



Student Support and Equity Programs Summer Transition Program Impact on First Generation College Students Assessment Report

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Type of Assessment: Learning Outcome(s) Assessment

Date of Assessment Implementation: June – July 2010

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Purpose of Assessment

To identify students' perceptions and level of confidence in their own understanding and abilities to meet the expectations of university life and to determine if we are reaching our objectives through the Summer Bridge Program.

Targeted Learning Outcome

After participating in the one week Summer Bridge transition program, students will indicate an increased confidence in their knowledge, skill, and ability related to specific learning outcomes with a minimum of 85% frequency in the "Agree to Strongly Agree" category.

Specific learning outcomes included: 1.) Use library resources to find high quality information to draft a college level research paper; 2.) Incorporate effective strategies to learn in environments different from your own learning style; 3.) Describe the actions to take to meet faculty expectations in a college course; 4.) Define at least two elements critical for making an effective college level speech/presentation; 5.) Determine the costs involved in paying for college; 6.) Read and interpret an Award Summary on Bronco Direct; 7.) Describe more than two careers related to a major; 8.) Describe the significance of taking responsibility for personal actions when pursuing an education; 9.) Identify advising tools and university resources; 10.) Develop an effective weekly study plan incorporating life balancing strategies; 11.) Define at least one healthy behavior to ensure physical well being while in college; 12.) Define the meaning of diversity.

Assessment Methodology

All student participants completed a pre and post assessment which asked them to rate their level of agreement with statements related to the learning outcomes (LO's) of the program. Additionally, students were asked to identify up to three things they hoped to learn (pre) and up to three things they actually learned (post) about university life from their Summer Bridge experience.

Results

Based on analysis of the pre/post assessment data, most of the program's learning outcomes achieved an 85% or higher response rating of "Agree to Strongly Agree". Students indicated positive growth and confidence with all learning objectives, but the greatest increases appeared in the areas of 1.) Utilizing library and other reference materials to meet the expectations of college level research papers and presentations (**45% pre to 92% post**), 2.) Appreciating and valuing faculty expectations and taking responsibility for their own education (**54% pre to 92% post**), 3.) defining and incorporating critical elements for making an effective college level speech/presentation (**45% pre to 90% post**), 4.) Determining the costs of and means to pay for their education (**50% pre to 96%**

post), and 5.) Knowing specific academic advising resources to use to develop an academic/graduation plan (**22% pre to 74% post**).

For all but three of the twelve specific learning outcomes listed above, students' rating frequency on the post-assessment within the "Agree to Strongly Agree" categories reached 85% or higher. Of the three specific learning outcomes with post assessment results below an 85% frequency of "Agree to Strongly Agree", it must be noted that there was still a relevant increase in students' perceptions of confidence and knowing. It can be concluded that learning took place and students felt confident in their skill, knowledge, or application of this information.

Students also described what they believed to be the top three things they learned from their Summer Bridge experience. These things fell into the following twelve themes ranked highest to lowest: 1.) time and task management for balanced living as college students, 2.) campus resources and the importance of identifying and using them, 3.) health and physical wellness in college, 4.) self esteem and self confidence for college success, 5.) the value of support networks, family, and friends, 6.) college study skills and strategies for college success, 7.) responsibility and taking ownership of own education, 8.) academic and faculty expectations, 9.) on campus living, 10.) Diversity and social awareness, 11.) Managing financial aid/cost of education, and 12.) The major/career connection.

Conclusion

In general, the one week summer transition program exposed students to the rigors and expectations of university life increasing their personal sense of belonging and belief in their readiness for the college experience. There are a few areas, however, in which the reduction in the size and scope of this year's program may have impacted the outcome. For example, despite an increase from 22% to 74% of the students indicating agreement with better knowing the advising resources to map out an academic plan, the 85% frequency of agreement was not achieved. This may be a result of the limited time available to present and review university expectations as well as apply strategies to develop academic plans.

Similarly, students responded at 69% level of agreement to being able to identify the advising resources available to interpret university policy/procedure which is an increase from the pre assessment of 35%. It is very likely that those instances of learning related to classroom and/or academic matters more closely mimicking the high school experience better resonated with the students in this shorter version of the Summer Bridge Program, such as teacher/faculty expectations, while topics relatively new to the students' previous experiences, such as advising resources and university policy, need a bit more time to ensure greater confidence in understanding and application.

Implications for Practice

While the students indicated getting a great deal from this one week experience, there are a few things which should be considered when planning future summer transition experiences for this specific student population.

- Expand length of program to allow for more in depth learning experiences.
- Identify specific expected learning outcome responses for those LO's in which a student response is required on the assessment instrument to compare pre and post knowledge.
- Consider reducing the amount of information covered in specific program sessions to ensure greater comprehension of most pertinent material especially if program remains one week.
- Incorporate more specific measurement tools throughout the program to best determine students' grasp of information and/or skill development.
- Calculate results of pre assessment early on to inform facilitators and advisors of the student cohort needs.