2013

Charting Their Course: Allowing First Year Students to Take Charge of Their Academic Success

Laura Ciccantell
Western Michigan University, laura.ciccantell@wmich.edu

Sarah C. Stangl
Western Michigan University, sarah.c.stangl@wmich.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/assessment_faculty_grant

Part of the Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons

WMU ScholarWorks Citation
Ciccantell, Laura and Stangl, Sarah C., "Charting Their Course: Allowing First Year Students to Take Charge of Their Academic Success" (2013). Assessment Fellows Grant. Paper 19.
http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/assessment_faculty_grant/19

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the Assessment at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Assessment Fellows Grant by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU.
For more information, please contact maira.bundza@wmich.edu.
Charting Their Own Course: Empowering First Year Students to Take Charge of Their Academic Success
Laura Ciccantell and Sarah Stangl
College of Education and Human Development Office of Admissions and Advising

Background

Academic advisors are committed to helping students develop ownership regarding the success of their educational experience and to working with students on a plan that includes numerous opportunities and options for professional success.

Part of our challenge, however, is helping students take responsibility for knowing and completing their program and graduation requirements so that advising time can focus on refining a student’s comprehensive, holistic graduation plan—a pathway to success—that includes:
- mapping out classes
- determining potential academic/lifestyle hurdles and opportunities and ways to surmount or optimize each
- recognizing volunteer/service and other career exploration and resume building prospects
- understanding how to use campus and local resources
- focusing on student identified priorities

Yet many students come to advising with little knowledge of their program and University requirements, which limits efforts to provide more holistic advising that will ensure students succeed.

Our assessment program will help us make data-driven decisions as we redirect students’ understanding of advising appointment preparation.

Objectives and Means of Assessment

The table below details (1) the student learning outcomes, (2) the online pre-advising module in which specific content would be addressed, (3) student mastery criteria, and (4) means of assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Student Mastery Criteria</th>
<th>Means of Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Longer</td>
<td>1. On-line modules can help about 80% of students learn and apply targeted advising and course scheduling content</td>
<td>60% of FYE/Toru students correctly identify course options for next term after watching short module</td>
<td>Program Plan Assessment Rubric: A score of 80% on all questions in online modules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorter</td>
<td>2. Freshmen could not translate module content to full graduation plan</td>
<td>43% increase in students who could correctly identify classes for next term after watching short module</td>
<td>Program Plan Assessment Rubric: A score of 80% on all questions in online modules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorter</td>
<td>3. Students like modules, but want modules to be shorter and interactive</td>
<td>88% of FYE/Toru students said they learned something from the module</td>
<td>Program Plan Assessment Rubric: A score of 80% on all questions in online modules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorter</td>
<td>4. Modules won’t replace advisors, but can supplement our work</td>
<td>Percentage of FYE/Toru students who correctly chose each course for their transcript</td>
<td>Program Plan Assessment Rubric: A score of 80% on all questions in online modules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorter</td>
<td>5. Modules are more effective when used in major specific classes than general advising</td>
<td>Percentage of FYE/Toru students who correctly chose each course for their transcript</td>
<td>Program Plan Assessment Rubric: A score of 80% on all questions in online modules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorter</td>
<td>6. Students can learn from the module independently</td>
<td>Percentage of FYE/Toru students who correctly chose each course for their transcript</td>
<td>Program Plan Assessment Rubric: A score of 80% on all questions in online modules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorter</td>
<td>7. Students value modules as a learning tool</td>
<td>Percentage of FYE/Toru students who correctly chose each course for their transcript</td>
<td>Program Plan Assessment Rubric: A score of 80% on all questions in online modules</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results

Assessment of Student Learning

Students Demonstrated Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 1: What did you learn from the module?</th>
<th>Percentage of FYE/Toru students who correctly chose each course for their transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial counseling</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job search strategies</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer options</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic knowledge</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career knowledge</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of support services</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of program requirements</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of graduation planning</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of course scheduling</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of academic priorities</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessment of Process

The vast majority of students would recommend modules to others and felt modules were good use of their time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Percentage of FYE/Toru students who correctly chose each course for their transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Longer</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorter</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Suggested Improvements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Percentage of FYE/Toru students who correctly chose each course for their transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Longer</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorter</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But... Students Still Wanted/Needed Advisor Assistance to Successfully Transfer Knowledge to Program Planning

- 100% of students who viewed either module had questions for an advisor about their course selections and/or their individual major specific program plan.
- 100% of students wanted advisor sign-off on their planned classes and/or program plan.

Project Development

Created Two On-Line Modules

Longer Module (20 minutes)
- In depth presentation of first 3 learning outcomes
  - Included narration
  - Students viewed at home
  - Required in FYE and FCS 1500 classes

Short Module (5 minutes)
- No sound
- Viewed in public computer lab with staff available to assist
- Optional while waiting to meet with advisor

Next Steps/Closing the Loop

- Develop Module Users
- Revise modules to be shorter, major specific, and more interactive
- Integrate Degree Works program planning into modules
- Pilot modules in a major specific class

Assessment of Process

- Integrate modules into baccalaureate majors
- Institute assessment of process
- Create and use program planning rubric
- Expand module use to support program planning in additional targeted advising and course scheduling content

Assessment of Student Learning

- Efficacy of modules in improving student learning outcomes
- Student feedback on module effectiveness
- Module content alignment with program planning rubric

What We Learned

1. On-line modules can help about 80% of students learn and apply targeted advising and course scheduling content
2. Freshmen could not translate module content to full graduation plan
3. Students like modules, but want modules to be shorter
   - Major Specific
   - Very Interactive
4. Modules won’t replace advisors, but can supplement our work
5. Modules are more effective when used in major specific classes than in open advising

Next Steps/Closing the Loop

- Revise modules to be shorter, major specific, and more interactive
- Integrate Degree Works program planning into modules
- Expand module use to support program planning in additional targeted advising and course scheduling content
- Make Program Plan Rubric easily available to students and advisors as key learning tool

Special Thanks

Alex Aivars, Johanna Kelly
Kim Ballard, Dianna Sachs
Katharine Cummings, Susan Stapleton
Ann Grillo, Pat Webster
and the entire staff in the CoEHD Office of Undergraduate Admissions and Advising

Piloted in Fall 2012

Full module required in
- Three FYE 2100: First Year Experience courses taught by CoEHD advising staff (60 students)
- One FCS 1500: Intro to Interior Design taught by faculty member (18 students)
- Short pre-advising module offered to CoEHD walk-in advising students in October 2012 (155 students)