Academic and Career Engagement on a Tight Budget

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About NSU

• Four-Year and Graduate Degree Granting University
• Over 9000 students enrolled on 4 campuses and online
• Approximately 1100 entering (FTF) freshmen on the Natchitoches campus
• In all but two academic departments faculty serve as academic advisors
• Professional staff serve as advisors in College of Nursing and University College
• All entering freshmen are required to complete freshmen orientation
• Orientation courses are department specific (FIGs)
• Counseling and Career Services counsels undecided students, as needed
Academic and Career Engagement

• Mandated by NSU QEP for all entering freshmen on the Natchitoches campus
• Integrate career advising with academic advising
• Through freshmen orientation students explore at least 3 career options via the career assessment portfolio TypeFocus™
• Freshmen meet with their academic advisors to address their career options
• Freshmen choose majors that match their values, interests, skills, and aspirations
• Freshmen will develop and regularly update their career portfolios with the assistance of their academic advisors.
• Retention rates will improve with students pursuing careers that give purpose to their college experiences.
About TypeFocus™

• Cost is about $1000/year/institution
• Advisors can access student results
• Helps students
  – Identify Personality Types (63 questions)
  – Identify Values (33 questions)
  – Identify Interests (list and pick from 3 interest clusters)
  – Identify Skills (4 checklists on 4 different work areas)
  – Identify Careers (that match the above)
  – Identify and Improve Success Factors (35 questions)
  – Write Resumes
  – Create Online Career Portfolios
The Plan

• ACE advisors (primarily full-time faculty) would receive release time for training and for advising 25 to 30 entering freshmen at least 3 times during their first semester.
• Two career counselors would work with ACE to counsel students who remained indecisive.
• An assistant director would oversee the ACE advisors.
• ACE funds would provide release time, for faculty, and salaries for two counselors, the assistant director, and an administrative assistant.
REALITY!
Academic and Career Engagement on a Tight Budget!
Plan B

- Start with a pilot group for Fall 2009
- Pilot group to include College of Nursing and University College (using professional advisors)
- College of Education and Scholars’ College volunteered to participate, also
- Pilot group addressed 1/3 of entering freshmen
- The career exploration process is facilitated primarily through orientation class
- Orientation instructors are also the ACE Advisors
- Counseling and career services will advise indecisive students
Essential Ingredients

According to Brown and Krane (2000) there are 5 essential ingredients in an effective career intervention program:

• Modeling the career exploration process
• Writing about career options and career goals
• Building support networks of peers, parents, faculty, staff
• Information on the world of work
• One-to-one dialogue between client and counselor concerning career related issues.
The 4-Step Career Exploration Process

Grand Rapids Community College uses a 4-step career development process in their Career Development Center. These steps involve:

1. Self-Awareness
2. Career Exploration
3. Decision Making
4. Taking Action
The Career Exploration Guide!

- Serves to guide students, orientation instructors and advisors through TypeFocus™ and the 4-step career development process
- Serves as a model of the career exploration process
- Addresses the other essential ingredients for career intervention
- Can be found on our website at http://ace.nsula.edu/resources
Required Assignments from the Guide

• Completing the TypeFocus inventories
• Writing about 3 career options
• Discussing your career options with your academic advisor
• Developing a support network, for career advice, consisting of at least two NSU faculty/staff.
• Developing a career portfolio that ACE advisors will continue to address throughout the student’s college experience
Freshmen Career Exploration Center

• Staffed by two Graduate Assistants and one SPS student intern

• To further assist students with the career exploration process and other advising related issues

• A major source of support for the ACE advisors and ACE orientation instructors i.e. will assist with grading and recording the results of assignments from the Career Exploration Guide and will contact students, as needed.
Expansion Plan

• Approach additional colleges this fall to discuss how this plan could work with their departments for Fall 2010
• Provide training for ACE advisors and Orientation Instructors
• Hire an additional career counselor
• Repeat the above steps for Fall 2011
• Have all entering freshmen participating in the ACE initiative by Fall 2011
Ultimately

• Career advising will be fully integrated with academic advising
• All entering freshmen will have fully developed career portfolios when they graduate
• Academic and Career Engagement at NSU!
How about You?

• Orientation is not required on your campus?
• No Advising Director?
• No TypeFocus™?
• Other Questions?

Many thanks to all! Please call me 318-357-5043 or email foxd@nsula.edu anytime. Powerpoint on website http://ace.nsula.edu/advisingresources
References


• Gore, P., University of Utah, *Best Practices in Promoting Career and Academic Success*, NCDA Workshop, St. Louis MO, June 2009

• Phifer, P., Grand Rapids Community College, *4-Step Career Development Process*, NCDA Presentation, St. Louis MO, July 2009