

ESTABLISHING CORE COMPETENCIES FOR “STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC
SUCCESS” COURSE

by

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ABSTRACT

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This study examines the course “Strategies for Academic Success” (TRDIS-120) offered at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. The research plans to interview the lead teacher of the course Ms. Holli Hebl to gain a better understanding of the concepts practiced on this campus.

The researcher will then study the University of Wisconsin-Stout’s sixteen peer universities. A list of these universities will be obtained from the University of Wisconsin-Stout budget and analysis office. The researcher will then conduct an extensive search of information regarding courses similar to the course “Strategies of Academic Success” held on the University of Wisconsin-Stout campus.

When the collection of data from this research is completed, the researcher will then format the data into a table. The table will chart out the various competencies covered in the course “Strategies for Academic Success.” The study will also describe what each of the sixteen peer universities includes into their curriculum.

The researcher expects to make a connection between what the University of Wisconsin-Stout is teaching and what their sixteen peer schools are teaching. It is anticipated that the data will reveal areas where improvement is needed for the University of Wisconsin-Stout, as well as those areas where they excel.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Background

The “Strategies for Academic Success Class” (TRDIS-120) has been offered on the University of Wisconsin-Stout campus for the last ten years, according to Holli Hebl, Lead Teacher. The description of this class is as follows: Strategies for Academic Success is a two-credit semester course designed to enhance your ability to learn effectively and efficiently. Application of the skills mastered in this class will provide a practical framework for efforts in other college courses, as well as in the workplace.

The procedure of this course is that the class will meet twice a week in the classroom. Format will vary and include brief lecture, large and small group discussion and independent work. Each student will be expected to read from the text and other assigned materials. Written work will be used as a learning strategy both in and out of class.

The nine objectives of this class are as follows: 1. Set short and long term goals, 2. Organize and prioritize time, 3. Develop your own personal note taking system, 4. Prepare for and take exams, 5. Conduct library research, 6. Communicate with instructors effectively, 7. Explain the value of diversity in any community, 8. Identify resources for students, and 9. Show that a balanced lifestyle contributes to success.

The class materials are two textbooks: 1. The Confident Student, Third Edition, 1998, by Carol C. Kanar, and 2. On Course, Strategies for Creating Success in College

and in Life, Third Edition, 2002, by Skip Downing as well as class handouts and a student planner.

The requirements of this course are that each student attends class regularly. One of the most important study habits to practice is class attendance. Along with attending class regularly, each student must also attend three individual academic monitoring sessions. During these sessions, we will discuss any needs or concerns that the student may have, work from other classes, registration, and their experiences at UW-Stout. The students must also use a planner, complete all assignments on time, and finish assigned readings before coming to class.

This class is in great demand. In Fall 2001, there were fourteen sections, with eight different teachers. Fifty percent of the students are required to take the class due to a lower than average G.P.A., class rank, or ACT score. Students who want to take the class to gain an edge for success in college make up the other fifty percent.

Statement of the Problem

There is no established curriculum to guide instructor when teaching the Strategies for Academic Success course. Instructors are provided old syllabi and the texts to use, but there is not a fixed curriculum for a new instructor to follow. There is a need for consistency to ensure that each student, regardless of who the teacher was, walks away from this class with the same knowledge and experience. Therefore, a set of core competencies should be established to guide each teacher's curriculum.

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the core competences of our peer universities first year experience courses. The research will compare the University of Wisconsin-Stout curriculum with those of their peer schools. From these results, the researcher will make recommendations for core competencies, which the instructors of the University of Wisconsin-Stout “Strategies for Academic Success” course can use to develop their curriculum.

Research Questions

The research intended to answer four questions:

1. What is the need for first year experience courses?
2. What are the core competences of other first year experiences?
3. What should the student be able to perform after completion of this course?
4. What are the recommended competences that should be established for the University of Wisconsin-Stout course, Strategies for Academic Success?

Rationale

The reasons the study was conducted:

1. To determine the need for the first year experience courses.
2. To identify the core competences other universities follow for the first year experience course.
3. To define how the students will be able to perform after completion of this course.
4. To identify what course content should be covered.

Assumptions

In considering the research, there were two assumptions that were identifiable:

1. The first year experience courses held at the other universities have the current information about the courses posted on the peer schools websites.
2. The results found in this study can be used by the Advisement and Career Center for establishing a set curriculum for Strategies for Academic Success teachers.

Limitations of Study

In conducting the research, there were three limitations:

1. The availability of the information provided by the other universities.
2. The accuracy of the information provided by the other universities.
3. The time frame of the study.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined to clarify the meaning for better understanding:

1. First year experience courses- A course that is offered to incoming freshman to help bridge the gap between high school and college.
2. Peer Universities- Universities identified by the University of Wisconsin-Stout as comparable in programs and sizes. The sixteen universities that will be studied are the peer universities of the University of Wisconsin-Stout, which are: 1. Ferris State University, Big Rapids, Michigan, 2. California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California, 3. New Jersey Institute of Technology, Newark, New Jersey, 4. Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, 5. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign,

Champaign, Illinois, 6. University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 7. Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Carbondale, Illinois, 8. Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa, 9. Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois, 10. University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Amherst, Massachusetts, 11. Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, 12. Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Edwardsville, Illinois, 13. University of Massachusetts Boston, Boston, Massachusetts, 14. University of Massachusetts- Dartmouth, North Dartmouth, Massachusetts, 15. Bradley University, Peoria, Illinois, and 16. Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Introduction

One half of the students who enter a four-year university will never graduate. (Hebl, 1998). These students may walk away from a university feeling disappointed, upset and a failure. What if there was some way of increasing that retention rate? What if we offered a class that focused on ways to increase freshman retention rate? What if we closed the gap from high school to college through the means of a class that taught students how to be successful in college? Is it possible? Is there a need?

Many universities are considering the freshman's students needs beyond a dormitory and an email address. Many universities are including such things are freshman seminars, freshman success courses and dormitory, freshman mentors, tutors and many more options to ensure student success and increase retention rates.

This review of literature will discuss a number of topics including: 1. A need for a freshman success course, 2. Student risks, 3. Sources of freshman stress, 4. Student preparation for college, 5. What freshman success courses can offer, and 6. How the course helps the student beyond academics.

A Need for the Course

If a student earns a high school diploma, it does not mean that they are ready for the transformation to college. The National Center for Education Statistics (1991) reported that 30% of all entering freshmen took at least one remedial course. A report from the Southern Regional Education Board (1991) indicated that the average remediation for first-term freshman in the Southern United States was 27% in reading

and writing and 38% in mathematics. Given this data, an estimate that 30% of entering students in the U.S. require remediation would appear to be accurate. This would mean that approximately 656,000 entering freshmen need to be involved in remedial and developmental courses.” (Hebl, 1998) An example in 1995, 43 percent of California State University freshman failed the English placement test, and 27 percent of traditional-age college freshman in Ohio enrolled in remedial courses. Only one-third of these college students who enroll in remedial reading in college earn either a two or four-year degree, compared with more than half of the student who do not take any remedial courses in college. (Rubenstein, 2000)

What are all these statistics all suggesting? Over the years, there have been an increased number of students taking remedial classes; meaning more incoming college freshmen students are not prepared for college academics. In addition, the students who are taking these classes have an increased statistical risk of not completing their two or four-year degree.

Student Risk

In general, college students with low GPA’s are thought to have inadequate study skills and habits. Al-Hilawani & Sartawi (1997) showed that students who had higher high school GPA’s achieved significantly higher scores on the study skills and habits instruments than students who had low GPA’s. White & Mosely (1995) concurred, showing that the best predictor of success in graduating from college four or five years later at Lamar University was the number of academic courses, English, math, history, etc., taken in high school and the grade point earned in those classes. High school rank in the senior class was the second best predictor.

According to Grimes (1997), student factors associated with lower achievement at varied educational levels include lower ability, poor study skills, and external locus of control and lower self-esteem. A student who is a lower achiever in academics can benefit from study skills instruction. This kind of instruction can be constructed as a one time seminar, a credit-bearing semester long course or somewhere in between. At many universities, this course takes on the form of a freshman experience course and is required of all students entering the university. (Hebl, 1998)

Freshman Stress

The transformation from childhood to college is seldom smooth for students who face life for the first time without curfews, vegetables or clean laundry—and plenty of social and academic pressure. (Dickinson, 1999)

There is an increased chance that these students may face an identity crisis. According to Dickinson (1999), “Kids know who they are in their senior years of high school, but a freshman has to reach out and start from scratch.” College offers additional pressure to self-identity. As Dickinson has stated, students have a self-identity developed at the high school age but college is a new ballpark for most. They have not been confronted with issues of money and time management, making decisions about drugs, sex and alcohol. “They often feel lonely and overwhelmed, resulting in exhaustion, anxiety and depression.” (Dickinson, 1999)

Nancy Corbin, director of clinical services for student-counseling services at Iowa State University, says “her office is seeing a significant increase in requests for counseling from freshman who are having trouble making the adjustment to college life. Despite all their technical sophistication, she says, older teenagers increasingly lack the

skills to deal with personal problems that aren't easily defined or fixed. They have 'point and click' expectations. They also get homesick, but have a hard time admitting it."

(Dickinson, 1999.)

Almost a third of U.S. college freshman report feeling "frequently overwhelmed by all I have to do," according to the 34th annual American Freshman Survey. (1999) Overall, a record 30.2 percent of the freshman report feeling overwhelmed, but female students were twice as likely to feel stressed out." (Curriculum Review, 2000.) These statistics show just a slight increase from high school senior's statistics where 29.6 percent of student said they were overwhelmed by all they had to do. (Chronicle of Higher Education, 1999.)

And what about the pressure to pay for school? Finding the finances for pay for such an expensive adventure sometimes put additional stress on students. About a quarter of the students stated that they would more than likely have to hold a full time job during their college years. (Curriculum Review, 2000.) A full time job would add additional stress in their first few years, as well as address a need for better time management skills while learning to juggle many demands.

Student Preparation

Students need to be prepared to make the transition from high school to college. The transition between high school and college can be made much easier for incoming freshman by their parents and high schools. For example, by teaching them to budget their hours and their dollars. It is also the responsibility of the high schools to present

information to the students that will prepare them for college. The development of a strong support systems and relationship between the student and their parents should be the parent's first priority. Unfortunately, the parents concerns are often on the amount of towels and sheets to bring. (Dickinson, 1999)

There is also the common threat of homesickness that affects a great number of freshmen across the United States each year. Dickinson, 1999 explains that "Many homesick freshmen think they'll be regarded as failures if they come home before thanksgiving, so parents can help by letting them know they're welcome to return if they feel the need." Having a support system such as a college success course many help to reduce the risk of homesickness by these students.

Freshman-Year Success Programs

Many colleges and universities are not considering the importance of the freshman year and the potential for success. "We have to take a look at the freshman year as a key period." (Roach, 1998) Now, more then ever, universities need to focus on the student's freshman year. Having a successful freshman year can be the foundation for a successful career at a university and eventually graduation.

Many higher education institutions across the country are currently adapting freshman seminar programs to enhance student success and retention. Schools like the University of Wisconsin-Stout, CA Polytechnic, San Luis Obispo, University of Massachusetts-Boston and the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities have all seen positive results and believe in the program. The value of freshman seminar programs, however, seems to vary widely due to a number of factors. A positive relationship between participation in freshman seminar programs and higher sophomore return rates, as well as

improved academic performance and increased knowledge and use of student services. Yet, no matter how well planned, researched-based, and proactively conceived a freshman seminar may be, programs can be totally destroyed by student reactions and perceptions. Understanding student perceptions of the value of their freshman seminar experience, therefore, could possibly help to make freshman seminars outcomes less variable and more positive for all students.

According to Rhodes & Carifio, (1999) “The ideal freshman seminar course is 1. Flexible, 2. Tailored to meet students needs, 3. Designed to enhance student success, and 4. Appropriate for students attending colleges and universities of high, moderate, low and non-selectivity levels.” Students not only need to know about the campus resources but also about themselves. College is a time where students explore themselves and where self-discovery is valued. Students discover for themselves the value and worth of higher education.

Beyond Academics

The course Strategies for Academic Success (TRDIS-120) also serves a social purpose. This class forces students to be an active part of the community and school. At Champlain College in Burlington, Vermont, Susan D’Elia, (1999) explains that the class also makes the students aware of problems on and off campus, such as sexual harassment, diversity, drugs, and alcohol. Currently, in her freshman success class, they are planning a community-service project to be carried out in the city of Burlington. “The course reinforces skills not only at the academic level, but at the social level as well.” (D’Elia, 1999).

At some universities, the students build learning groups and hold study sessions or take practice tests for other courses together (D'Elia, 1999). This sort of support network can help ensure student success. "Students say being surrounded by other first-year college students serves as a source of support." (Chiang, 1999.)

The students often have more confidence when it comes to dealing with professors. They often have the courage to take the initiative and seek additional help. (D'Elia 1999.) explains, "as the second semester approached, we needed to select courses for the up coming term. We had a course-selection discussion in class, which motivated me to call and interview perspective professors." She also goes on to explain that she was able to become familiar with many more faculty members due to the interviews. The freshman focus program inspired this action. D'Elia (1999) also stated, "I never before had the confidence to speak to unfamiliar teachers or question a course's significance. The program has helped me learn how to take the initiative and learn things for myself. This newfound self-confidence and determination is the most valuable skill I've acquired since I arrived at college."

Peer Universities

The current study will examine variables that make a freshman success course effective. What core competencies need to be covered, and what other universities are doing to guarantee successful freshman? The sixteen universities that will be studied are the peer universities of the University of Wisconsin-Stout, which are: 1. Ferris State University, Big Rapids, Michigan, 2. California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California, 3. New Jersey Institute of Technology, Newark, New Jersey, 4. Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, 5. University of Illinois at Urbana-

Champaign, Champaign, Illinois, 6. University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 7. Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Carbondale, Illinois, 8. Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa, 9. Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois, 10. University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Amherst, Massachusetts, 11. Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, 12. Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Edwardsville, 13. Illinois, University of Massachusetts Boston, Boston, Massachusetts, 14. University of Massachusetts- Dartmouth, North Dartmouth, Massachusetts, 15. Bradley University, Peoria, Illinois, and 16. Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island.

Chapter III

Methodology

Introduction

The study will research sixteen schools, identifying their freshman success programs and learn about their study skills/freshman success course. This study will look at what topics they cover and how they present their materials. The researcher will then compare the information gathered about all the universities to the University of Wisconsin-Stout. With the information from the comparison the researcher will make recommendations for the course Strategies for Academic Success, which is the course offered on the Stout campus.

Description of Peer Schools

1. Ferris State University, Big Rapids, Michigan
 - a. They do not offer a traditional class; rather, they offer seminars, which are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 a.m. to 11:50 a.m. on topics of self esteem, test taking, goal setting, stress management, and math study skills.
 - b. They also offer Study Skills Assistance in the academic support center and tutoring. Help is available for text reading, memory improvement, note taking, test preparation, time management, reading and test taking.
2. California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California
 - a. They offer First Year Seminars, which are credit courses designed to support the success of new incoming freshman and transfer students at the university. Through these courses, the student will explore their

academic, career and co-curricular options at Cal Poly. Their participation in one of these courses will assist in developing new study techniques and problem-solving skills, as well as enhancing their educational experiences as a first-year student.

- b. These seminars are taught in an active classroom environment where, through peer activities and instructor guidance they are involved in many topics.

3. New Jersey Institute of Technology, Newark, New Jersey

- a. All freshman students register for freshman seminar during their first semester.
- b. Students meet in small groups (approximately 15 students) with a seminar instructor to discuss adjusting to college life at NJIT.

4. Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan

- a. They offer a freshman seminar to groups of first-year students.
- b. Freshman seminars offer a unique opportunity to work with some of the university's best-known faculty, to examine both age-old and space age issues that affect your life and to bond with a small group of student who share your interests. The seminars may be offered either for one credit or on a no-credit basis

5. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Champaign, Illinois

- a. Reading and Study Skills Programs are held at the Counseling Center
- b. They offer courses on Speed Reading and Study Methods Courses

- c. This is a non-credit, non-graded course designed to help students improve their reading speed, comprehension, and study skills.
- 6. University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, Minneapolis, Minnesota
 - a. They offer a very descriptive study strategies homepage, which is very detailed with lots of information and web sights.
 - b. They also offer workshops for new students, such as things on note taking and time management. They are on Tuesdays and Thursdays evenings from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm.
 - c. They also offer a university-wide orientation course “Introduction to College Learning.” This initiative has been designed to help new students through the transition to UMD life. An emphasis is placed on exposing students to a variety of information technology, academic success strategies, making connections and guidance in the development of a personalized learning portfolio, which incorporates skills and experience in both curricular and co-curricular activities.
- 7. Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Carbondale, Illinois
 - a. They offer an orientation course for all incoming freshman.
 - b. They also offer a mentoring program in the center for basic skills.
- 8. Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa
 - a. They offer a learning lab, which is a “learning how to learn” service, designed to assist students at any level. Lab consultants work one-on-one with students to evaluate and identify problem study habits and time management and develop strategies to improve them.

- b. Workshops are scheduled throughout the year on topics such as test taking strategies, memorization, reducing stress, and time management.

9. Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois

- a. They offer a freshman learning connections program. This is a free program for incoming freshmen to assist in the transition from high school to college.
- b. The program is offered in the fall and gives the student an opportunity to become part of a learning community, as well as expand their study skills.

10. University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Amherst, Massachusetts

- a. They state in their handbook that they offer the class LSS 022 Seminar in Study Skills
- b. Further investigation reveals that the course is no longer offered due to budget cuts.

11. Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas

- a. They offer a course University Experience (EDCEP 111) that is a graded, elective course designed to provide new students with a general orientation to Kansas State University. Topic covered includes study skills, effective utilization of campus resources and services, academic planning and advising, career decision-making and university policy and procedures, etc.
- b. They also offer a DED 051: Study Skills Lab and EDSEC 502: College Learning Skills which are periodically available.

- c. The course that relates most to the study is their DAS 100: Freshman Seminar, which touches upon questions of academic success.
12. Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Edwardsville, Illinois
- a. They are currently proposing a plan to develop and implement a course called Academic Quality Improvement Project. This course will strengthen new-students' first year experience.
 - b. The school also offers new-student seminar required for all new students.
13. University of Massachusetts Boston, Boston, Massachusetts.
- a. They offer a course titled UNIV 101: The New Student Seminar.
 - b. Within the course content, they cover such topics as organizational structure of the university, career planning and self-management skills.
14. University of Massachusetts- Dartmouth, North Dartmouth, Massachusetts.
- a. They currently do not offer a freshman experience/ study skills course.
 - b. They are however in the process of developing and implementing a course.
15. Bradley University, Peoria, Illinois.
- a. Bradley University offers a course titled Study Skills Seminar.
 - b. This course is designed for students who want to develop the various reading, and study skills that are demanded in college courses.
16. Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island
- a. Their website provided no information about a freshman study skills course.
 - b. Further investigation revealed that they do not offer such a course.

Peer Schools Selection

The sample selections were the Peer School of the University of Wisconsin-Stout. The researcher contacted the Provost office, which lead to the contact of the Budget, and Analysis office that was able to provide a list of comparative colleges/universities. The sample was taken from the list of sixteen peer schools.

The schools were selected from the list of comparative colleges/universities. The information gathered included course title, syllabus, and requirements of the course, and any other information that were provided.

Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher contacted each school's advisement center asking for information on a course that addressed study skills. The researcher also visited the web site for each school in order to find additional course information.

The researcher requested course syllabi and telephone interviewed instructors who taught the course. An interview was also conducted to gain more information on the UW-Stout system of delivering this course.

Procedure for Data Analysis

A spreadsheet was used to chart the information for analysis. The researcher then compared the information on what was taught in each of the sixteen-peer schools course to what the University of Wisconsin – Stout was teaching in their Strategies for Academic Success course.

Chapter IV

Findings and Analysis of Results

Introduction

The results of this study were based on the sixteen-peer schools comparable courses to the “Strategies for Academic Success” course offered at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Of the sixteen schools fifteen responded and provided the researcher with adequate information to complete the study. The researcher found that out of the sixteen schools thirteen offered a course comparable to “Strategies for Academic Success.” The researcher also found that the schools that were not offering a course comparable were in the process of developing a course to cover similar competencies.

Findings

The data of this research are separated into ten sections: 1. Time management, 2. Academic Monitoring, 3. Goals, 4. Organization Skills, 5. Note Taking, 6. Test Taking, 7. Library, 8. Campus Resource, 9. Community Resource, and 10. Other. The ten sections are the competencies most often practiced in the course “Strategies for Academic Success” at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Table one displays the schools and the competencies covered.

TABLE ONE

Schools	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	
Ferris State			x			x					Self-Esteem, Stress Management & Math Skills
CA Polytechnic, San Luis Obispo	x				x	x	x	x			Career Exploration,
New Jersey Institute of Technology	x								x		Ethics & Values, Career Exploration
Michigan State University									x	x	
University of Illinois at Urbana	x				x	x	x				Memory & Reading Skills
University of Minnesota-Twin Cities	x				x	x	x	x			Web based study skills resources
Southern Illinois University-Carbondale											
Iowa State University	x				x	x					Web based study skills resources, Memory, Reading, Diversity, Thinking, Writing, & Health
Illinois State University									x	x	Web based study skills resources
University of Massachusetts-Amherst					x	x			x		Career Development
Kansas State University											
Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville											
University of Massachusetts-Boston	x				x	x	x	x			
University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth											
Bradley University	x			x	x	x					Reading, Classroom Etiquette & Motivation
Rhode Island School of Design											
Totals	7	0	1	1	7	8	4	7	2		

Key

Time Management	A
Monitoring Sessions	B
Goal Setting	C
Organization	D
Note Taking	E
Test Taking	F
Library	G
Campus Resources	H
Community Resources	I
Other	J

The first competency was time management. Out of the sixteen schools, seven reported instructing students on basic time management skills. The University of Massachusetts-Boston did not report that they covered time management but instead referred to time management as self-management, which the researcher included in the time management section.

The next section that the researcher collected data on was academic monitoring, none of the schools reported any form of academic monitoring. Academic monitoring at the University of Wisconsin-Stout is considered to be a requirement of the course “Strategies of Academic Success.” A monitoring session is approximately a twenty-minute, one-on-one meeting, with the instructor of the course. Meetings are held in the instructor’s office and the general content consisted of the student needs for their adjustment to college.

Of the sixteen peer schools, only one university reported goal setting and organizational skills. Ferris State was the only university to report goal setting as part of their competencies. Ferris State incorporates goal setting as part of their study skill seminars. Bradley University was the only university to do any sort of organizational skills training.

Note taking was one of the highest reported sections with seven out of sixteen schools reporting that they cover the topic. The highest section of all ten was test taking which reported eight schools teaching the topic. The topics schools covered in their test taking section were examples like; test taking skills for various test and reducing test anxiety as a few of the topics they cover under test taking skills.

To the surprise of the researcher, only four of the sixteen schools reported incorporating a section on the library into their course. This data seemed odd, due to the courses primary focus being on study skills.

The final two titled sections were campus resources and community resources. Seven out of the sixteen schools reported campus resources as part of their curriculum, only two of the sixteen schools reported community resource. One would conclude that the schools primary focus is on making the student aware of the campus resources over the community.

The last section was titled “other.” This section was created to provide a location for competencies that the University of Wisconsin-Stout does not cover. One of the most frequently reported components to the course was the availability of resources to students, including web resources. The University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, Iowa State University and Illinois State University had extensive web based resources for the student including: examples of note taking styles, test taking tips, reading improvement tips, etc. The University of Massachusetts-Amherst, CA Polytechnic, San Luis Obispo, and New Jersey Institute of Technology all reported including a unit on Career Development/Exploration into their courses. They all provided exploration of the options the university had to offer as well as going beyond the university to meet the needs of the students. Unique to Bradley University was a lesson on classroom etiquette and motivation.

Of the sixteen universities, the University of Massachusetts-Boston, University of Minnesota- Twin Cities, and CA Polytechnic, San Luis Obispo had the most matches with the University of Wisconsin-Stout at five matches each. Each of the schools courses

where comparable to the course “Strategies of Academic Success” held at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. The school that had the most resemblance in style of course to the University of Wisconsin-Stout course was the University of Massachusetts-Boston. Their format was most familiar to Stout’s format as well as the material covered.

Summary

The peer schools offered an adequate sample of programs offered across the country. In comparison to what is being offered on the University of Wisconsin-Stout Campus, the peer schools are relative closely related to Stout. There were a total of thirty-seven matches in the sections. The data show that the University of Wisconsin-Stout is on track in comparison to its peers and is offering a course to meet the students needs.

Chapter V

Summary, Conclusion, Recommendations

Summary

The researcher has spent the last six months researching the course “Strategies for Academic Success” at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. The researcher has interviewed the lead teacher of the course Ms. Holli Hebl to gain a better understanding of the concepts practiced on the campus.

The researcher then took the study a step further by obtaining a list of the University of Wisconsin-Stout’s peer universities from the University of Wisconsin-Stout Budget and Analysis Office. The researcher then conducted an extensive search of the sixteen peer schools to gain information regarding a course similar to “Strategies of Academic Success” held on the University of Wisconsin-Stout campus.

When the collection of data from this research was completed the researcher then put the data into a table format. The table charted out the various competencies covered in the course “Strategies for Academic Success”. The table also lists the sixteen peer universities and places an “x” in the appropriate box if the schools’ comparable course covers the topic.

Conclusions

After the research was charted the researcher analyzed the similarities between the schools and made the following conclusions:

1. The University of Wisconsin-Stout’s course “Strategies for Academic Success” is comparable to what their peer schools are offering.

2. The University of Wisconsin-Stout is advanced in their thought process by incorporating academic monitoring into this course “Strategies for Academic Success.”
3. Nine out of the sixteen peer schools are including other topics into their comparable course. Some topics include: career exploration, classroom etiquette, motivation and reading improvement.
4. Of the sixteen schools, three schools, the University of Massachusetts-Boston, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, and CA Polytechnic, San Luis Obispo, had the most in common with the University of Wisconsin-Stout, with a total of five matches each.
5. Peer universities are offering web based resources for students who many not have the time to fit the course into their schedule.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations made by the researcher for improvement of the University of Wisconsin-Stout’s course “Strategies for Academic Success”:

1. Research the topics covered by the peer universities, career exploration, classroom etiquette, which are not covered by the University of Wisconsin-Stout, and include them in the course “Strategies for Academic Success.”
2. Conduct further research on the schools that have comparable programs, University of Wisconsin-Stout, University of Massachusetts-Boston, University of Minnesota- Twin Cities, and CA Polytechnic, San Luis Obispo, to improve the program held on the University of Wisconsin-Stout campus.

3. Establish web-based resources for students who need some quick answers to issues such as: test taking skills, goal setting, etc.
4. Continue to include academic monitoring as part of the core curriculum.

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