2013

Intensive Follow-Up of WMU Probation Students to Increase Retention and Academic Success

Bette Ludwig  
*Western Michigan University*, bette.ludwig@wmich.edu

Patricia Hinckley  
*Western Michigan University*, patricia.a.hinckley@wmich.edu

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

Part of the Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons

WMU ScholarWorks Citation

Ludwig, Bette and Hinckley, Patricia, "Intensive Follow-Up of WMU Probation Students to Increase Retention and Academic Success" (2013). *Assessment Fellows Grant*. 18.  
https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/assessment_faculty_grant/18

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 wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.
The purpose of this project was to increase retention within the College of Arts and Sciences. Students on probation with a 1.99 or lower and less than 56 credits were identified for intensive intervention to develop appropriate student learning objectives in keeping with the mission and strategic goals of the University.

This proposal aligned with the first goal of WMU’s strategic plan: Ensure a distinctive learning experience and foster the success of students, and more specifically, to provide tools to foster the success of our students by identifying the barriers to retention and graduation, and create services to meet the needs of our students.

### WMU Probation Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Total Freshman Targeted</th>
<th>Total Freshman Participating</th>
<th>Total Freshman Completed</th>
<th>Total Sophomore Targeted</th>
<th>Total Sophomore Participating</th>
<th>Total Sophomore Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Dismissal rates over the past two years at WMU as a whole and in the College of Arts and Sciences has not changed significantly.

• 68% of all students dismissed from fall 2009 to spring 2011 were freshmen and sophomores not only in the College of Arts and Sciences but the entire University.

The University is losing the majority of students in the first and second years. It is imperative to target students in the early stages to provide them with the necessary tools to succeed academically and gradually to succeed.

In recent years, more focus has been placed on non-cognitive factors and how those factors can affect academic success. For example, students with high self-esteem, self-awareness, mastery goal orientation and high locus of control tend to be more successful than peers deficient in those skills.

The purpose of this program was to help students identify and increase their non-cognitive skills in order to be academically successful, retained, and graduate.

Once the HSIRB Protocol was submitted and approved, a graduate student was hired from the WMU counseling program to meet with students Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 for a minimum of 5 meetings.

Students were asked to take the following inventories in their first meeting after signing a consent form agreeing to participate:

- Anxiety Inventory
- Authentic Happiness Inventory
- Locus of Control Inventory
- Learning Styles Inventory
- Personality Inventory
- Strengths Based Inventory

The following three inventories were administered again during the final meeting:

- Anxiety Inventory
- Authentic Happiness Inventory
- Locus of Control Inventory

In addition to meeting with the graduate student and taking the inventories listed, students were also asked to do the following:

- Create a calendar or day planner for use during the semester
- See their general education, major, and/or minor advisors
- Develop an understanding about academically planning out their future semesters

Most data from the inventories appear inconclusive. However, some interesting personality indicators appeared:

- 61% of participants scored as extroverted types versus introverted types.
- 61% of participants scored as sensing types versus intuitive types.

### Fall 2012 Semester

105 total students were targeted which consisted of all freshmen and sophomores in the College of Arts and Sciences on probation Fall 2012 Semester.

### Spring 2013 Semester As of Spring Break

More freshmen were targeted since many more freshmen than sophomores were on probation with significantly lower G.P.A.s.

### Conclusion

- Many students today work too many hours, do not study enough, and/or just are not ready for college. However, many more students have far more emotional or non-cognitive factors impacting their academic success.

- The belief that probation students just do not study enough or lack the ability to succeed academically is a myth. In order to start helping probation students, or any student struggling, we need to understand the deeper non-cognitive or emotional issues they are facing.

### References


### Acknowledgements

The Assessment Fellows Grant Committee for seeing value in working with probation students on non-cognitive factors.

The College of Arts and Sciences Advising Office for allowing us to use office space and access to probation students.

The College of Arts and Sciences Dean’s Office for supporting the project.

Patricia Hinckley for her commitment to this project and her tireless effort to help the students once they agreed to be part of the study.

All the probation students that agreed to participate and found value in being part of the study.

### Contact Information

Bette A. Ludwig, M.S.
Academic Advisor
Psychology Department
2124 Wood Hall
Western Michigan University
1903 W. Michigan Ave
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

Phone: 269-387-4475
Email: bette.ludwig@wmich.edu

### Targeted students were:

- Sent a letter by U.S. Mail
- E-mailed a minimum of 3 times
- Called at least 2 times

**23 STUDENTS COMPLETED THE STUDY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retained</th>
<th>19 (79%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 of the 19 Off probation</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Continued on extended probation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Dismissed</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 of the 14 Dismissed</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Initial Appointments:

- 61% Responded to e-mail
- 32% Responded to a phone call
- Less than 1% responded to the letter
- 67% of completers responded to e-mail
- 22% of completers responded to a phone call

### Issues students faced during Fall 2012 Semester:

- Abortion
- Anorexia
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Domestic Violence
- Gender Issues
- Legal/Court Issues
- Loss: Death of a Parent/Grandparent/Aunt
- Borderline Personality Disorder
- Relationship Issues
- Suicidal Ideation
- Suicide Attempt
- Sexual Addiction

### References


