Structured Seminars for Domestic and International Freshmen: Their Impact on Students and Retention

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Duquesne University

NACADA National Conference 2015
Duquesne University
About Duquesne

• Private Catholic University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

• Founded more than 130 years ago by the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Founded in 1878)

• Only Spiritan Institution of Higher Learning in the United States
Students and Academics

- 9,757 Students
  - 6,101 Undergraduates
  - 3,656 Graduate and Professional Students

Nine Schools of Study

76 Undergraduate Degree Programs

84 Master’s Doctoral and Professional Programs

21 Post-graduate Certificate Programs

Source: Duquesne University website - September 2015
Freshmen Transition Courses

• Strategies – Academic Success – 1 credit
  – Designed to help students understand the academic rigors of college

• Academic Strategies for International Students – 0-1 credit
  – Designed to help international students enhance their study skills and understand American system of education

• Seminar New International Students – 0-1 credit
  – Designed to help new undergraduate and graduate international students adjust to the social and academic aspects of D.U.

• Intro to University Success – 1 credit
  Designed to help students adjust to their new surroundings as University Students – sections for athletes and spiritan students
Freshmen Transition Courses (cont.)

Gateway to Business – 2 credits

- Provides an overview of the curriculum offerings and organization of the School of Business Administration

Pre-Prof Pharm Development Seminar – 1 credit

- Introduce students to the history of pharmacy and to various career paths of the pharmacy profession. Students will also be familiarized with policies and procedures of the Mylan School of Pharmacy

Freshmen Seminar – 1 credit (School of Nursing)

- Focusing on the new student as learner and nursing student...the seminar will also explore the challenges of social and emotional adjustment to college and the rigors of a nursing program.
Freshmen Seminar – School of Nursing

- One Credit – Pass/Fail
- Mandatory for all Nursing Freshmen and Transfer Students
- One hour per week for 13 weeks
  - Content
    - Navigating Technology
      - E-books
      - Blackboard
      - DORI
      - ATI
Freshmen Seminar – School of Nursing

Content (cont.)

**College Success**
- Active Involvement
- Social Interaction and Collaboration
- Personal Reflection

**Higher Education and Liberal Arts**
- Expectations
- Value of Liberal Arts Education

**Study Skills**
- Setting Goals
- Math Proficiency
- Test-taking
- Professional Development
Methods of Instruction

Projects

• Group Video Project on Campus Student Service Organizations
• 2 Reflection Papers
• Math Exam
• Career Plan

Guest Speakers

• Student Wellness Center
• Writing Center
• DU – Cares – Drug and Alcohol Awareness
• School of Nursing Faculty
School of Nursing Retention Rates

5 Year On-Time Graduation and Attrition Rates for BSN Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduation Year</th>
<th>On-Time Graduation Rate</th>
<th>Attrition Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Seminar for New International Students

Objective: Social and Academic Adjustment

- Optional for any new international students in any programs
- 0 to 1 credit
- Letter grade
- Meet twice for 7 weeks
Seminar for New International Students (cont.)

• Topics
  - Student/Faculty relationship
  - Expectations of Faculty
  - Classroom Etiquettes
  - American System of Education
  - Cross-cultural Communication
  - Campus and off-campus social life
  - Study skills
Academic Strategies for International Students

Objective: Academic Skills Enhancement

- mandatory course for students on academic probation and warning
- mandatory for students with one “F” grade in ESL courses
- ESL students taking both ESL and academic courses
- Offered as 0 (Pass/Fail) or 1 credit (letter grade)
- Meet twice for seven weeks
Academic Strategies for International Students (cont.)

• Topics
  - Study Skills
  - Self academic assessment
  - Students’ expectations of faculty
  - Faculty expectations of students
  - Communicating with teachers
  - Overcoming Public Speaking fear
  - Learning Styles
## Retention of International Students in Academic Strategies Seminar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>#of Students in Seminar</th>
<th>Graduated/Currently Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sp2009</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fl2009</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sp2010</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fl2010</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL2011</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP2012</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL2012</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP2013</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL2013</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sp2014</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fl2014</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sp2015</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Su2015</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>134</strong></td>
<td><strong>92 (69%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Institutional Research Office, Duquesne University
Objective: College Expectations and adjustment

- Optional
- One credit
- Choice of twice a week for 8 weeks or once a week for 15 weeks
- Letter grade
Intro to University Success (cont.)

Topics:

• Campus Resources
• Student Organizations
• Multiple intelligence
• Major/Academic Requirements
• University Policies on campus life and academic integrity
• Student and Faculty Expectations
• Academic and Social Skills
Strategies for Academic Success for Domestic Students

Objective: Understand academic rigors

• Optional
• One-credit
• Letter Grade
• Choice of twice a week for 7 weeks or one a week for 15 weeks
Strategies for Academic Success for Domestic Students (cont.)

Topics:

• Academic expectations of college life
• Study skills (note-taking, time management, effective reading and writing, critical thinking, text-taking and anxiety, stress management, public speaking ........)
• GPA projection
• Social Skills
Research on Academic and Personal Development of Students

- Population: 110 total Freshmen enrolled in “Intro to University Success” and “Strategies for Academic Success” courses
- Demographic questionnaire
- Quantitative Pre and Post-test
- Open-ended questions at end of semester
- Likert-scale instrument
Demographic Information

Population 110 students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender: Male</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity: White</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools: Liberal Arts</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>1</td>
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## Results of Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test Taking</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note Taking</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-awareness</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of and adaptability to evn.</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>.4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pathways to Success

Objective: Enhancement of study skills

• One credit
• Letter Grade
• Mandatory for all second semester freshmen with a GPA below 2.0
• Once a week whole semester
• Domestic and international students (not taking ESL courses)
Pathways to Success (cont.)

Topics:

• Academic expectations of college life
• Study skills (note-taking, time management, effective reading and writing, critical thinking, text-taking and anxiety, stress management, public speaking ........)
• GPA projection
• Social Skills
• Academic self-assessment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th># of Students</th>
<th>1st Year Retention(%)</th>
<th>2nd Year Retention (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FL08</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP09</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL09</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP10</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL10</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP11</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL11</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP12</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL12</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL13</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP14</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL08/SP09</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL09/SP10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL10/SP11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL11/SP12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL12/SP13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL13/SP14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>NAS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Institutional Research Office, Duquesne University
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-time Full-time Freshman Retention Rate (1)</th>
<th>FA 2008 Cohort</th>
<th>Fall 2009 Cohort</th>
<th>FA 2010 Cohort</th>
<th>FA 2011 Cohort</th>
<th>FA 2012 Cohort</th>
<th>FA 2013 Cohort</th>
<th>FA 2014 Cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FA&gt;SP</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>95.4</td>
<td>95.3</td>
<td>97.0</td>
<td>94.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA&gt;FA</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>87.0</td>
<td>88.8</td>
<td>88.7</td>
<td>89.8</td>
<td>???</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*National First to Second Year Retention Rates - Based on data accumulated by ACT 2014*

*Degree Level/Control: PhD Private Institutions - Average: 80.9%

*Degree Level/Control: PhD Public Institutions - Average: 77.9%

*Admission Selectivity: Private Selective Institutions Offering Bachelors, Masters & Doctoral - Average: 83.0%

*Source: ACT, Inc. - ACT Institutional Data*

(1) Initial cohort includes all first-time full-time freshmen including new entrants into the six-year Doctor of Pharmacy program.
Conclusion

- Strategies to serve students require collaborative efforts of different departments and funding from the administration and schools.
- Assessment of the strategies is important in order to make changes and better serve the needs of students.
- Seminars have a positive impact on the students and the university retention rate.