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Persons - Marlaire, Natalyn M. *Academic Performance of Dismissed Students Reinstated at Chippewa Valley Technical College*

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if the changes in the academic standards dismissal and appeal procedures regarding mandatory semester leave for academically dismissed students had an impact, positively or negatively, on students' academic performance upon reinstatement to the college. Using data from two cohort groups, the study investigated three central objectives: 1) the differences in student academic performance of reinstated students under the old academic standards compared to the performance under the new academic standards. (2) To explore the academic success rates of students on probation plan (PP) compared with students on probation cumulative (PC) plan and (3) to explore the differences in academic performance of students on a probation plan (PP) based on extenuating circumstance that led to academic dismissal. Overall, results indicated that recent changes to the Academic Standards policy have had a positive impact on student success.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Wisconsin's technical colleges play a vital role in ensuring that employers have the skilled workers they will need in the coming years by producing more than 25,000 graduates a year (Wisconsin Technical College System, 2011). The Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) serves approximately 460,000 adults annually, offering a variety of educational options to meet the needs of business and industry partners across the region (Wisconsin Technical College System, 2011). Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) is part of the Wisconsin Technical College System and is one of 16 technical colleges in the state of Wisconsin, encompassing an eleven-county area in west-central Wisconsin.

In 2008, many colleges experienced a surge in student enrollments. As student enrollment increased at four-year, two-year and technical colleges across the nation, retention rates of students continued to decline. Research indicates that half of community college students are first-generation and half leave high school underprepared for college-level coursework (Barnes & Piland, 2010). A 2010 article published in *Education Week* states that half of college freshman, on average, will actually finish, and the percentage is even lower for two-year institutions (Adams, 2011). Bailey, Alfonso, and Leinbach supports this claim as findings indicate that over a five-year span more than two-thirds of students in occupational majors left post-secondary institutions after completing one year or less of their coursework (Bailey, et al, 2004).

Chippewa Valley Technical College has not been excluded from this growing national trend regarding student retention. In the 2008 – 09 school years, 16,850 students attended CVTC, including 5,506 full-time equivalencies (FTEs). Of these, 31 percent were degree-seeking

students, also known as program students (Wisconsin Technical College System Client Reporting, 2008-09). Program students are those pursuing an associate degree or technical diploma. Many non-cognitive and cognitive factors contribute to the success of students. CVTC students have a particularly difficult time adjusting to college life and coursework, due to a variety of academic, social and economic disadvantages they face. These issues lead to the significant problem of low retention and graduation rates. Research indicates that these factors play a role in how well a student performs at the post-secondary level, but also how much they become integrated with the social and academic systems at the institution (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1993). The fall-to-fall retention rate for full-time, first-time, degree-seeking students at CVTC was 48 percent, 16 percent lower than the WTCS median retention rate of 64 percent (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2009). CVTC's graduation rate for degree-seeking students was 45 percent, indicating more than half of students leave college without a degree (Wisconsin Technical College System, 2009).

In 2011, the federal government invested more than \$140 billion to aid post-secondary students pursuing a degree in order to better their lives and stimulate our economy (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Fifty-two percent of CVTC program students are low income. Low-income students at CVTC may qualify for the federally funded Title IV program. A student who withdraws from the college must return Title IV financial aid funds. In the past five years, returned Title IV funds have increased 28 percent, indicating a growing number of low-income students who leave CVTC indebted and without a degree (Chippewa Valley Technical College, Title IV, 2010). Non-profits, such as Chippewa Valley Technical College, are not alone regarding this growing trend.

Across the country, online and for-profit schools are expanding at rates that are unparalleled in American higher education history. A 2010 report commissioned by the United States Senate revealed that, on average, for-profit colleges offer access to programs that were significantly more

expensive than public post-secondary institutions. Students who attend for-profit schools can incur a significant amount of debt that can take years to repay (United States Senate, 2010). In a U.S. Department of Education investigation of 16 for-profit colleges, 1.9 million students withdrew over a three-year period with a substantial amount of debt (United States Department of Education, 2007-08). According to a National Center of Higher Education policy report, students who leave without earning a degree are 10 times more likely to default on their student loans (Gladieux & Perna, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

Rapid growth of enrollment, debt load and default rates at for-profit institutions in recent years prompted President Barack Obama's administration to examine, regulate and develop new guidelines for the U.S. Department of Education federal student aid programs (Ed. Gov., 2010). With CVTC's student retention numbers declining, and student debt and Title IV return of funds increasing, the college was forced to examine and develop new academic standards, policies and procedures for students dismissed from the college based on academic performance. Significant changes in the academic standards policy in the fall of 2011 included the implementation of a mandatory semester leave for students who failed to meet the academic standards for two consecutive terms and the development of a standard appeal process for reinstatement to the college.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if the changes in the academic standards dismissal and appeal procedures regarding mandatory semester leave for academically dismissed students had an impact, positively or negatively, on students' academic performance upon reinstatement to the college.

Research Objectives

The following research objectives were addressed by this study:

- 1) To explore differences in student academic performance among two groups: 1) those who appealed and were reinstated to the college and were required to adhere to the new academic standards policy regarding a mandatory semester leave and 2) students who, under the old academic standards policy, were able to appeal and return the following semester .
- 2) To explore the academic success rates of two cohort student groups: probation plan (PP) students and probation cumulative (PC) students enrolled in the fall of 2012.
- 3) To explore the differences in academic performance of students on a probation plan (PP) enrolled in the fall 2012 based on the extenuating circumstance category.
 - a. Death of friend or family member.
 - b. Medical condition.
 - c. Family, financial or legal situation.
 - d. Other.
 - i. Learning habits.
 - ii. Prior experiences.
 - iii. Degree focus.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for the purpose of this study.

Low income. “Defined in terms of the US Department of Health and Human Services’ poverty line. Common definitions include 125 percent, 150 percent and 200 percent of the poverty line for a family of four” (FinAid, 2012).

Title IV return of funds. The return of unearned Title IV policy applies if the student withdraws from, changes enrollment status from credit to audit or ceases attending all classes

before the 60 percent point in term. All unearned portion of dollars must be returned to the appropriate Title IV program (Federal Financial Aid, 2012).

Limitations of the Study

This study has the following limitations:

- 1) This study is specific to students who were dismissed from Chippewa Valley Technical College and is not representative of students dismissed from the 15 other technical colleges statewide.
- 2) This study samples students who were dismissed in the fall of 2011, who appealed successfully and were reinstated in the college for the fall 2012. Academic performance was based on fall 2012 semester grades, as opposed to student graduation.

Significance of the Study

The research topic is significant for the following reasons:

- 1) Findings will validate recent changes in the policy and/or provide insight to possible revisions of policy.
- 2) Findings will provide valuable information regarding indicators of student success and retention resource management.
- 3) Findings will be shared among the other 15 technical colleges statewide regarding a model for students dismissed for academic reasons.

Chapter II: Literature Review

In 2011 student enrollment continued to increase at four-year, two-year and technical colleges across the nation, while retention rates of students continued to decline. Two-thirds of all first-year students at two-year and four-year institutions move on to the second year of school. Retention rates for two-year institutions continue to be significantly lower than their four-year counterparts, hovering around 56 percent (ACT, 2011). Bailey (et. al) supports this claim as findings indicated that over a five-year span, more than two-thirds of students in occupational majors left post-secondary institutions after completing one year or less of their coursework (Hirschy, Bremer & Castellano, 2011). According to ACT CEO Jon Whitmore, “College retention is a very challenging problem facing our nation. If we are to meet the goal set forth by President Obama to increase the number of young adults who earn a college degree, we must not only ensure that more students have access to college, but also make certain that they are well prepared to succeed once they get there” (ACT, 2011, para. 3). The body of knowledge related to student retention is vast, however, there is still much to learn about the non-cognitive factors that influence a student’s academic success. This literature review will examine the effects of stress on student academic performance by narrowing research relevant to this study. The following pages will focus on research specific to the impact of death, medical illness, family and financial stress and auxiliary stress-related factors that play a role in the overall health and well-being of college students.

Effects of Stress on the Health and Well-being of College Students

College retention and student performance are influenced by many factors, both cognitive and non-cognitive. Many students often have competing interests for time and attention, are less engaged in studies and have relatively no time to socially integrate on their campuses (Hagaedorn, 2010). Research conducted by Dill, Gilbert, Hill, Minshew & Sempier (2011) cites

factors from studies on retention over the past two decades that include inadequate academic background (Addus, Chen & Khan, 2007), unrealistic evaluation of self (Austin, Cherney, Crowner & Hill, 1997), lack of goal setting, academic and social integration (Tinto, 1993), background, finances, employment (Bean & Metzner, 1985), gender, study habits, faculty connection, grade-point average (Hoyt, 1999), career choice, degree focus (Coll & Stewart, 2008), and self-confidence and stress (Hsieh, Sullivan & Guerra, 2007). Today's two-year institutions often serve older, part-time commuter students, who juggle work and multi-dimensional familial and external obligations (Rankin, Katsinas, & Hardy, 2010). They must learn to co-exist in all of these worlds, effectively juggling between them in order to be successful in college, often heightening the level, or perceived level, of stress in their lives.

Stress, a term coined by Hans Selye in 1936, is defined as "the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change" (The American Institute of Stress, n.d., para.2). Research indicates that the term "stress" has many interpretations; what is stressful for one person may have little or no effect on others. Stress, which is often considered synonymous with the term distress, has a negative connotation, frequently being viewed as an unpleasant threat, often ignoring the positive effects of stress (The American Institute of Stress, n.d.). Due to this reason, the term "stressors" has been adopted and used in the professional arena. There are two varieties of stressors: life events (Holmes & Rae, 1967) and daily hassles (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984):

- 1) Life events, defined as discrete, often traumatic, events that have a clear onset, such as death or an accident.
- 2) Daily hassles, defined as chronic, problematic situations, such as day-to-day care of a sick relative or chronic illness.

(Broderick & Blewitt 2010, p. 470).

Negative stress can reduce one's capacity to perform and function well, either at school, home or in the workplace. Therefore, stress is not something to be dismissed. Aside from the personal impact one experiences from stress, it also affects how one deals with the environment and the people in their lives. Examples of negative stressors include:

- the death of a spouse,
- filing for divorce,
- losing contact with loved ones,
- the death of a family member,
- hospitalization (oneself or a family member),
- injury or illness (oneself or a family member),
- being abused or neglected,
- separation from a spouse or committed relationship partner,
- conflict in interpersonal relationships,
- bankruptcy/money problems,
- unemployment,
- sleep problems,
- children's problems at school, and
- legal problems

(Mills, Reiss & Dombeck, 2008).

Though there is a substantial amount of research regarding stress in a less than favorable light, it is also important to note that not all effects of stress are negative. Selye referred to positive stress as eustress. Eustress is a term that is often used to refer to what many call good stress. Eustress has the following characteristics: a) motivates; focuses energy, b) is short term,

c) is perceived as within our coping abilities, d) feels exciting, and e) improves performance (Mills, Reiss & Dombeck, 2008). In summary, eustress motivates people to continue moving forward and enjoy actions and events that may require effort but ultimately provide a great deal of satisfaction. Examples of positive personal stressors include:

- receiving a promotion or raise at work,
- starting a new job,
- marriage,
- buying a home,
- having a child,
- moving,
- taking a vacation,
- holiday seasons,
- retiring, and
- taking educational classes or learning a new hobby

(Mills, Reiss & Dombeck, 2008).

A plethora of research supports the notion that psychological stress plays a key role in student performance and attrition (Radcliffe, Stevenson, Lumley, D'Souza, & Kraft, 2011). Studies indicate that when experiences are negative, rather than positive, there is an adverse effect on one's motivation and performance. Lazarus (1966) believed that "a negative event can elicit a complex set of cognitive, affective and behavioral responses depending on a person's perceived capacity to deal with that event" (Struthers, Perry, & Menec, 2000, p. 589). When negative experiences continue, and become seemingly insurmountable, a sense of helplessness, depression and stress surfaces (Struthers, et al., 2000). Life events, such as a death in the family

or traumatic accident causing medical complications, can amass, creating a ripple effect that compounds further issues. These “cycles of disadvantage can exert an onset of physical and mental health problems” (Broderick & Blewitt, 2010, p. 471).

Death of Family Member or Friend

Sociologist R. Hill is credited as the first person, in 1949, to examine the effect of stress and families’ ability to cope with stressor events such as losses, illnesses or separation. His research indicated that families experience more stress from situations for which they had little or no prior preparation. More change required to deal with stress resulted in greater hardship on the family (Harvey, 1994). Detmer & Lamberti (1991) stated:

The immediate effects of the loss of a loved one are felt by those who are close to the person, but eventually effects of the loss reverberate throughout the whole system of family relationships transgenerationally, necessitating changes in interconnectedness and relationships. ... The reactions of those close to the dead family member initiate a cycle of change in others. Gelcer, (1986) adds, stress is generated not only in the immediate impact on those close to the deceased but also as a result of the reactions that are produced in the rest of the family system (Harvey, 1994, p 31).

A 2006 study conducted by Servaty-Seib revealed that 22 to 30 percent of college undergraduates are likely to have experienced the death of a family member or friend in the previous year. Noting that grief can affect students’ academic performance in numerous ways, the study states that it is “the combination of grief interfering with the ability to concentrate and perform ... that grief is not purely emotional. There are serious cognitive effects as well” (Purdue University, 2006, para. 16). The Department of Education concurs, stating that the sense of loss that results from the death of someone close can impact a student’s social and emotional health and ability to learn at school (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Depression sometimes occurs in response to a stressful event, such as a recent death, often resulting in difficulty with school work and relationships with parents and peers, and decreased interest and involvement in daily activities and responsibilities (Bonin, n.d.).

Medical Illness of Self or Family Member

Research suggests that stress levels are higher in middle-age adults than older adults, due in part to increased work responsibility, care of children and, in some cases, emotional, physical and financial care of aging parents. A 2000 study (Marten), indicated that care is being provided by family members for roughly 80 percent of the elderly population needing assistance.

Although the experience may be very rewarding, there are many psychological, physical, social, occupational and financial ramifications for the caregiver. Research demonstrates (Compa, Davis Forsythe & Wagner, 1987 & Selye 1998) that chronic daily stress in one's life increases the likelihood of the development of physical and psychological symptoms that affect one's mental health (Broderick & Blewitt, 2010). Post (1985, 2007) described the effects of cumulative stressors due to chronic stress as kindling-behavioral sensitization. Kindling-behavioral sensitization is defined as a "process of progressive illness severity or illness incidence that results from gradual increases in sensitivity to stressful triggers" (Blewitt and Broderick, 2010, p. 471). The impact of illness of self or others can carry over to the classroom. A 2011 study revealed that with increasing academic stress, students exhibited increasing levels of psychological distress, anxiety, stress and depression, ultimately impacting student performance (Andrews & Chong, 2011).

Family and Financial Stress

Family stress or lack of social support. Social support, such as family or close relationships, can be a protective factor in managing stress and promoting the health and well-being of an individual. Studies have shown that the amount of social support from the university and outside contributors such as family, friends and mentors has a positive impact on a student's success. College can be a stressful and life-changing experience. Emotional, academic and financial support is an influential factor in the success of a college student (Trockel, Barnes & Egget,

2000). A 2001 study conducted by Wickrama et al., demonstrated that “chronic exposure to stressors in relationships can have direct negative effects on health and that these effects may be further exacerbated by gender-salient roles and expectations” (Broderick & Blewitt, 2010, p. 470). A study conducted by Lakey and Cohen (2000) suggested that there are two measurements of social support:

- 1) Received social support: the frequency of supportive actions from others, such as advice and reassurance.
- 2) Perceived social support: perceptions of how much social support one has available.

Lakey and Cohen propose that both social and perceived social support contribute to lower levels of academic stress, ultimately improving academic performance (Mackinnon, 2012).

Financial stress. Many students are pushed into the world of education not by choice, but rather by necessity. In 2010, half a million workers age 50 or over who received unemployment insurance, due to a recent layoff lacked a high school diploma (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2012). Job loss can affect the well-being of an individual. A Kessler, Turner & House (1989) study found that there is a strong connection between job loss and mental and physical health problems, interceded by the loss of personal control and self-worth often associated with the decline in financial resources (Price, Choi and Vinokur, 2002). According to the aforementioned researchers, job loss and financial strain may influence depression. Depression, in turn, may reduce access to opportunities to reduce financial strain through re-employment. Thus, chains of adversity are clearly complex and may contain spirals of disadvantage that reduce the life chances of vulnerable individuals still further (Broderick & Blewitt, 2010 p. 453). Additional psychological consequences associated with job loss and financial stresses are increased anxiety, heightened feelings of hopelessness and drug and alcohol dependencies.

Further studies suggest that the effects of unemployment on adults also impact their children's behavior and academic performance (Broderick & Blewitt, 2010).

A 2011 study regarding the well-being of students revealed that students who indicated that they were struggling financially demonstrated more psychological distress, stress, anxiety and depression than those students who reported adequate or secure financial circumstances (Andrews & Chong). A 2010 study revealed that, on average, full-time college students worked more than 30 hours per week. The negative influence of work on academic performance indicates that students who work 30 or more hours add additional stress by not arranging adequate time to study, thus putting their academic career in jeopardy (Torres, Gross and Dadashova, 2010). A study by Cotton, Dollard and De Jonge (2002) supports the notion that work contributes to additional stress, indicating that students who had highly demanding jobs, little control and little social support, displayed declining levels of well-being, ultimately resulting in higher levels of poor academic performance (Chambel & Curral, 2005).

Auxiliary Stress-Related Factors

Learning habits. Trying to read all chapters assigned, meet deadlines and participate in extracurricular activities can become overwhelming. A part-time or full-time job, combined with the aforementioned responsibilities, and the tasks at hand become stressful for most. Studies conducted by Gall (1988), Longman & Atkinson (1988) and Walter & Siebert (1981) demonstrated that "poor time management behaviors, such as not allocating time properly or last minute cramming for exams, have been frequently discussed as a source of stress and poor academic performance" (Macan, Shanhani, Dipboye & Phillips, 1990, p. 760). Change can be stressful, Madhuri Patil (2003) reports that adolescence is accompanied by some stress, related to school, family and peers, and this stress can have a tendency to be difficult to manage (Geeta & Vijayalaxmi, 2006).

Prior experiences. According to Tinto (1982,1993), the transition from high school to college places significant demands on young adults requiring high levels of self-regulation, discipline, independence and initiative. Uncertainty about new friends, living conditions and finances is likely to be a part of many students' worries (Chemers, Hu & Garcia, 2001). When observing behaviors of confident versus non-confident students, the authors' study revealed that confident students saw the post-secondary experience as a challenge rather than a threat, reducing the student's perception of stress, creating a sense of eustress and lessening cases of illness and easing adjustment to college life.

Degree focus. For some students, choosing a career path is an overwhelming task, accompanied with the added stress and pressure of making a career decision that may impact the rest of their lives. Studies (Neumann, Oltisky & Robbins) suggest that the "greater the congruence between a person's college major and career on the one hand, and their measured values and interests on the other, the more likely that person is to persist in college and achieve work success and satisfaction" (College Success, 2007, p.3). A study conducted by Tracey & Robbins (2006) found a correlation between career interest and college GPA suggesting that career fit was a predictor of student retention and graduation (College Success, 2007).

Based on research and literature, constant exposure to negative forms of stress hinders the ability to perform to one's potential in an academic environment. The ability to adapt to stress and challenges is critical to the overall health and well-being of an individual. The ability to provide opportunities to teach students strategies for channeling stress positively is critical to improving student academic performance and college retention rates.

Chapter III: Methodology

The methods and procedures used in this study of academic performance of reinstated students are explained in this chapter under the headings of (1) method of study, (2) sample selection, (3) instrumentation, (4) procedures followed, and (5) method of analysis. The research objectives of this study are outlined below.

- 1) To explore differences in student academic performance among two groups: a) those who appealed and were reinstated to the college and were required to adhere to the new academic standards policy regarding a mandatory semester leave and b) students who, under the old academic standards policy, were able to appeal and return the following semester (Figure one).
- 2) To explore the academic success rates of two cohort student groups: probation plan (PP) students and probation cumulative (PC) students enrolled in the fall of 2012 (Figure 2).
- 3) To explore the differences in academic performance of students on a probation plan (PP) enrolled in the fall 2012 based on extenuating circumstance category (Figure 2).
 - a. Death of friend or family member.
 - b. Medical condition.
 - c. Family, financial or legal situation.
 - d. Other (Figure 3).
 - i. Learning habits.
 - ii. Prior experiences.
 - iii. Degree focus.

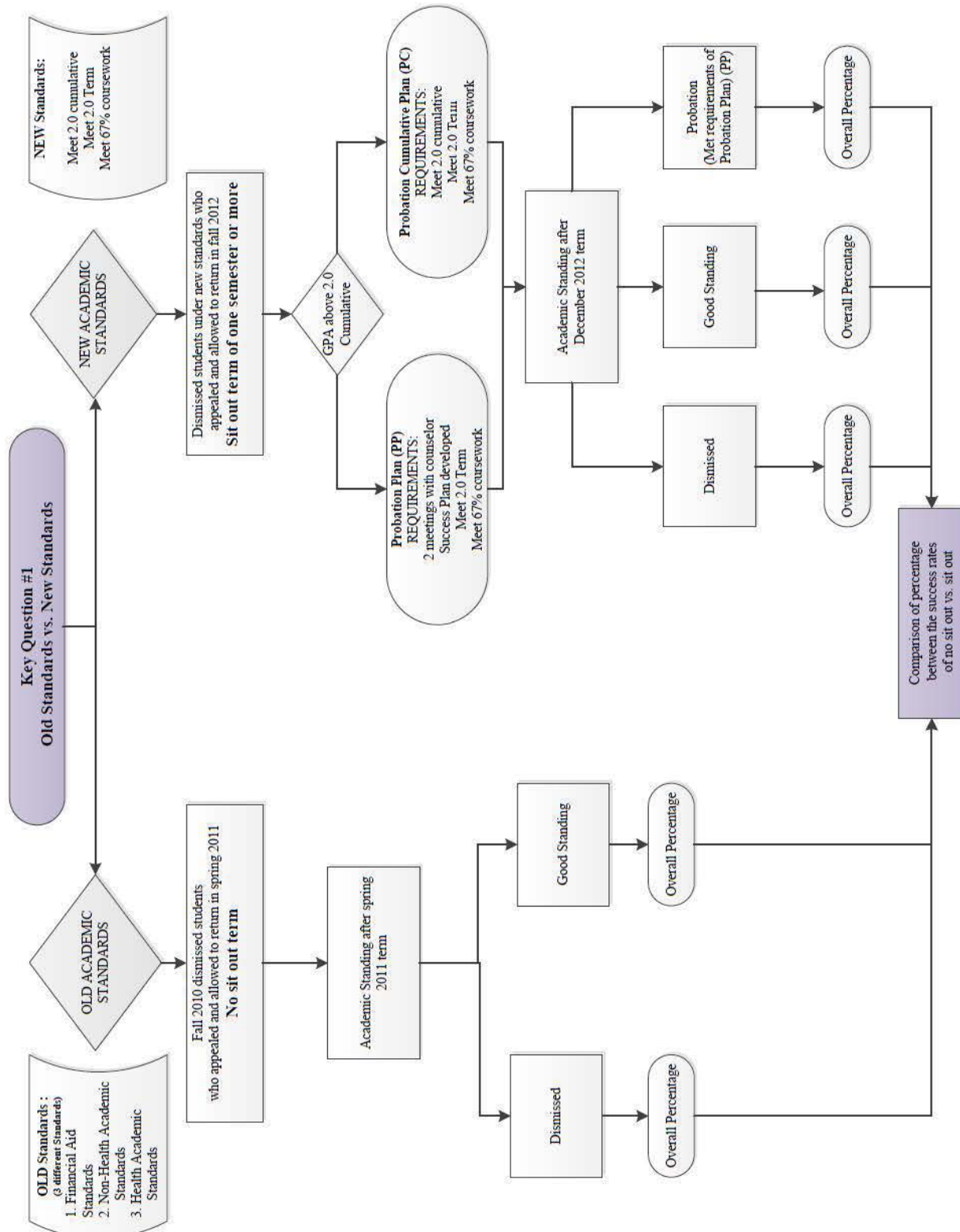


Figure 1. Research Object 1 Flowchart

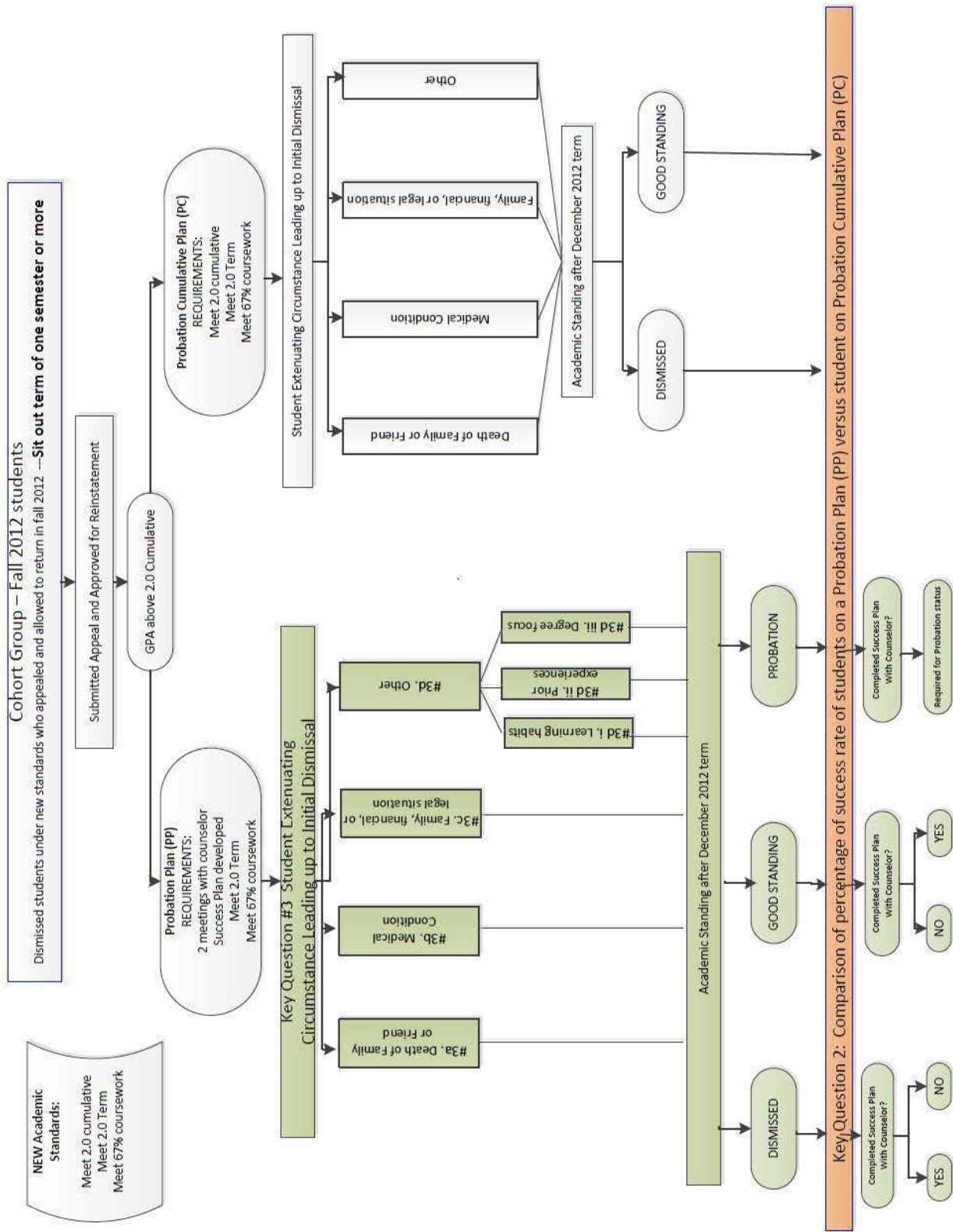


Figure 2. Research Objective 2 and 3 Flowchart

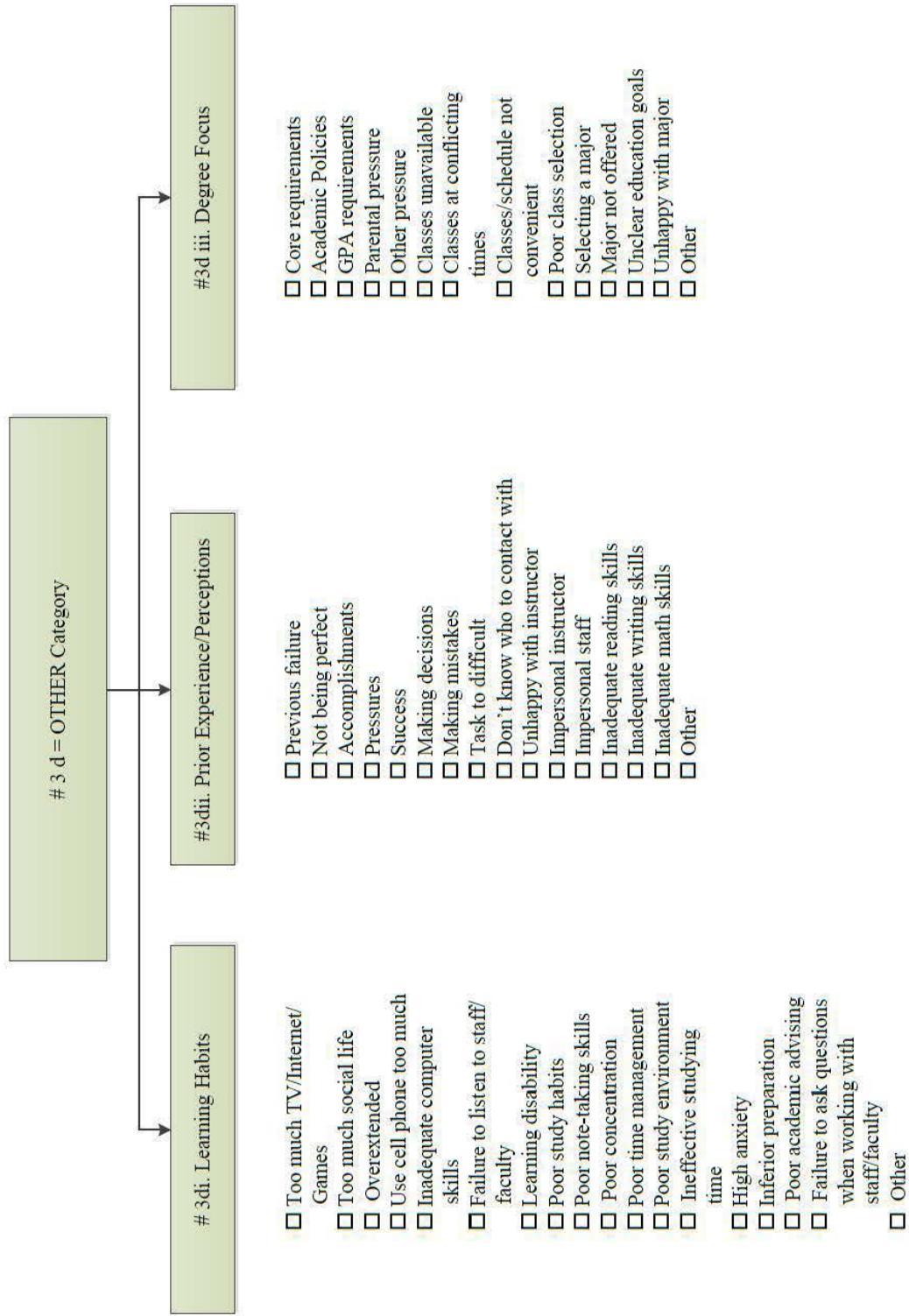


Figure 3. Research Objective 3d Flowchart

Method of Study

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at UW-Stout and CVTC approved the study and determined that the project is exempt under Category 4 of the Federal Exempt Guidelines identified below:

Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects (Institutional Review Board, 2013, para 5).

The purpose of the study was to examine the academic performance of reinstated students to determine the impact of changes in the academic standards dismissal and appeal policy at CVTC.

Data was collected from two separate departments at CVTC: Registration and Records and the Information and Technology Department. The data for this study was drawn from two existing data sources: (1) BANNER, CVTC's enterprise database system that holds information regarding students' academic status, term, cumulative grade-point average and enrolled program, and (2) approved academic appeals submitted by reinstated students.

Hard copies of submitted and approved academic appeals were given to the researcher for review. In order for the researcher to identify extenuating circumstances that led to low academic performance and dismissal from the college, these circumstances were divided into four categories: death of immediate family member; medical condition; family, financial or legal situation; or other. The category identified as "other" consisted of three subcategories, (1) learning habits, (2) prior experiences and perceptions, and (3) degree focus.

Sample Selection

Data for this study was derived from two cohort groups of reinstated students following academic dismissal: (1) students dismissed and immediately reinstated in the spring of 2011

under the old academic standards policy and, (2) students dismissed and reinstated in the fall of 2012 after a semester or more leave under the new academic standards policy.

Sample Selection – Cohort One. In the fall of 2010, CVTC had three different academic standards for students: (1) Non- Health Program Academic Standards, (2) Health Program Academic Standards and (3) Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Standards.

Students enrolled in non-health technical degree and associate degree programs were subject to the academic standards outlined in Table 1. Academic standing for students enrolled in non-health programs were based on term GPA and were the same for students enrolled in a one-year technical program and/or a two-year associate program.

Table 1

Non-Health Program Academic Standards

<u>Academic Standing</u>	<u>Term Grade-Point Average</u>
Good Standing	2.00 – 4.00
Academic Warning	1.50 – 1.99
Academic Probation (first term)	0.00 – 1.49
Academic Dismissal (second consecutive term)	0.00 – 1.49

Students enrolled in health technical and associate degree programs were mandated to adhere to the academic standards identified in Table 2. Opposite of the standards for non-health students, academic standards for health students were based on letter grades, opposed to term GPA. Based on the number of grades below a C, a student enrolled in a health program could be dismissed after one semester.

Table 2

Health Program Academic Standards

<u>Academic Standing</u>	<u>Letter Grades</u>
Good Standing	All grades above a C
Academic Warning	One grade below a C
Academic Probation	Two grades below a C
Academic Dismissal	Three grades below a C

Chippewa Valley Technical College students who received financial aid were required to adhere to the following Financial Aid Satisfactory Progress Standards set by the federal government:

- successfully complete 67 percent of the term credits attempted;
- meet the length of eligibility rule set by the federal government by completing their program of study without having attempted more than 150% of the credit hours required to complete the program curriculum;
- maintain a minimum term grade-point average of 1.5.

In addition to the requirements identified above, financial aid recipients were required to adhere to the following cumulative grade-point averages based on credits attempted and degree type outlined in Table 3.

Table 3

Financial Aid Satisfactory Progress Standards

<u>Degree Type</u>	<u>Number of Credits Attempted</u>	<u>Cumulative GPA</u>
Technical Diploma	0.00 – 5.99	Exempt
	6.00 – 14.99	1.5
	15.00 and above	2.0
Associate Degree	0.00 – 5.99	Exempt
	6.00 – 29.99	1.5
	30.00 – 44.99	1.75
	45.00 and above	2.0

Two hundred and 72 students were dismissed from CVTC for not meeting one or more of the academic standards in the fall of 2010. Out of the 272 students, 85 or 31 percent of these students appealed and were immediately reinstated in the spring of 2011. The demographics of this first cohort group included both part-time and full-time students representing 19 associate degree and four technical degree programs.

Sample Selection – Cohort Two.

In the summer of 2011, CVTC revised its academic standards policy by combining the three different academic standards identified earlier into one academic standard. The new policy for dismissed students required a mandatory one-semester leave before appealing for reinstatement to the College. All enrolled-for-credit students were subject to the following academic standards in order to remain in good academic standing:

- successfully complete 67% of the credits attempted. Course failures and withdrawals are counted as attempted credits but not as earned credits;

- successfully maintain a minimum 2.0 term grade-point average;
- successfully maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative institutional grade-point average;
- financial aid recipients only: Successfully meet the length of eligibility rule set by the federal government by completing their program of study without having attempted more than 150% of the credit hours required to complete the program curriculum.

Failure to adhere to the listed stipulations for two consecutive semesters resulted in dismissal from the college. Academically dismissed students who were interested in returning to CVTC were required to appeal to be reinstated by completing an academic appeal form (Appendix D). Dismissed students were also required to provide supporting documentation of their extenuating circumstance that led to dismissal and the steps they had taken to address the issue. Appeals submitted for reinstatement were reviewed by an Academic Appeals committee three times a year: March, June and October.

In the fall of 2012, 131 reinstated students were enrolled in courses. All reinstated students were placed on academic probation and were required to meet the requirements of their success plan by the end of the term or they would be dismissed from the college. A student's overall cumulative grade-point average determined what academic probation code was assigned to the student. Students were assigned to one of two probation codes: probation plan (PP) or probation cumulative (PC). Students placed on a probation plan (PP) had a cumulative grade-point average below a 2.0 and were required to meet the following requirements at the end of the term:

- Successfully complete 67% of the term credits attempted;
- Achieve a term grade-point average of 2.0;
- Meet with assigned CVTC counselor two times per semester;

- Complete required action items as determined by the CVTC counselor.

Students placed on a probation cumulative plan (PC) had a cumulative grade-point average above a 2.0 and were required to meet the following requirements at the end of the term:

- Successfully complete 67% of the term credits attempted
- Achieve a term grade-point average of 2.0
- Achieve a cumulative grade-point average of 2.0

The demographics of this cohort included a combination of males and females, both part-time and full-time students, with cumulative GPAs ranging from 0.00 – 3.51. The cohort group included students both with and without disabilities and ethnicity groups that included Caucasian, Asian, Hispanic and African-American. In addition, the sample included representation from 32 of CVTC's associate and technical degree programs.

Instrumentation

The academic appeal form was developed and implemented in the summer of 2011. The form includes a combination of blended items based on best practices of technical colleges in the state of Wisconsin and two- and four-year institutions nationwide. In addition, input was received from key student services departments and personnel, including Financial Aid, Academic Advising and Counseling, Diversity Resources, Registration and Records, Educational Deans, Vice President of Student Services and Vice President of Instruction. All dismissed students requesting to appeal were required to complete a five-page form and provide documentation within the timeline indicated.

Students were required to complete general contact information as well as specific information, such as, but not limited to, student I.D. number, year of dismissal and new academic program of interest. Students were required to identify one of four categories that prevented them from meeting the College academic standards and provide third-party

verification/documentation of the circumstance. Categories and acceptable documentation are identified in Table 4.

Table 4

Categories of Specific Circumstances

<u>Category Type</u>	<u>Acceptable Documentation</u>
Death of an immediate family member	Copy of death certificate or obituary.
Medical condition	Signed letter from physician and/or hospital admission papers.
Family, financial or legal situation	Statement from family member, health care provider, friend, family, advocate or legal documentation.
Other	Documented steps that have already been taken to address identified circumstance in “other” category.

The academic appeal form included two self-reflection sections where students identified the obstacles that served as barriers to their success over the previous two semesters as well as a section where students identified possible solutions to overcome the identified obstacles. Questions to determine extenuating circumstances and barriers that led to academic dismissal in post-secondary education were arranged by dispositional and situational barriers. Both the obstacle and solution sections of the appeal were divided into the following eleven categories:

1) Learning Habits, 2) Social Support, 3) Financial, 4) Work-Related, 5) Personal, 6) Prior Experience/Perceptions, 7) Degree Focus, 8) Academic/Study Skills, 9) Reading Confidence, 10) Verbal Confidence, and 11) Math Confidence.

Four open-ended questions were provided for students to describe the extenuating circumstance in further detail and identify campus resources and steps that will be taken to increase the likelihood of success if approval for reinstatement was granted. Refer to Appendix D to view the academic appeal form.

Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected from two separate departments at CVTC: Registration and Records and the Information and Technology Department.

Students had two avenues for submitting academic appeals: 1) in person at the Business Education Center's Information and Service Center located on the Eau Claire campus or, 2) via U.S mail by 4 p.m. on one of three academic appeal identified deadlines. Appeals were perused by Registration and Records and/or Information and Service Center personnel at time of submission to determine if academic appeal was complete and included documentation of extenuating circumstances. If the appeal was incomplete, it was returned to the student.

The Registration and Records department scanned submitted appeals and documents using Xtender scanning software and filed the hard copy of the academic appeal and supplemental documentation in a locked cabinet.

The Academic Appeals committee, consisted of three CVTC personnel representing the following departments: 1) Academic Advising and Counseling, 2) Financial Aid, and 3) Instruction. The committee reviewed all submitted appeals and determined whether the students appeal for reinstatement was approved. The committee used the following criteria to determine approval for reinstatement: 1) submitted academic appeal identifying extenuating circumstance,

2) supporting documentation of extenuating circumstance, 3) developed plan to address identified barriers to success, 4) previous appeals (if applicable) and conditions of return, 5) financial debt incurred, 6) cumulative grade-point average, and 7) number of credits completed toward program graduation.

Hard copies of submitted and approved academic appeals were given to the researcher for review. In order to examine students' situations that contributed to low performance, information was reviewed by the researcher and categorized by extenuating circumstance. Extenuating circumstances were divided into four categories: death of immediate family member; medical condition; family, financial or legal situation, or other. Students whose extenuating circumstance was contributed to "other" factors were reviewed in further detail and based on categories checked on page two of the academic appeal were divided into one of three categories: (1) learning habits, (2) prior experiences and perceptions, and (3) degree focus. The researcher recorded all information in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

CVTC's Information and Technology department provided data stored in the Colleges' Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, BANNER, for the two targeted cohort groups identified in the Sample Selection section on pages 21-23. Information collected included students' term GPA, cumulative GPA, credit load, academic status and program of enrollment at the beginning and end of the term, as well as name, student ID, email address, phone number, disability indicator, gender and ethnicity. Information from both data sources was merged and exported into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis.

Method of Analysis

All statistical operations were conducted by using 2010 Microsoft Excel software to provide the researcher with basic descriptive statistics of quantitative data including mean, median, mode, standard deviation, percentages and frequency for identified data sets.

Additionally, a t-test was conducted to determine statistical significance of research objectives 1 and 2; a chi-test was used for research objective 3. Using descriptive analysis, findings are presented in Chapter 4.

Limitations

The academic appeal form required of students appealing for reinstatement was designed to meet the needs of CVTC staff involved in reinstatement decisions and departments directly involved with reinstated students, therefore there are no measures of validity and reliability. In addition, this study is specific to a small number of students who were dismissed from Chippewa Valley Technical College and is not representative of students dismissed from the 15 other technical colleges statewide.

Chapter IV: Results and Discussion

This research project has centered on the impact of CVTC's recent changes to the Academic Standards dismissal and appeal procedures regarding mandatory semester leave for academically dismissed students by focusing on three central objectives. (1) To explore differences in student academic performance among two groups 1a) those who appealed and were reinstated to the college and were required to adhere to the new academic standards policy regarding a mandatory semester leave and 1b) students who, under the old academic standards policy, were able to appeal and return the following semester. (2) To explore the academic success rates of two cohort student groups: probation plan (PP) students and probation cumulative (PC) students enrolled in the fall of 2012 and (3) to explore the differences in academic performance of students on a probation plan (PP) enrolled in the fall 2012 based on an extenuating circumstance category.

In order to answer the three research objectives, data for this study was derived from two cohort groups of reinstated students following academic dismissal: (1) students dismissed and immediately reinstated in the spring of 2011 under the old academic standards policy and, (2) students dismissed and reinstated in the fall of 2012 after a semester or more leave under the new academic standards policy.

Cohort One

Two hundred and 72 students were dismissed from CVTC for not meeting one or more of the academic standards in the fall of 2010. Out of the 272 students, 85, or 31 percent of these students appealed and were immediately reinstated in the spring of 2011. The demographics of this cohort group included both part-time and full-time students representing 19 associate degree and four technical degree programs.

Cohort Two

In the fall of 2012, 131 reinstated students were enrolled in courses. Thirty-six, or 27 percent of these students, had a cumulative GPA above a 2.0 and were coded as probation cumulative (PC). Ninety-five, or 73 percent, had a cumulative GPA below a 2.0 and were assigned the academic code of probation plan (PP). Students coded as PC and PP were required to meet the terms of their success plans outlined in the Methodology chapter of this study. The demographics of this cohort included a combination of males and females, both part-time and full-time students, with cumulative GPAs ranging from 0.00 – 3.51. The cohort group included students both with and without disabilities and ethnicity groups that included Caucasian, Asian, Hispanic and African-American. In addition, the sample included representation from 32 of CVTC's associate and technical degree programs.

Research Objective One

The first objective was to investigate the differences in student academic performance between cohort 1 and cohort 2 identified previously to determine the impact of the new academic standards policy implemented at CVTC regarding a mandatory semester leave of dismissed students.

The following six tables compare the end of term academic status codes: 1) good academic standing, 2) academic warning and/or probation and, 3) academically dismissed of reinstated students by cohort groups.

Good Academic Standing. Data suggest that students who sit out one semester or more are 39 percent more likely to significantly improve their academic standing by attaining the highest academic code, good academic standing. As outlined in Table 5, nine of the 86 students (10%) identified in cohort 1 achieved the aforementioned code.

Table 5

Cohort One – Good Academic Standing Code by Degree Type

<u>Degree Type</u>	<u>Number of Students (9 of 86)</u>	<u>Overall Percentage</u>
Undeclared	1	11%
Technical Degree	2	22%
Associate Degree	6	67%

Table 6 reveals that 64 of the 131 (49%) of students in cohort 2 attained good academic standing status at the end of the term.

Table 6

Cohort Two – Good Academic Standing Code by Degree Type

<u>Degree Type</u>	<u>Number of Students (64 of 131)</u>	<u>Overall Percentage</u>
Undeclared	2	3%
Technical Degree	7	11%
Associate Degree	55	86%

Academic Warning and/or Probation. Ten percentage points separated students in cohort 1 and 2 who had an academic warning and/or probation code at the end of the term. As outlined in the Methodology chapter, students in cohort 1 had four academic codes that were applied to students upon reinstatement, as opposed to three academic codes for cohort 2. Academic warning and probation codes were assigned to students in cohort 1 based on grade-point average and letter grades given in core program courses and probation codes were assigned to only students on a PP plan for cohort 2. For comparative purposes, academic code of warning and

probation were considered one and the same. As described in more detail in Table 7, 32 percent of students in cohort 1 improved their academic status from the prior semester.

Table 7

Cohort One – Academic Probation or Warning Code by Degree Type

<u>Degree Type</u>	<u>Number of Students (27 of 86)</u>	<u>Overall Percentage</u>
Undeclared	4	15%
Technical Degree	4	15%
Associate Degree	19	70%

Data reveals in Table 8 below that 21 percent of students in cohort 2 achieved an academic probation code at the end of the semester. Tables 7 and 8 also reveal that 70 percent or more of the students in both cohorts were enrolled in associate degree programs.

Table 8

Cohort Two – Academic Probation Code by Degree Type

<u>Degree Type</u>	<u>Number of Students (27 of 95)</u>	<u>Overall Percentage</u>
Undeclared	3	11%
Technical Degree	3	11%
Associate Degree	21	78%

Academic Dismissal. Data indicates that out of the 50 students in cohort 1 and 40 students in cohort 2 with the academic code of dismissal at the end of the term, students in cohort 1 were 27 percent more likely to be dismissed than students in cohort 2. As outlined in Table 9 below, fifty-eight percent of students in cohort 1 were dismissed at the end of the semester when allowed to return the subsequent semester.

Table 9

Cohort One – Dismissed Code by Degree Type

<u>Degree Type</u>	<u>Number of Students (50 of 86)</u>	<u>Overall Percentage</u>
Undeclared	9	18%
Technical Degree	5	10%
Associate Degree	36	72%

Table 10 shows that 31 percent of students in cohort 2 were dismissed at the end of term despite the requirement of one semester or more sit out term.

Table 10

Cohort Two – Dismissed Code by Degree Type

<u>Degree Type</u>	<u>Number of Students (40 of 131)</u>	<u>Overall Percentage</u>
Undeclared	1	3%
Technical Degree	1	3%
Associate Degree	38	94%

For research purposes, positive academic performance was defined as students who had an academic status code of good standing or warning and/or probation and negative academic performance was defined as students who had an academic code of dismissal.

As Table 11 reveals, students who were required to adhere to the new academic standards and semester leave policy were 27 percent more likely to have a positive academic performance status code than students who under the old standards were allowed to return the following semester. Fifty-eight percent of reinstated students in cohort 1 who were allowed to immediately

return the following semester were dismissed at the end of the term compared to 31 percent in cohort 2. The difference between the two cohort groups was 27 percentage points; a two sample t-test revealed the following: ($t(215) = 3.95, p = .0001$).

Table 11

Overall Academic Status Percentage by Cohort Group

<u>Cohort</u>	<u>No. in Cohort</u>	<u>Good Standing</u>	<u>Warning/Probation</u>	<u>Dismissed</u>
1	86	9 (10%)	27 (32%)	50 (58%)
2	131	64 (49%)	27 *(28%)	40 (31%)

* Percentage is divided by 95 students. Only 95 students in Cohort 2 met the criteria required for probation code status.

Research Objective Two

The second research objective was to examine the academic success rates of students in cohort 2, who were assigned an academic probation code of PP and PC in order to assess effectiveness of success plans related to academic performance at the end of the term.

Twenty-seven percent of the students identified in cohort 2 had an assigned academic probation code of PC at the beginning of the fall 2012 term. Students categorized as PC were required to meet the terms of their success plan outlined in the Sample Selection section of Chapter Three. At the end of term, students in this category were assigned one of two academic codes: good standing or dismissed. As delineated in Table 12, 72 percent of the students met the terms of their success plan and improved their status by achieving the highest academic standing: good standing. Twenty-eight percent were dismissed and were required to sit out a minimum of one semester and appeal for reinstatement to the college.

Table 12

Cohort 2 - End of Term Academic Standing by Assigned Academic Probation Code

<u>Probation Code</u>	<u>No. in Cohort</u>	<u>Good Standing</u>	<u>Probation</u>	<u>Dismissed</u>
PC	36	26	n/a	10
PP	95	38	27	30

Seventy-three percent of the students in cohort 2 had an assigned academic probation code of PP at the beginning of the fall 2012 term. Students who were assigned this code were required to meet with a CVTC counselor two times within the semester and also obtain a term GPA of 2.0 and successfully complete a minimum of 67% of the credits attempted in the term. At the end of the term, these students were reassigned one of the three following codes: 1) good standing, 2) probation, or 3) dismissed. As previously defined, positive academic performance for students in this category was defined as students who had an academic status code of good standing or probation and negative academic performance was defined as students who had an academic code of dismissed. As described in Table 12, 68 percent of the students had a positive academic outcome at the end of the term, 40 percent achieved good academic standing and 28 percent met the terms of their success plan and remained on academic probation with an academic code of PP. Thirty-two percent of students in this group were dismissed and were required to sit out a minimum of one semester and must appeal for reinstatement if interested in returning to the institution.

The difference between the two groups was 4 percentage points; a two sample t-test revealed the following: ($t(129) = 0.44, p = .65$).

Research Objective Three

The third research objective was to explore the end of term academic performance of students with an academic probation code of PP based on the extenuating circumstance identified on their submitted appeal for reinstatement to the college. Students who submitted an appeal for reinstatement were required to identify one of four extenuating circumstances that contributed to their low academic performance. Extenuating circumstances were divided into four categories: death of immediate family member; medical condition; family, financial or legal situation or other. Students whose extenuating circumstance was contributed to “other” factors were reviewed in further detail and were divided into one of three categories: (1) learning habits, (2) prior experiences and perceptions, and (3) degree focus.

Forty three percent of the students in this cohort indicated through submitted appeals that the extenuating circumstance identified as “other” was the most common reason for students’ poor academic performance and ultimately led to dismissal from the College. Thirty-one percent identified family, financial or legal situations as the contributing factor, 22 percent listed a medical condition and 4 percent contributed low performance to the death of an immediate family member.

As displayed in Figure 4 below, out of the 41 students with the extenuating circumstance as “other,” 19, or 46 percent, achieved good academic standing, 30 percent remained on probation and 10 students, or 24 percent, were dismissed from the college at the end of the term. Twenty-nine students identified family, financial or legal circumstance as impacting their academic performance. Data reveals that 31% of students in this category obtained good academic status, 31% remained on probation and 38% were dismissed from the college. Forty-three percent, or 9 of the 21, of students whose circumstance was contributed to a medical condition reached good academic standing. Twenty-four percent met conditions of their success

plan and remained on probation, while 33 percent of students in this same category did not and were dismissed from the college at the end of the term. Very few students, less than 4 percent of all students on a PP plan, identified death of an immediate family member as a contributing factor for low academic performance. One student attained good academic standing, one remained on probation and two were dismissed from the college.

A chi-square test was used to determine if there was a statistical difference in the counts of students' academic success by type of extenuating circumstance; results of the test were the following: ($\chi^2(3) = 2.18, p = .54$).

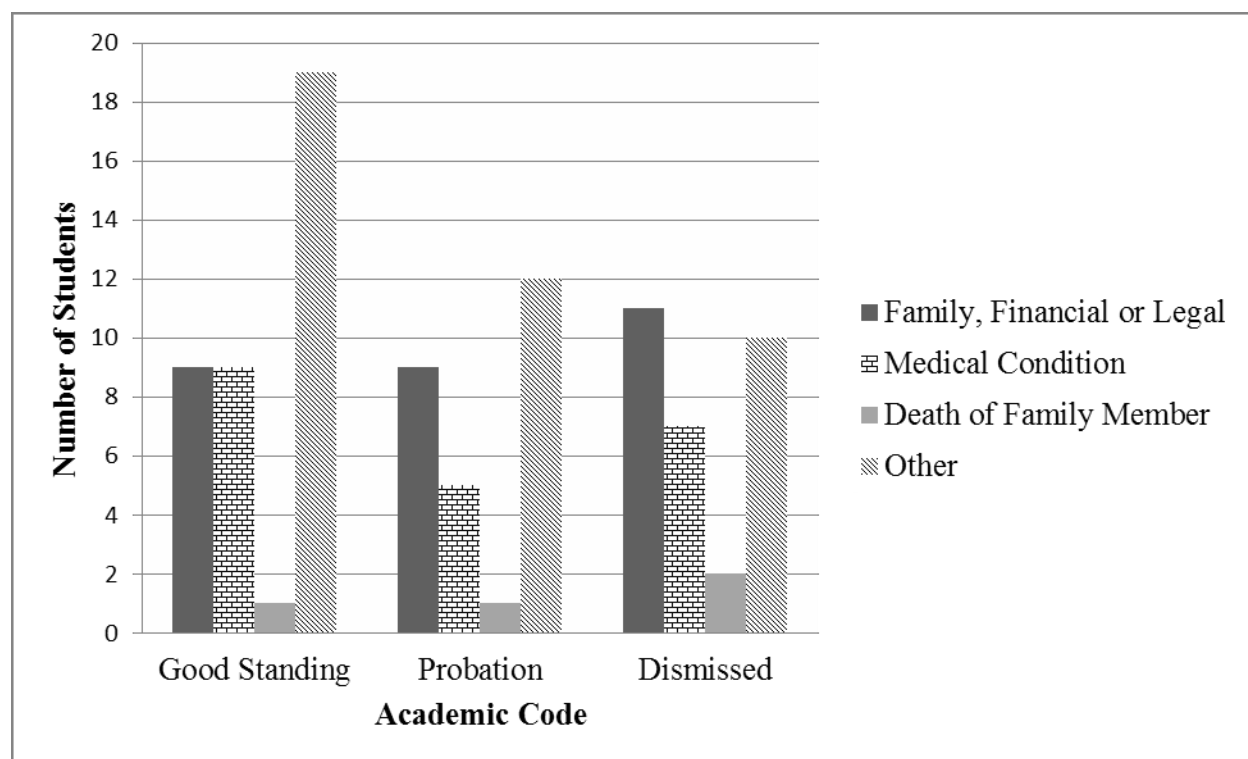


Figure 4. End of Term Academic Standing of Students on a PP plan by Extenuating Circumstance

Regardless of extenuating circumstance, all students on a PP plan were required to meet with a counselor a minimum of two times a semester to address their barriers to success and to develop an individual success plan. Out of the 95 students on a PP plan, 69 of the 95 (73%) students met with a counselor. Further evaluation of the data reveals that out of 65 students that

had a positive academic outcome, 91 percent met with a counselor. Out of the 30 students who were dismissed, 33 percent met with a counselor. A two sample t-test was conducted to determine statistical significance, the t-test revealed the following: ($t(188) = 8.24, p = .0000$).

As defined in Figure 5 below, forty-one students indicated on their submitted appeal that their poor academic performance was due to factors defined as “other.” These factors were reviewed in further detail and were assigned to one of three categories: (1) learning habits, (2) prior experiences and perceptions, and (3) degree focus.

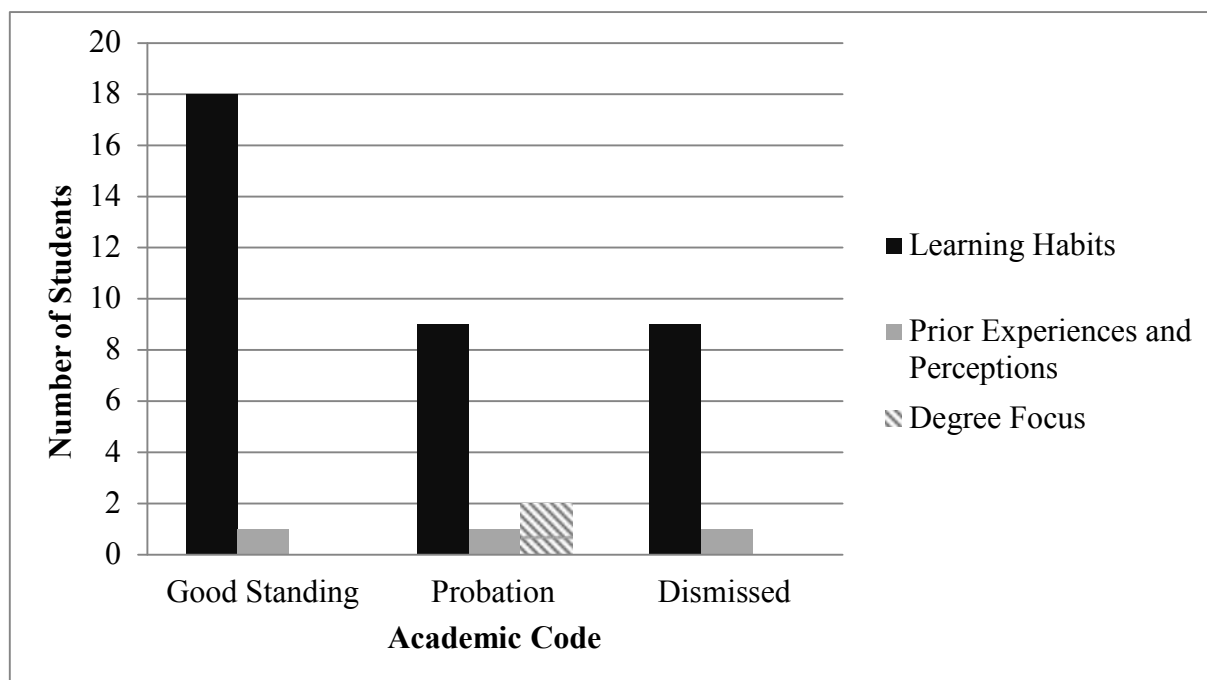


Figure 5. End of Term Academic Standing of Students on a PP plan with Extenuating Circumstance Identified as “Other.”

Data reveals that 88 percent of the students indicated that their poor performance was contributed to inadequate learning habits. At the end of the term, 18 of the 36 students, or 50 percent achieved the highest academic standing: good standing. Twenty-five percent of the remaining 50 percent maintained their original status of probation, and 25 percent were dismissed. A total of five students indicated prior experiences and perceptions or lack of degree

focus contributed to their lack of success. One of the five students obtained good standing status, three remained on probation and one was dismissed.

Chapter V: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

The primary purpose of this study of this study was to determine if the changes in the Academic Standards dismissal and appeal procedures regarding mandatory semester leave for academically dismissed students had an impact, positively or negatively, on students' academic performance upon reinstatement to the college. Data for this study was derived from two cohort groups of reinstated students following academic dismissal: (1) students dismissed and immediately reinstated in the spring of 2011 under the old academic standards policy and, (2) students dismissed and reinstated in the fall of 2012 after a semester or more leave under the new academic standards policy. In order to determine the overall impact, the study focused on three research objectives: (1) To explore differences in student academic performance among two groups 1a) those who appealed and were reinstated to the college and were required to adhere to the new academic standards policy regarding a mandatory semester leave and 1b) students who, under the old academic standards policy, were able to appeal and return the following semester. (2) To explore the academic success rates of two cohort student groups: probation plan (PP) students and probation cumulative (PC) students enrolled in the fall of 2012 and (3) To explore the differences in academic performance of students on a probation plan (PP) enrolled in the fall 2012 based on extenuating circumstance category.

Research surrounding these objectives will serve as validation of recent changes in the policy and/or provide insight to possible revisions of the policy at Chippewa Valley Technical College. Findings will also provide data regarding indicators of student success and retention resource management.

Conclusions

Each research objective will now be restated and a conclusion offered for each.

Research Objective One. To explore differences in student academic performance among two groups: 1) those who appealed and were reinstated to the college and were required to adhere to the new academic standards policy regarding a mandatory semester leave and 2) students who, under the old academic standards policy, were able to appeal and return the following semester.

Overall, when comparing CVTC's old academic standards and new academic standards regarding student academic performance, the data reveals that the new academic standards policy implemented at CVTC had a positive impact on a student's academic status. Positive academic performance rates were 27 percent higher for students who sat out one semester or more under the new guidelines compared with students who were allowed to immediately return the following semester. More than half of the students (58%) that were allowed to return under the old standards were dismissed at the end of the term, compared with 31 percent under the new academic standards.

A two sample t-test was conducted between these two cohort groups, data revealed this was statistically significant, ($t(215) = 3.95, p = .0001$).

Eighty-six percent of students reinstated under the new academic standards achieved the highest academic standing, good academic standing, a rate that was 39 percent higher than students reinstated under the old policy. Seventy-three percent of these students were required to meet with a college counselor a minimum of two times during the semester, suggesting that advising and counseling played a role in higher success rates of these students. Noel and Levitz (1998) research revealed that the single most powerful retention strategy is when at least one person takes a personal interest in the student and relates to that student as a total person (Noel & Levitz, 1998a). Results support Lakey and Cohen's (2000) research, highlighted in the literature review, that social support and one's perceived social support has a positive impact on academic

performance. Students who were reinstated under the new academic standards were also required to submit an academic appeal and provide documentation of the extenuating circumstance and steps they have already taken to address the barriers that impeded their success, supporting the research outlined in Chapter 2 that, unless addressed, repeated exposure to negative stress plays a significant role in the overall health and well-being of college students.

Research Objective Two. To explore the academic success rates of two cohort student groups: probation plan (PP) students and probation cumulative (PC) students enrolled in the fall of 2012.

Results indicate very little difference in success rates of students on a PP and PC plan. Four percentage points were the variance between students in these two categories. Data reveals that students on a PC plan had an academic success rate 72 percent, compared with students on a PP plan, despite the requirement of meeting with a CVTC counselor twice a semester who had an overall academic success rate of 68 percent.

The difference between the two groups was 4 percentage points; a two sample t-test showed this was not statistically significant, ($t(129) = 0.44, p = .65$).

These findings may contradict the research of many, such as Tinto, Noel & Levitz and Lakey and Cohen regarding the impact of social support on academic success. It is important to note that even though students in the PC cohort may not have been required to meet with a CVTC counselor, they may have established supportive connections with others inside or outside the institution. Another factor that may have played a role in the higher success rate for students in the PC cohort may be contributed to one's cumulative GPA. All students who were in the PC cohort had a cumulative GPA above a 2.0, compared with students in a PP cohort whose cumulative GPA was below a 2.0, suggesting that previous academic performance indicates that

students in this cohort may be better academically prepared than students in the PP cohort and may not need the additional support.

Research Objective Three. To explore the differences in academic performance of students on a probation plan (PP) enrolled in the fall 2012 based on extenuating circumstance category:

- a. Death of friend or family member.
- b. Medical condition.
- c. Family, financial or legal situation.
- d. Other
 - i. Learning habits.
 - ii. Prior experiences.
 - iii. Degree focus.

Statistics disclose that students who identified “other” as the extenuating circumstance that led to poor academic performance had the highest positive outcome percentage rate (76%). This percentage was 10 percentage points higher than students whose extenuating circumstance was due to medical issues (66%) and 14 percentage points higher than students whose performance was due to family, financial or legal situations (62%). A chi-square test was used to determine if there was a statistical difference in the counts of students’ academic success by type of extenuating circumstance; results indicated that there were no statistical difference between the 4 types of circumstances ($\chi^2(3) = 2.18, p = .54$).

Further evaluation of students in the “other” category revealed that 36 of the 41 students in the “other” category identified inadequate learning habits as a specific barrier to academic success. Even though 75 percent of these students had a positive academic outcome, it could not be compared with others who indicated prior experiences and perceptions or lack of degree focus were contributing factors of performance due to low numbers in these categories.

Results do support the review of literature and mirror the findings that additional stressors, including death of family members, medical illnesses, family, financial and legal situations and auxiliary stressors play a role in academic success. Research indicates that it is essential for students who have been readmitted following academic dismissal to establish a trusting relationship with a staff member on campus (Noel & Levitz, 1998a). Results of this study show that out of the 65 students who had a positive academic outcome, 91 percent met with a counselor. When reviewing the data of the 30 students who were dismissed from the college, 67 percent of these students did not meet with a counselor. The difference between the two groups was 58 percentage points; a two sample t-test showed this was statistically significant, ($t(188) = 8.24, p = .0000$).

Recommendations Related to This Study

Results of this study will be presented to Chippewa Valley Technical College's Student Appeals Academic team along with the following recommendations:

- 1) It is recommended that CVTC continues to follow the new Academic Standards dismissal and appeal procedures and practice regarding mandatory semester leave for academically dismissed students.
- 2) It is recommended that CVTC continues to code reinstated students as probation cumulative (PC) or probation plan (PP) based on overall cumulative grade-point average until data provide reason for change.
- 3) It is recommended that findings are shared among the other 15 technical colleges statewide regarding a model for students dismissed for academic reasons.

Recommendations for Further Study

- 1) It is recommended that CVTC continues to track students in the identified cohorts to determine semester to semester persistence and graduation rates of reinstated students.

- 2) It is recommended that CVTC expands the study to include long-term academic success and graduation rates of multiple semesters of reinstated students.

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Appendix A: Academic Appeals Form

Chippewa Valley Technical College Request for Academic Appeal

All students dismissed from CVTC may appeal to be reinstated to the College. If you wish to appeal your academic dismissal, you must submit this form and the following information/documentation within the timeline indicated:

1. An explanation of the specific circumstance that prevented you from meeting the College academic standards and how you have addressed the problem to ensure future academic success.
2. The following third party verification/documentation of the circumstances is attached.
You are required to check a box(es) below and attach documentation. If documentation is not submitted and does not support your circumstance, your appeal for reinstatement will not be reviewed.

- Death of an immediate family member (mother, father, sibling, child, spouse, or grandparent). A copy of the death certificate or obituary is required.
- Medical condition which resulted in the inability to attend class or make contact to drop/withdraw. Medical documentation including the dates of illness, admission to the hospital, or a signed letter from the doctor is required.
- Family, financial, or legal situation that impacted your ability to succeed. A statement from a third party (family member, health care provider, friend, faculty, or other advocate) is required.
- Other. Documentation of special circumstance when appropriate. Additional required documentation of steps you have already taken to address your circumstance may include, but are not limited to, a letter from your employer supporting changes in work schedule or flexibility with your school schedule, a transcript from another college identifying successful completion of courses, attendance verification of Student Services College Success Seminars you have attended, Career Assessments completed or Academic Services resources utilized, or a letter from a case manager, agency counselor, or CVTC counselor verifying actions taken to address your circumstance. Refer to the [Services for Students](#) website for CVTC resources.

- I have checked with the Cashier's Office and cleared all accounts receivable holds. **(Please note an appeal cannot be submitted until all financial holds are cleared.)**

The Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Appeals committee, comprised of representatives from College Administration will review your request for academic appeal annually in October and March.

Students who submit an academic appeal by the deadlines below:

- October 1 (by 4pm) will be notified of the committee's decision by October 31.
- March 1 (by 4pm) will be notified of the committee's decision by March 31.
- June 15 (by 4pm) will be notified of the committee's decision by July 15.

If your appeal is approved and reinstatement granted, you are obligated to meet the requirements of your success plan. Your plan will be evaluated at the end of the next term of enrollment to ensure that you met all requirements. If your appeal is denied, you will be informed of your re-entry options. All committee decisions are final.

Complete the student contact information in the space below, and address the questions/statements that follow.

Last Name	First & Middle Name	CVTC Student Identification Number
PO Box/Street Address		Home/Contact Telephone Number
City State Zip		CVTC E-mail Address
Program Enrolled in at time of Dismissal Reinstated	New Program of Interest if	Month Year of Dismissal From CVTC
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Is this your first appeal		If no, term of previous appeal

OBSTACLES

Self reflect on the following items that may have been a barrier to your success the past two semesters. Use the the information on page 2-3 along with the [Services for Students](#) website to assist you in answering the questions on page 4.

Learning Habits Too much

- TV/Internet/Games
- Too much social life
- Overextended in my
- _____
- Use cell phone too much
- Inadequate computer skills
- Failure to listen to staff/faculty
- Other

Social Support

- Spouse/Children problems
- Household obligations
- Roommate problems
- Socially uncomfortable/shy
- Housing problems
- Parental pressure
- Physical abuse
- Divorce or Separation
- New Marriage
- New independent status
- Family health problems
- Loneliness
- Being Single
- Other

Financial

- Worried about money
- Financial aid requirements
- Inadequate Financial aid
- Spouse not working
- Too many debts
- Time limit on school funds
- Other

Work-Related

- Must work to survive
- Work too many hours
- Problems with the boss
- May lose job

- Conflicts with the job
- No part-time work available
- Conflicts at work
- Lack of computer/internet
- Lack of phone
- Lack of transportation
- Other

Personal

- Stressed all the time
- Cultural pressures
- Relationship worries/problems
- Loss of family member or friend
- Depression
- Substance abuse Rape or assault
- Health/Medical worries
- Illness
- Housing problems
- Value conflicts
- Transportation issues
- Commitment
- Commuting
- Negative attitude
- Emotional abuse
- Pregnancy
- Family Issues/Concerns

Prior

Experience/Perceptions

- Previous failure
- Not being perfect
- Accomplishments
- Pressures
- Success
- Making decisions
- Making mistakes
- Task to difficult
- Don't know who to contact with concerns
- Unhappy with instructor
- Impersonal instructor
- Impersonal staff
- Other

Degree Focus

- Core requirements
- Academic Policies
- GPA requirements
- Parental pressure
- Other pressure
- Classes unavailable
- Classes at conflicting times
- Classes/schedule not convenient
- Poor class selection
- Selecting a major
- Major not offered
- Unclear education goals
- Unhappy with major
- Other

Academic/Study Skills

- Learning disability
- Poor study habits
- Poor note-taking skills
- Poor concentration
- Poor time management
- Poor study environment
- Ineffective studying time
- High anxiety Inferior preparation
- Poor academic advising
- Failure to ask questions when working with staff/faculty
- Other

Reading Confidence

- Inadequate reading skills

Verbal Confidence

- Inadequate writing skills

Math Confidence

- Inadequate math skills

SOLUTIONS

Solutions that are followed by (*) indicate resources available on campus. See next page for a list of campus resources.

Learning Habits Set

- goals* Reward
- yourself Say
- NO!
- Use to-do list
- Time management workshop*
- Turn cell phone off
- Other

Social Support

- Discuss goals*
- Attend to children first, and then require solitude
- Develop a routine*
- Delegate duties
- Take family member to get medical help
- Seek help with communication *
- Attend parenting classes
- Attend marriage or family counseling
- Obtain family planning help
- Other

Financial

- See financial planner
- See tax accountant for deductions
- Contact Student Financial Assistance about loans/grants*
- Explore credit for prior learning options*
- Consider part-time schooling
- Develop a degree plan*
- Cash Course (MYCVTC)*
- Other

Work Related

- Search for a new job*
- Develop problem solving skills
- Find a job*
- Spouse gets a job
- Change position within job
- Reduce hours working
- Quit job
- Other

Personal

- Attend stress management workshop
- Attend assertiveness training workshop
- Meet with CVTC counselor*
- Seek personal counseling
- Attend group counseling
- Visit a medical doctor
- Join club or organization*
- Read self-help book
- Listen to motivational tapes
- Develop problem solving skills*
- Attend ISS Workshop*
- Take semester off while working on problems
- Say NO!
- Car pool/ride bus
- Other

Degree Focus

- Consult with Academic Advisor*
- Use Student Success Center resources [Services for Students*](#)
- Consult with instructor*
- Change major*
- Change schools
- Attend a Career Planning Workshop*
- Develop an Academic Plan*
- Other

Academic/Study Skills See

- Tutorial Services for tutoring assistance*
- Attend study skills seminar/class*
- Use study skill self-help brochures/materials
- Visit with Instructors*
- Change study environment
- Form a study group
- Change instructors
- Ask questions during advising
- Seek career counseling*
- Know drop deadlines & procedures*
- Utilize Disability Services*
- Meet with Diversity specialist*
- Attend test anxiety workshop*
- Attend a technology support seminar*
- Enroll in remedial courses*

SELF-EVALUATION

Please address the following questions/statements. Briefly describe your situation/circumstance in complete sentence format.

1. **CIRCUMSTANCES:**

Describe the circumstances (death of an immediate family member, medical condition, family, financial, or legal situation) that may have contributed to your academic difficulties **and attach documentation to support your circumstances.**

If your circumstances are categorized as “OTHER”, describe WHY these circumstances contributed to your academic difficulties. **Describe and provide documentation** of the steps you may have taken to improve your opportunity to achieve your educational goals at CVTC. Documentation of steps you have already taken to address your circumstance may include, but are not limited to, a letter from your employer supporting changes in work schedule or flexibility with your school schedule, a transcript from another college identifying successful completion of courses, [attendance verification](#) of Student Services College Success Seminars you have attended, Career Assessments completed or Academic Services resources utilized, or a letter from a case manager, agency counselor, or CVTC counselor verifying actions taken to address your circumstance. Refer to the [Services for Students](#) website for CVTC resources.

2. **CHANGING YOUR HABITS:**

Identify and list a minimum of three (3) items in your self evaluation that you believe will help you manage life circumstances and improve performance in your classes if reinstated to the College.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3. **CAMPUS RESOURCES:**

Identify and list a minimum of three (3) campus resources you will use to assist you in identifying solutions and overcoming barriers if reinstated to the College. See [Services for Students](#).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

4. **FUTURE SUCCESS:**

How will the changes described above increase the likelihood that you will succeed if given another opportunity? Please be very specific and detailed in your response.

Submit this form and information/documentation of circumstances as follows:

By Mail: Student Academic Appeals Business
 Education Center Chippewa Valley
 Technical College
 620 W Clairemont Avenue
 Eau Claire, WI 54701

Drop Off: Eau Claire Business Education Center – Information and Service Center, Room 113