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**Student Completion Agenda –**

**The Literature and Data on College Success Skills Courses**

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**What the National Research Tells Us**

There is a considerable amount of research indicating that programs intended to provide students with early support (first-year experience, orientation, and college success skills courses) are associated with better student outcomes, making participation in such programs a potential indicator of momentum toward completion.

A model for college readiness, developed by David Conley (2007), envisions college readiness as a multi-faceted concept that includes key cognitive strategies (intellectual habits), academic knowledge and skills (content knowledge), academic behaviors (self-awareness, self-monitoring), and contextual skills and awareness (college knowledge).

*How Non-Academic Supports Work: Four Mechanisms for Improving Student Outcomes*, Melinda Mechur Karp, Community College Research Center (April 2011).

While allowing for the advantages of advising, the author also notes that “since colleges often have difficulty implementing enhanced advising, alternative methods are needed to help students clarify their goals and identify steps for achieving them. Student success courses are a promising vehicle for this, as they allow students to engage in major and career exploration, program planning, and course advising over multiple weeks with an instructor who has the opportunity to know them well. Moreover, delivering services to 30 students in one classroom is more resource-efficient than providing 30 students with individual advising sessions.”

The author continues: “Providing students with college know-how may improve outcomes, but it is not frequently done on college campuses. Giving students accurate and clear information is a challenge, since guidance and counseling services in colleges are overburdened and underfunded, and efforts to disseminate information are often not well-coordinated. Student success courses may be a useful vehicle for providing basic information in a timely, efficient manner. In addition, streamlining students’ options and better structuring their choices may make college easier to navigate (Scott-Clayton, 2010)” (p.2).

**SVC Data**

**SENSE – Fall 2010**

Skagit Valley College included a group of special focus questions as part of the SENSE survey administration in fall 2010. These questions related to student success courses. The initial prompt asked students if they had taken during their first term at the college a “Student Success Course.” There were 152 students who reported doing so and their responses to the remaining questions about the impacts of taking that course are below.

| **This course helped me develop skills to become a better student.** | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|  | Strongly Agree | 55 | 36.2 | 36.2 | 36.2 |
| Agree | 52 | 34.2 | 34.2 | 70.4 |
| Neutral | 29 | 19.1 | 19.1 | 89.5 |
| Disagree | 9 | 5.9 | 5.9 | 95.4 |
| Strongly Disagree | 7 | 4.6 | 4.6 | 100.0 |
| Total | 152 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

| **This course helped me to feel more connected to the college.** | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|  | Strongly Agree | 44 | 28.9 | 28.9 | 28.9 |
| Agree | 54 | 35.5 | 35.5 | 64.5 |
| Neutral | 35 | 23.0 | 23.0 | 87.5 |
| Disagree | 9 | 5.9 | 5.9 | 93.4 |
| Strongly Disagree | 10 | 6.6 | 6.6 | 100.0 |
| Total | 152 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

| **This course helped me to feel more connected to the college.** | | | | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | | Frequency | | Percent | | Valid Percent | | Cumulative Percent | |
|  | Strongly Agree | | 44 | | 28.9 | | 28.9 | | 28.9 | |
| Agree | | 54 | | 35.5 | | 35.5 | | 64.5 | |
| Neutral | | 35 | | 23.0 | | 23.0 | | 87.5 | |
| Disagree | | 9 | | 5.9 | | 5.9 | | 93.4 | |
| Strongly Disagree | | 10 | | 6.6 | | 6.6 | | 100.0 | |
| Total | | 152 | | 100.0 | | 100.0 | |  | |
| **This course helped me to improve my study skills (listening, note-taking, highlighting readings, working with others, etc.).** | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | Frequency | | Percent | | Valid Percent | | Cumulative Percent | |
|  | Strongly Agree | 48 | | 31.6 | | 31.6 | | 31.6 | |
| Agree | 53 | | 34.9 | | 34.9 | | 66.4 | |
| Neutral | 28 | | 18.4 | | 18.4 | | 84.9 | |
| Disagree | 13 | | 8.6 | | 8.6 | | 93.4 | |
| Strongly Disagree | 10 | | 6.6 | | 6.6 | | 100.0 | |
| Total | 152 | | 100.0 | | 100.0 | |  | |
| **This course helped me to understand my academic strengths and weaknesses.** | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | Frequency | | Percent | | Valid Percent | | Cumulative Percent | |
|  | Strongly Agree | 42 | | 27.6 | | 27.6 | | 27.6 | |
| Agree | 53 | | 34.9 | | 34.9 | | 62.5 | |
| Neutral | 37 | | 24.3 | | 24.3 | | 86.8 | |
| Disagree | 13 | | 8.6 | | 8.6 | | 95.4 | |
| Strongly Disagree | 7 | | 4.6 | | 4.6 | | 100.0 | |
| Total | 152 | | 100.0 | | 100.0 | |  | |

| **This course helped me to develop a written plan for how and when I can achieve my academic goals.** | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|  | Strongly Agree | 42 | 27.6 | 27.6 | 27.6 |
| Agree | 53 | 34.9 | 34.9 | 62.5 |
| Neutral | 31 | 20.4 | 20.4 | 82.9 |
| Disagree | 18 | 11.8 | 11.8 | 94.7 |
| Strongly Disagree | 8 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 100.0 |
| Total | 152 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

| **This course helped me to improve my test-taking ability.** | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|  | Strongly Agree | 30 | 19.7 | 19.9 | 19.9 |
| Agree | 42 | 27.6 | 27.8 | 47.7 |
| Neutral | 48 | 31.6 | 31.8 | 79.5 |
| Disagree | 19 | 12.5 | 12.6 | 92.1 |
| Strongly Disagree | 12 | 7.9 | 7.9 | 100.0 |
| Total | 151 | 99.3 | 100.0 |  |
|  | System Missing | 1 | .7 |  |  |
| Total | | 152 | 100.0 |  |  |

| **This course helped me to improve my time management skills.** | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Strongly agree | 41 | 27.0 | 27.9 | 27.9 |
| Agree | 49 | 32.2 | 33.3 | 61.2 |
| Neutral | 33 | 21.7 | 22.4 | 83.7 |
| Disagree | 17 | 11.2 | 11.6 | 95.2 |
| Strongly Agree | 7 | 4.6 | 4.8 | 100.0 |
| Total | 147 | 96.7 | 100.0 |  |
| Missing | System | 5 | 3.3 |  |  |
| Total | | 152 | 100.0 |  |  |
| **This course helped me to develop my skills and strategies for reading textbooks and other materials.** | | | | | |
|  | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Strongly agree | 37 | 24.3 | 25.2 | 25.2 |
| Agree | 49 | 32.2 | 33.3 | 58.5 |
| Neutral | 32 | 21.1 | 21.8 | 80.3 |
| Disagree | 21 | 13.8 | 14.3 | 94.6 |
| Strongly Agree | 8 | 5.3 | 5.4 | 100.0 |
| Total | 147 | 96.7 | 100.0 |  |
| Missing | System | 5 | 3.3 |  |  |
| Total | | 152 | 100.0 |  |  |

| **This course helped me to learn about college services that are available to help students succeed in their studies.** | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Strongly agree | 48 | 31.6 | 32.9 | 32.9 |
| Agree | 64 | 42.1 | 43.8 | 76.7 |
| Neutral | 24 | 15.8 | 16.4 | 93.2 |
| Disagree | 8 | 5.3 | 5.5 | 98.6 |
| Strongly Agree | 2 | 1.3 | 1.4 | 100.0 |
| Total | 146 | 96.1 | 100.0 |  |
| Missing | System | 6 | 3.9 |  |  |
| Total | | 152 | 100.0 |  |  |

**CCSSE - Spring 2003 to 2010 Administrations**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Study skills course** | | | |  |
|  | 2003 | 2005 | 2007 | 2010 |
| I have not done, nor plan to do | 65.1 | 66.8 | 59.9 | 66.6 |
| I plan to do | 17.0 | 17.1 | 17.6 | 15.9 |
| I have done | 17.8 | 16.1 | 22.5 | 17.5 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Percent plan to do or have done | 34.9 | 33.2 | 40.1 | 33.4 |

An analysis comparing 2010 responses of students who stated the who had not done nor planned to attend a study skills course and those who reported they had done so in the following.

Students who responded that they had attended a college orientation program or course reported a significantly higher use of and satisfaction with academic advising, peer or other tutoring, and skills labs (writing, math, etc.).

Respondents who said they had taken a study skills course reported a significantly higher response rate regarding the extent to which the college encouraged them to spend time studying and to interact with students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic background.

Note: these were all significant at the .01 level.