfield recognizes two types of transfer students: (a) those who wish to move their enrollment from another postsecondary institution to pursue degrees or certificates at Eastfield and (b) those currently enrolled in other institutions (two- or four-year) who wish to take summer courses at Eastfield. Returning students who are on academic suspension or probation are probably the most restricted registrants. Transfer and probation students cannot self-register; advisors must enroll these students in classes. Further, probation students must complete contracts agreeing to follow a student success plan designed to remove their probationary status. As part of their success plan, some probation students must also attend a one-credit, four-week course focused on personal study skills, educational planning, and career exploration.

Outcomes – Improved Registration Experience

After implementing Zone, students routinely complete registration in less than one hour. They not only leave with their class schedules; they also have a far less stressful experience. Patrick explains, "The best thing about Zone is that students are not confused and frustrated." Zone's individualized checklists keep students on track throughout the entire registration process. "For staff, Zone has turned an intensely stressful time of the year into a far less stressful one. Zone has improved the entire atmosphere at Eastfield during registration," added Patrick. Most importantly, Zone improves students' registration experiences. Bree'ana, a former Eastfield student, compared registration before and after Zone: "It is a smoother process than we had before. I didn't have to waste my time going to unnecessary offices and standing in long lines." Overall, Zone expedites registration by clarifying the process for students, reducing wait times, shortening lines, and lowering student and staff stress levels. Zone fosters student success at the front door by reducing barriers to successful registration.

References

Drake, J. K. (2011). The role of academic advising in student retention and persistence. *About Campus, 16*(3), 8-12.

Jaggars, S., Fletcher, J., Stacey, G. W., & Little, J. (2014, June). *Simplifying complexity in the student experience: Gathering data*. New York, NY: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University. Retrieved from http:// http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/simplifying-complexity-gathering-data.pdf

Contact

Dawna Wilson
dawnawilson@dcccd.edu

Related Articles in *E-Source*

Bell, A. (2014). Moving beyond the checklist: Redesigning orientation to deliver information when it is needed. *12*(1), 11.

Marina, B. L. H. (2007). Individual academic management (IAM) workshop aims to retain students. *5*(2), 5.

Poisel, M. A. (2010). The transfer center: Building a home for transfer students. *8*(1), 1.

Assessing Sexual Misconduct Intervention Programs

Philip J. Ruthkosky
Associate Dean, Student Affairs/
Student Development
Deputy Title IX Coordinator

Wilkes University
Wilkes-Barre, PA

Since the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (Ali, 2011) published a dear colleague letter addressing sexual violence in educational settings, higher education institutions across the country have been grappling with how to address matters of sexual misconduct. Although a multitude of so-called experts offer online programs and services, there has been a dearth of guidance and attention on how to assess the efficacy of student sexual misconduct programs. While staying in compliance is obviously essential, the crux of the matter should be determining whether sexual misconduct programs are truly enhancing first-year students' decision-making skills and fostering safer living and learning environments.

A Formative Assessment Plan

Wilkes University's First-Year Student Sexual Misconduct Training Program comprises 10 complementary pillars (Table 1), each unique in pedagogical approach and delivery. While individual components taken in isolation are certainly not a panacea, the premise is that students' learning increases exponentially when a range of interventions are employed (Koenick, 2014).

Table 1
Sexual Misconduct Training Paradigm

Program	Delivery time		
	August	**September – November**	**January - March**
90-minute presentation by Victims Resource Center	X		
Climate study		X	
60-minute peer-led bystander intervention training in First-Year Foundation classes		X	
Deputy coordinator presentations to First-Year Foundation classes		X	
MyStudentBody Essentials (online self-assessments/quizzes)	X	X	
Sexual Misconduct Policy quiz (online)	X		
Electronic brochures sent via e-mail	X		
S.A.F.E. (two-hour awareness program teaching basic self-defense)			X
30-minute presentations in residence halls by Public Safety	X		
Awareness campaigns			X

As opposed to the traditional Likert-scaled satisfaction instruments that are often used to assess programs of this nature, Wilkes University's assessment plan includes two formative, qualitative techniques to evaluate student learning outcomes.

Minute Papers

A minute paper (Angelo & Cross, 1993) was used to track attendance at the mandatory 90-minute presentation by the Victim's Resource Center of Luzerne County and to gather insights into what students learned. At the conclusion of the workshop, the Deputy Title IX Coordinator distributed the questions listed below and allowed students five to seven minutes to provide written responses:

- What was the most important thing you learned at this session?

- Are there any issues related to sexual misconduct that are unclear to you?

- Can you identify any confidential resources where victims of sexual misconduct and domestic violence can go for information and support?

Based on the information gleaned from the minute papers, the Deputy Title IX Coordinator elaborates on areas of student confusion during his face-to-face presentations to the First-Year Foundation classes later in the semester.

Bystander Training Pre- and Post-Tests

A 60-minute bystander training session is delivered to every First-Year Foundation Class. Prior to the presentation, the Deputy Title IX Coordinator distributes the following questions to students:

1. What are some common misperceptions and/or victim blaming rhetoric pertaining to sexual misconduct?

2. If you saw a peer who appeared to be vulnerable or at risk of being taken advantage of, would you have the confidence to intervene?

3. Can you think of any specific strategies that you would use to assist this individual?

4. If you do choose to use alcohol, what are some high-risk drinking behaviors to avoid?

Students hold on to their papers and then respond to the same questions at the conclusion of the sessions. Subsequently, the Deputy Title IX Coordinator analyzes all of the submissions. The results of the 2014 analysis ($N = 300$) are summarized below.

Question 1. Most (85.7%) of the students were able to cite one or more misperceptions pertaining to sexual misconduct in the posttest compared to only 38.1% in the pretest. Furthermore, 64.3% of the students were able to cite two or more common misperceptions in the posttest.

> "Offer students multiple training programs throughout the course of the year to provide ongoing message reinforcement."

Question 2. In the pretest, 78.6% of the students indicated that they would have the confidence to intervene if they saw a peer who was vulnerable to a sexual assault, while 21.4% responded no or not sure. The posttest results revealed that the percentage of students who indicated they would have confidence to intervene climbed to 95.2%. Students' responses in the posttest suggested the reason for the increase was that they learned specific strategies in the session. For example, one student who initially indicated that she would not be comfortable intervening, wrote the following: "Definitely, now that I know some strategies, I will be ready (and confident) to help someone."

Question 3. A larger percentage (40.5%) of the students in the pretest were able to cite one or more safe intervention strategies that could be employed to help an individual who appeared to be vulnerable or at risk. There was also a notable percentage, however, whose answers were confrontational and, therefore, not akin to the safe and effective strategies that were presented in the training. In the posttest, the percentage of students who were able to cite one or more safe and effective strategies increased to 97.6%. Additionally, more than two thirds of the students were able to cite two or more safe and effective strategies they could employ.

Question 4. Slightly more than three quarters (78.6%) of the students were able to list at least one risky drinking behavior in the pretest. That percentage increased to 95.2% in the posttest.

Final Thoughts

Although the days of in locus parentis in college are behind us, the fact remains that the most salient ethical responsibility as educators is to take proactive steps to promote the safety and well-being of students. If we do not implement effective assessment techniques to measure the extent of students' learning in our sexual misconduct programs, however, we are not fulfilling this obligation. Luckily, expertise in assessment is not required to make use of the methods described here. Rather, coordinators of first-year student sexual misconduct programs should

- take the time to carefully craft measurable student learning outcomes,

- offer students multiple training programs throughout the course of the year to provide ongoing message reinforcement,

- carefully formulate questions for qualitative assessments that are designed to measure the desired learning outcomes,

- keep questions on evaluations short and precise because students may tune out or rush answers when responding to more than four questions, and

- conduct assessments early enough in the process to provide time to address shortcomings with subsequent programs.

References

Ali, R. (2011, April 4). *Dear colleague letter.* Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201104.html

Angelo, T. A., & Cross, K. P. (1993). *Classroom assessment techniques: A handbook for college teachers* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Koenick, R. A. (2014). Sexual violence prevention on campus: Leading the culture change. *NASPA Leadership Exchange, 12*(2), 10-12.

Contact

Philip J. Ruthkosky

philip.ruthkosky@wilkes.edu

Related Articles in *E-Source*

Kirk. V. (2012). Resource spotlight: Preventing unplanned pregnancy and completing college-online lessons. *10*(1), 16.

Promoting Student Success Through Departmental Collaboration and Institutional Reorganization

Shawnda Freer
Director of First Year Experience

Taylor University
Upland, IN

A challenge within higher education is to look beyond the silos and find interdisciplinary approaches to programs and services. Like many of today's higher education institutions, Taylor University, a small, faith-based liberal arts institution, had, until 2012, a fragmented approach to first-year programming. Faculty and staff from academic affairs, admissions, and student development were responsible for meeting the needs of all academically at-risk students, managing retention, and supporting the transition experience of first-year students, respectively. This approach meant that rather than having one location where all their questions could be answered, first-year students often met with personnel in three different offices around campus. In an effort to more efficiently and effectively promote student success, and based on the recommendations of an appointed internal task force, Taylor University implemented a departmental collaboration and reorganization.

The Restructuring of Student Success Support

The process of restructuring began in summer 2010, when the provost appointed a task force composed of the coordinator of academic support (academic affairs), the director of retention (admissions), and the director of new student programs (student development) to create a comprehensive proposal to streamline efforts focused on the needs of first-year students. Recommendations for the first-year experience were developed according to Alexander and Gardner's (2009) framework, consisting of nine hallmarks of excellence (i.e., philosophy, organization, roles and purpose, transitions, improvement, faculty, students, learning, and diversity) designed to improve the first year of college. Each of the hallmarks was organized into one of two overarching categories (e.g., Leadership or Community of Learners) for the purpose of illustrating that the first-year experience would have effective leadership by personnel who would champion the cause of an intentional community of learners within the first year. In addition to the first-year experience recommendations, short-term initiatives for retention were also included in the proposal. These involved academic advising, connectedness to the university, programs for at-risk students, centralized

Rice Bell Tower at Taylor University. Photo by Jim Garringer, Taylor University.

data collection, parent orientation, and support services. The result was a three-page matrix of 51 recommendations, organized within these constructs. Examples of recommendations in the first-year experience and retention areas included increasing administrative support at all levels to raise institutional awareness and value of first-year issues and having introductory courses taught by the best faculty equipped for facilitating learning in the first year.

The Implementation

In fall 2012, administrators followed the recommendation to reorganize personnel and programs from academic affairs, admissions, and student development into one department to accomplish the goals of developing a comprehensive first-year experience model that would reflect the institutional mission, engage in quality improvement assessment, and impact retention. The reorganization included changing the structure, reporting lines, budget allocations, physical location, as well as position titles and job descriptions in the three departments. The new department, Academic Enrichment Center (AEC), is now housed in academic affairs with a single reporting line to the associate provost (Figure 1). The coordinator of academic support's title changed to director of the Academic Enrichment Center, which included a department chair appointment and continuation of tenured faculty status. The director of New Student Programs moved from student development, had a title change to director of First Year Experience (FYE), and maintained student development faculty status. The director of Retention moved from admissions, maintained a staff position, and assumed responsibility for disability services. In addition to these three full-time positions, the department also includes a part-time, nontenured faculty learning specialist, a part-time coordinator of tutoring services, a full-time program assistant, and two graduate assistants. AEC is physically located in the same area as Academic Advising and the Writing Center due to significant collaboration among the departments and their frequent engagement with first-year students.
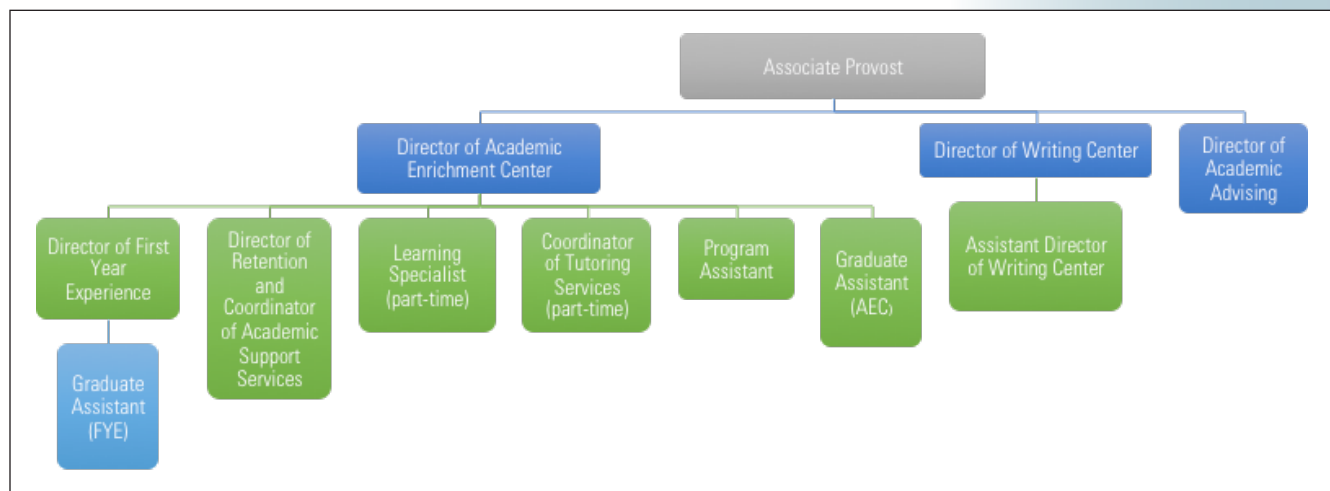

Figure 1. Organizational chart of Academic Enrichment Center and related support services at Taylor University.

The Implications

Since this initiative was a comprehensive effort, assessment data have been collected for each area represented in the reorganization. Direct correlation or causality of this initiative on these results is not assumed; however, the data in each area show improvement since the implementation of the initiative.

After the initiative was implemented, programs were redesigned to enhance learning. For example, a general education course required of all first-year students was redesigned to increase student learning and satisfaction. Initial assessment results from end-of-course student survey data show improvement in several areas from fall 2013 to fall 2014, including assignments contribute to learning (+.66), course develops analytical and critical-thinking skills (+.47), and learning is stimulating (+.48).

Photo by Jim Garringer, Taylor University.

Additionally data show that since the implementation of this initiative, retention rates have increased from 85% (fall 2011) to 88% (fall 2014). Term-to-term persistence rates have been maintained at or above the 96% target range for the institution. The graduation rate of the 2008 cohort was 74%, and early estimates indicate that the 2009 cohort will have a graduation rate of 77% in 2015.

Finally, the impact of this initiative for the academically at-risk student population also shows improvement. New criteria has been developed for provisionally admitted students, and the director of AEC has input into the admissions process for those students. Assessment data show an increase in retention rates from 57% (2012) to 71% (2013) for the most academically at-risk students and 60% to 64% for the moderately academically at-risk student population.

As a result of this initiative, several benefits to the institution have been seen:

- Institutional quality improvement has continued. Specifically, more effective collaboration between academic affairs, student development, and admissions has been fostered.

- Increased retention rates, enhanced learning, and streamlined services indicate more effective support for meeting the transitional needs of first-year students.

> "Increased retention rates, enhanced learning, and streamlined services indicate more effective support for meeting the transitional needs of first-year students."

- The reorganization of the departments raised institutional awareness of the comprehensive scope of the first-year experience, providing avenues necessary to advance overarching FYE goals.

- Connections with faculty teaching first-year courses have been provided. Specifically, collaboration has occurred between the AEC's faculty who teach the first-year seminar and those teaching an interdisciplinary course required of all first-year students, resulting in a stronger academic experience for students.

- The initiative has advanced institutional faculty development strategies. Faculty in AEC have collaborated with the dean of Faculty Development to provide workshops and a conference designed to give intentional support to faculty teaching first-year students.

Conclusion

The departmental collaboration and institutional reorganization implemented at Taylor University has promoted student success by streamlining services, enhancing student learning, and effectively supporting all academically at-risk and transitioning first-year students. The challenge of working beyond silos in higher education was addressed through this initiative, which provided a less frustrating experience for students and minimized duplication of services among personnel and programs. This model could be adapted and implemented on other campuses with several positive implications for students and the institution. e

References

Alexander, J. S., & Gardner, J. N. (2009). Beyond retention: A comprehensive approach to the first college year. *About Campus, 14*(2), 18-26

Contact

Shawnda Freer
shfreer@taylor.edu

Related Articles in *E-Source*

Cuseo, J. (2008). Strategies for promoting collaboration and integration between academic and student affairs. *5*(6), 3.

Person, P. (2006). The University of Cincinnati's FYE best practices series: A forum for generating communication and collaboration across the institution. *3*(5), 5.

Zlotkowski, L., Conway, S., & Getchell, K. (2015). Rebranding an early-alert system through education and collaboration. *12*(2), 5.