

Community College of Philadelphia
Leadership Institute
2009-2010

Final Project Report

Academic Checkup

Catrina Cameron
Lawrence DeAngelis
Anne Dempster

The Community College of Philadelphia produces numerous amounts of publications, including the College Catalog, Course Listings, departmental handouts and online postings to ensure that students are aware of what will happen, what is happening and what can happen during their journey to academic success. As we know the tools provided are not always user friendly and at times are not utilized for guidance. Some students do not need the guidance provided due to several factors, for example, being non-degree seeking students (guest students) or only taking courses for job enrichment (continuing education courses or corporate college). But the reality is many students need guidance for success and it is our jobs as academia professionals to provide students with the tools they need to succeed in way that they may respond to them. The reality is that some students do not succeed for many reasons and lack of early intervention is one of those reasons. According to Office of Institutional Research at the Community College of Philadelphia, statistics reported in November 2006, showed that in the Spring and Fall semesters combined of 2002, 11,546 students departed from the Community College of Philadelphia. Forty percent of those students departed because of being unsuccessful. Unsuccessful, in this report is defined as earning a GPA less than a 2.0 or never attempting to take college-level courses. Our challenge is to prevent the primary causes that allow students to be unsuccessful. We need to intervene before

these causes present themselves so that they may be addressed in a timely manner. The way we may be able to do so is by identifying the causes and addressing the indicators that lead to these causes. Early intervention is a prevention method they may help more of our students succeed.

The purpose of our project is to provide self-awareness, increase knowledge of current curriculum, and increase retention. The purpose of the Academic Check-up is to help students meet their full potential by gaining a greater insight into their strengths and needs. An academic checkup, in likeness to a medical checkup, is a time to get a better snapshot of the progress of a patient or in this case a student. Depending on the outcome of their history, it will determine the next course of action. In a medical checkup, the doctor will offer advice, medication, or a referral to a specialist. In an academic checkup, a student could receive advice and information, possible tutoring, or a referral to see a counselor. The point of both is to reduce the number of indicators that can lead to unsuccessful or unhealthy development.

Tentatively, our project was to be a program based on a given question or set of questions provided by us, that will help develop a goal statement for a student. The answers to the "goal statement" which will be provided by the student will trigger more questions or provide information. These answers will hold different values and raise flags. At the end of the questioning the values will be calculated then allowing the student to be placed in one of three levels. The student could be congratulated on their progress with no need to move on, informed about red flags that have come up and provided with a warning, or referred to meet with someone in the Counseling Department. It is our hope that once a counseling referral has been made the program will tie into the counseling scheduling system allowing students to make their appointment on the spot. It is the job of this team to develop a process from beginning to end. What questions will be asked in the goal statement? What answers will generate information? What answers will generate red flags? Will the questions and/or answers be curriculum based? What will be the values of the answers? How many levels are needed at the end of the questioning? What is considered early for early intervention?

What type of students will or will not receive an academic checkup? Will the checkup be mandatory? How often will a student need a checkup?

Through our many meetings and research, we discovered that approximately more than 50% of currently enrolled Culture, Science and Technology students received grades below the minimum requirements, in selected courses, to be successful. We selected six key courses (BIOL 106, BIOL 109, BIOL 110, CHEM 110, CHEM 118 and MATH 118) as our red flag criteria for the Academic Check-Up.

The Academic Check-Up generates two tiers of students.

Tier #1: Optional - Students who are on the right path to their academic/career goals.

Tier #2: Must –Indicators show student goals are not being met and they must do the advising process.

Our group has come up with three Advising Process options:

1. Culture, Science, and Technology web-site to gain useful information.
(<http://faculty.ccp.edu/dept/cst/>).
2. On-line video that explains curriculum programs and requirements with cautionary message.
3. Actual meeting with counselors to discuss the student educational and career goals and their progress.