

Department Name  
**Evaluating Students Knowledge of Academic Policies**  
Assessment Report

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**Choose One:** Other

**Date of Assessment Implementation:** August 2018-May 2019

**Date of Report:** July 2019

**Purpose of Assessment**

ARCHES provides comprehensive and individualized supplemental academic advising each semester. Students meet with their ARCHES advisor for at least one hour each semester to identify educational and career goals, assess for academic difficulties in current courses, clarify campus procedures and academic policies, and identify and recommend additional learning support services as needed. A goal of ARCHES advising is to provide consistency in communication to students and to teach them to feel competent in self-advocacy. The purpose of this assessment is to identify if students are learning academic policies which may result in gaining competencies in self-advocacy and empowerment.

**Division Learning Outcome** Integrative Thinkers - integrating and transferring learning

**Targeted Learning Outcome**

Eighty-five percent of new students will demonstrate knowledge of at least one CPP academic policy after taking part in ARCHES academic advising.

**Assessment Methodology**

Qualitative data was collected during the fall 2018 and spring 2019 semester. ARCHES Advisors conducted individual interviews with all new students and tracked the students' knowledge and comprehension of academic policies. A rubric was used to assess the student's level of knowledge based on observable behaviors. Below is the rubric used to assess the student's knowledge.

Category	Description
1. No knowledge:	The student knows nothing about the policy and has never heard about it before
2. Little Knowledge	The student may have heard about the policy but have no understanding of what it is or where to find out more information about it.
3. Some Knowledge	The student knows about the policy and can explain it somewhat accurately, they know to speak to their advisor but do not know where to find the policy independently.
4. Knowledge	The student can recite the policy in its basic terms and know who to talk to about the policy. They may have an idea of where to find it.
5. Very Knowledgeable	The student can recite the policy accurately and know the steps to follow the policy, they know where to find it and who to speak to.
6. Not Applicable	The student's circumstances did not require a discussion of the policy.

## **Results**

A pre-survey was conducted with 48 new students who joined the ARCHES program. Sixty-four percent (N 31) of students met with their advisor more than once. Most commonly discussed were the following: Enrollment Status, Academic Standing, Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements and Registration Requirements. At the end of the spring semester, students with 2 or more advising appointments demonstrated 99% knowledge of at least one policy. These policies were: Enrollment Status, Academic Standing, and Registration Requirements. Seventy-two percent had an increase in knowledge in these policies, with most students demonstrating “some knowledge”. Other policies discussed with less frequency were: Course Repeat and Grade Forgiveness; Withdrawal for serious and compelling reasons; and Retroactive Withdrawal. Students also demonstrated “some knowledge” of these policies at the end of the academic year.

## **Conclusion**

We met our goal of 85% of students learning a new policy and students overall demonstrated increase of knowledge of the policies. The results indicate that students increase their knowledge of policies (enrollment status and academic standing) when they met with their advisors with more frequency. Other factors that could have contributed to students increase of knowledge is practicing the policy, for example when students register for classes, they must be aware of enrollment dates and maximum units. Students may also receive enrollment reminders from their respective colleges. Therefore, the communication of these policies from multiply target areas could contribute to the high percentage on knowledge.

Advisors would ask each student to report on their progress in their classes. If student shared concerns about failing their courses, advisors would assess factors contributed to their challenges. In most cases reasons students were failing were associated with their disabilities. Most of these disabilities were either neurological and psychological. One example is a student who had a dual diagnosis of generalized anxiety disorder and traumatic brain injury and was taking 15 units, by the 5<sup>th</sup> week of the semester they were failing. The student shared challenges with retention and memory recall of the course material, they reported an increase in their anxiety medication and seeing their psychologist more frequently. They were not aware that their academic challenges were disability related. The policy for “withdrawal for serious and compelling reasons” became a tool for the student to maintain good academic standing and persist.

Through advising, the student became empowered to understand the impacts of this disability and not have feelings of shame in not performing at the same rate as their peers. They demonstrated their ability to self-advocate by exercising all steps of the policy: writing a statement that articulated their reasons for requesting to withdrawal from their course and identifying steps for the future to prevent this.

## **Implications for Practice**

The expectation of ARCHES advising is to exercise consistency in communication to students and teach them to feel confident in self-advocacy. The program met the goal of teaching students about the academic policies that most frequently impact their lives. The data reflected circumstances that create opportunities to teach students to self-advocate and be empowered; however it appears this occurred more when students were struggling. The program needs to explore ways to teach students these skills within all discussion points in advising.

## **Closing the Loop**

The data validated that ARCHES advisors are exceling at educating students on the most commonly used academic policies. To make sure students are not falling through the cracks, the program should incorporate a review of student progress reports at the 6<sup>th</sup> week of the semester.