
Title III
Mid-Grant Update

April, 2007

Overview

Title III Grant Mission

- » The Title III Grant was awarded to UW-Stout in October of 2004 by the Department of Education. The two primary goals of UW-Stout for this five year grant are to improve retention and graduation rates through student services and faculty development, and to establish and implement a system to assess student learning outcomes in order to allow the institution to make valid curricular decisions and systematically improve the teaching and learning process.

Title III Programs

- » Multiple programs are being used to reach the **first grant goal** of improving retention and graduation rates.
 - **Student Success Plan** - provides a variety of services to target students at risk for attrition
 - **Faculty Summer Institutes** - offers faculty the opportunity to learn about, discuss and practice innovative teaching practices that increase student engagement and performance
 - **Faculty travel** - supports attendance at conferences pertaining to student learning
- » Multiple programs address the **second grant goal** of establishing and implementing a system of assessing student learning outcomes and mobile technology effectiveness.
 - **Faculty Workshops** - offers both informational materials and opportunities for faculty to work on course-specific assessment needs
 - **E-Scholar Program Assessment Plan** - assesses the impact of the e-Scholar program, and examines areas for improvement related to student learning
 - **Electronic learning assessment portfolio development** - create a model designed to demonstrate student learning outcomes

Title III Impact

- » Grant sponsored events have been well attended – across all the events to date, the grant has touched the lives of 1,764 undergraduate students and 281 faculty/staff.
- » Students indicated that they were influenced by participating in the Title III activities. In particular, their level of knowledge of career possibilities with a UW-Stout education has increased.
- » Faculty have also indicated that they have been influenced by the workshops. In addition to increased knowledge of new classroom tools used to enhance student learning, they have indicated an increased ability to implement methods of assessing these student learning gains. A recurring theme mentioned by the faculty was the positive impact of learning these new teaching techniques in a community of peers.
- » Over 170 undergraduate students created electronic portfolios.
- » Preliminary impact estimates on student retention for targeted groups have been encouraging.

“It is clear that the Title III project has had a positive impact on faculty, staff, students, and the institution as a whole. Everyone I interviewed was grateful for the support the grant provided and appreciative of the services the funds paid for. It is also clear that the grant is in excellent hands.”... “In short, UW-Stout has made excellent use of its Title III grant during years one and two. The project is making good progress towards its goals and objectives. Moreover, it is contributing in many ways to student learning, faculty development, and the overall health of the institution.”

Dr. William Campbell, Title III External Evaluator; as quoted from the Year 2 external evaluation of UW-Stout Title III activities

Goal 1: Increase Retention and Graduation Rates

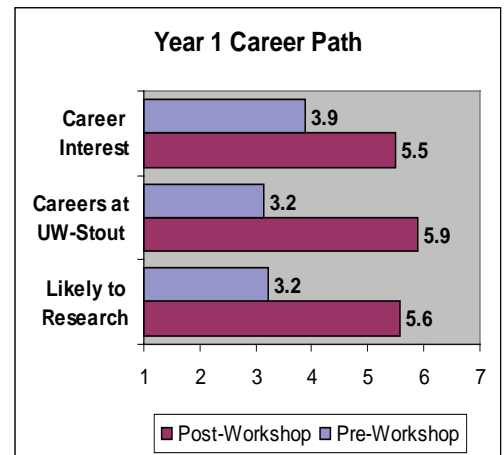
- » **Student Success Plan** was designed to provide additional and enhanced programs and services to assist students in attaining their academic and career goals. During Year 1 the initial program components were developed. These components, listed below, were implemented in Year 2.
 - **Transfer Student Service** was designed as a multi-faceted program. The transfer student website was made available to assist transfer students in developing their own student success plan. In Year Two, 45 undecided transfer students participated in a half-day registration program and received ongoing academic advising, registration assistance, and assistance with career exploration. In Year 3, this number increased by 33% to 60 undecided transfer students. Efforts are underway to assess the impact on transfer student success, including graduation rates.
 - **Academic Skills Online Resource** was designed as an academic toolbox for freshman and students on academic probation to help them formulate their student success plan. 10% of the students who had access in Year 2 used this resource. Preliminary assessment of impact in Year 2 revealed that full-time new freshman that used the resource had a 7% higher retention rate than their classmates that did not use the resource.
 - **Career Exploration Online Resource** was focused toward undecided students to assist them in creating an individual student success plan. In Year 2, this was made available to 600 undecided freshmen, and in Year Three, 371 undecided students had access. Impact assessment studies are planned.
 - **One Credit Career Exploration Class** was made available to all current students to help them create their own student success plan. A pilot of the new on-line curriculum was conducted with 48 students in the fall of Year 2 and evaluated for course improvement. In the spring semester of Year 2, 78 students enrolled with the following positive results.
 - Sophomore class participants had a *14% higher retention rate* when compared to their peers
 - *The percentage of declared majors among freshman participants greatly exceeded, by more than two-fold, their peer group (58% versus 22%) by fall 2006*
 - *The percentage of declared majors among sophomore participants reached parity with the stringent Benchmark Group (96% versus 95%, respectively) by fall 2006*
 - *The percentage of declared majors among sophomore participants greatly exceeded, by more than threefold, their peer group (96% versus 27%) by fall 2006*
 The course was offered again in spring of Year 2 and in Year 3. Impact analysis for these students is underway.

"...this class has helped me get a better perception on what I can do in my future life and how I can make my life be a success and live happy"

"In closing I learned a lot and I will take what I got from this class in making my decision what to major in and what to do for the rest of my life for work. What I got from the class is going to weigh significantly in my decision making. If I could go back and make my schedule, I wouldn't think of changing this class for another"

"Most of all this class gave me the confidence to put myself out there, because now I know I control my future."

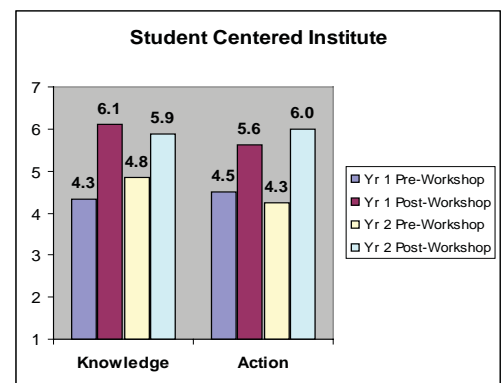
- o **Career Path Workshop** was a day long seminar for incoming students and their parents that targeted undecided students. Workshop participants experienced a personal assessment of career interests, were provided with information about how careers relate to UW-Stout programs, and also had the chance to interact with a panel of UW-Stout students.
 - The pilot workshops were held in Year 1. The immediate impact was assessed via an exit survey, where both students and parents indicated significant increases in their knowledge of personal career interests and the careers available to those with a UW-Stout education. Students also indicated that the workshop made them much more likely to continue to research careers. Both students and parents indicated that they highly valued the student panel component.
 - Further evaluation via student performance data revealed an estimated impact on overall retention of attending the workshop was about 2% (30% of the grant’s goal of increasing retention to 80%).
 - Workshops were also held in Year 2 and Year 3. Impact analysis of these workshops is underway.
 - Attendance in the seven workshops held in Years 1 and 2 exceeded the goals set by the grant by more than 150%.



- » Evaluation of the impact on retention rates of Title III sponsored student activities continues as data becomes available, as does evaluation of the impact on graduation rates.
- » Additionally, impact on students is measured through the following ongoing assessments
 - o Student scores on the ACT-CAAP exams
 - o Student scores on National Survey on Student Engagement
 - o Student responses to the e-Scholar assessment surveys

» Faculty Development

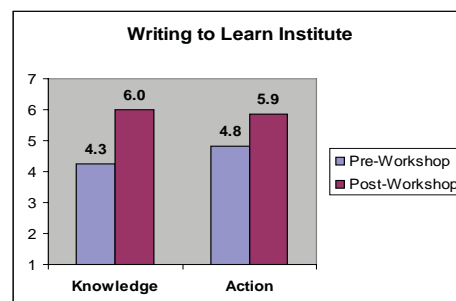
- o **Student Centered Institutes** were sponsored by Title III Grant in Year 1 and Year 2. These institutes focused on enhancing student engagement and critical thinking. Faculty participants had significant increases in both the **knowledge** of student-centered learning techniques and their ability to put this knowledge into **action** in the classroom. Participants also indicated high levels of engagement. One of the most useful aspects of the workshop was the hands-on presentations. Participants indicated that a workshop highlight was interaction with colleagues. Several participants will be attending and presenting at national conferences.



“I found the actual implementation of the active learning activities the most useful because I could see exactly how the methods worked”

“this is one of those rare seminars I have attended that I will walk away and actually use what I have learned”

- o **Multimedia Institute** was held in Year 1. 21 faculty attended the three day event that introduced the participants to the variety of multi-media learning resources available at UW-Stout.
- o **Writing to Learn Institute** was held in the summer of Year 2. Faculty gained **knowledge** about “writing to learn” in their discipline-specific context. Through workshop activities, participants felt more able to develop **action** plans to implement these new skills in student assignments. Faculty also said that the most useful aspect of the workshop was being able to work together with colleagues, both inside and outside of one’s program. Participants had follow-up sessions.



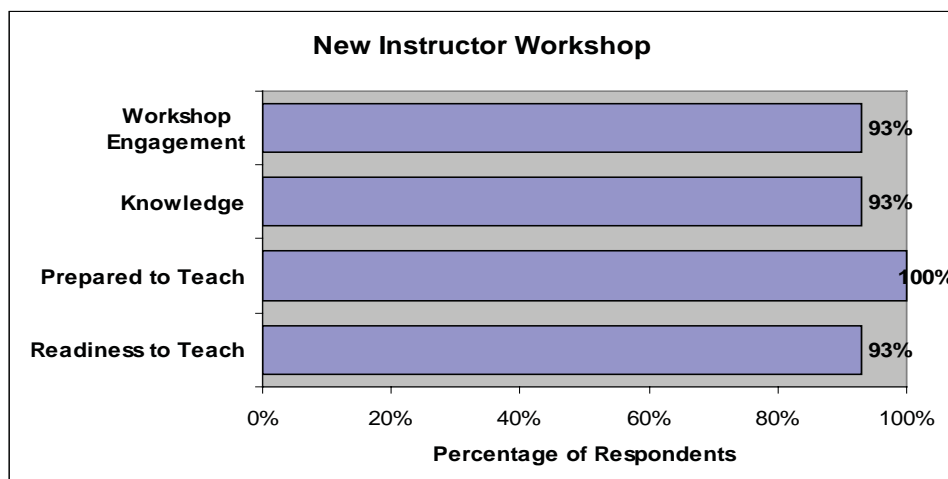
The most useful aspect was

“Working in groups with people from outside my discipline”

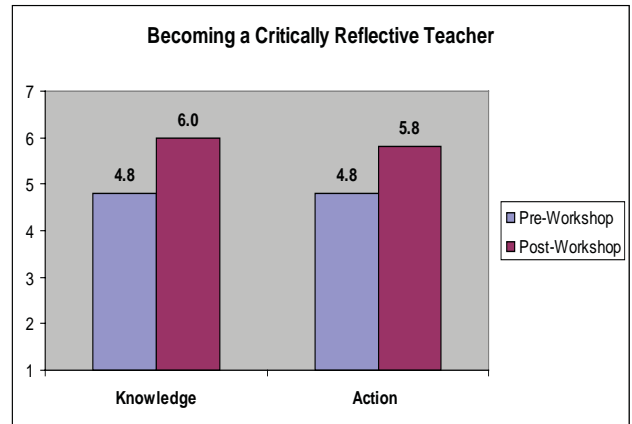
“Networking with faculty from various disciplines, in order to better understand our students’ writing. The across-the-curriculum experience”

“I like the practical, how-to tips on assignments. While theory is necessary for understanding, I sometimes find it hard to apply in simple ways. I enjoy hearing not only from the facilitators about how to do things, but also from the other participants.”

- o **New Instructor Workshop** was held in Year 2 and 3 to introduce new faculty to the UW-Stout’s digital learning environment and the variety of resources available to assist with teaching. After workshop completion, participants indicated high levels of **engagement** during the workshop, **knowledge** of student learning and engagement, and that they felt **prepared** and **ready** to use these tools for teaching. New faculty that are prepared and feel able to utilize UW-Stout resources will contribute to improved student retention and graduation rates. This workshop will be continued in Year 4.



- o ***Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*** workshop, led by Stephen Brookfield, was held in Year 3. This session allowed participants to learn about and experience the art of being a reflective teacher. Participants indicated a significant increase in their **knowledge** of what critical reflection was. They also indicated an increased ability to put reflective teaching into **action**. As seen with the other faculty institutes, a key to success was being able to reflect on the ideas with their colleagues. Follow-up sessions were offered.



The most useful aspect was

“open discussions with other faculty. Format for discussion with peers”

“opportunity to reflect on my own teaching. Opportunity to hear common concerns & solutions/ideas”

“alternate ways to create a classroom learning environment”

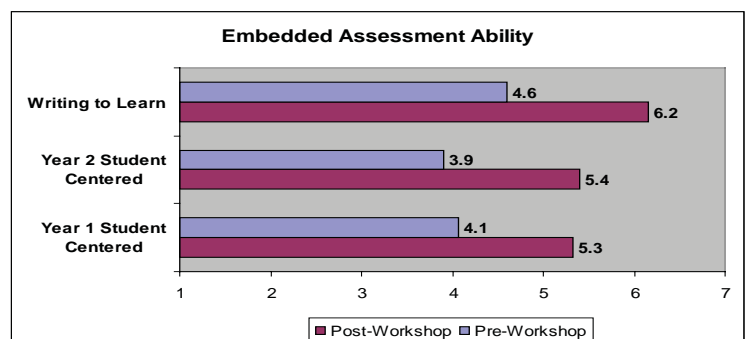
“Actual role modeling of techniques of discussion, of application & of practice.”

- o ***Continued Faculty Development*** Many workshop participants requested follow-up sessions, and several were provided. In Year 3 the Teaching and Learning Center sponsored Friday “Teaching Stories” gatherings for instructors to share their teaching experiences. These sessions were well received by all who attended.
- o We are currently developing the Year 3 faculty summer institutes.
- o ***Conferences*** In Year 1, the grant subsidized 21 instructors to attend conferences that related to the grant goals. In Year 2, this number increased by 148% to 51 instructors. Additionally, in Year 3, the grant is sponsoring 10 UW-Stout presenters at the national “Teaching for a Change” conference in Utah. Presenters attended previous grant sponsored institutes.

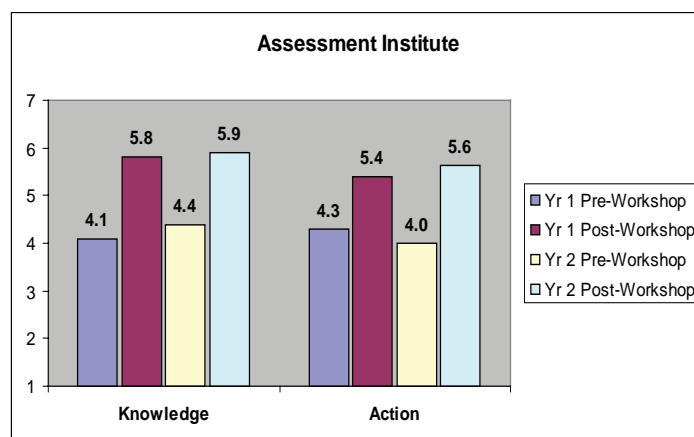
Goal 2: Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

» ***Embedded Course Assessment***

- o In addition to informing faculty about classroom tools, the *Student Centered Institutes* in Years 1 and 2 and the *Writing to Learn Institute* had the objective of enabling faculty to embed assessment into their courses. According to faculty ratings, they felt able to do this by the end of the workshop.



- o Title III sponsored two assessment specific summer institutes. The Year 1 *Assessment Institute* was facilitated by presenters from Alverno College and was attended by 29 UW-Stout faculty and staff. The Year 2 *Assessment Institute* was facilitated by Dr. Barbara Walvoord and had 33 attendees. Participants in both institutes were highly engaged. Similar to the other faculty workshops, those in the *Assessment Institutes* indicated that they found the peer interaction to be advantageous. Participants indicated significant gains in **knowledge** of different types of assessment practices and their ability to put these assessment practices into **action** in the classroom. Participants were also asked to formulate assessment related action plans. These action plans became “living” documents via Title III follow-up with the institute participants.



Most useful aspects...

“Interaction and discussion with STOUT colleagues regarding current methods of assessment.”

“Conversations with other program directors about best practices and areas of concern in other programs

“I found Barbara’s lectures very interesting, engaging, and informative”

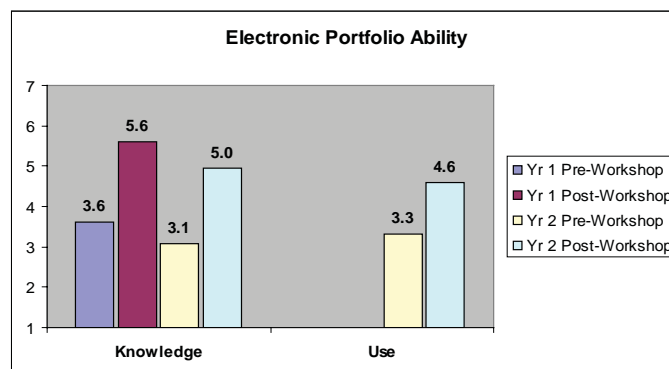
“...I also like being able to meet other colleagues, something that is made virtually impossible most of the time because of the 4-4 course load.”

- » ***E-Scholar Assessment Plan*** was developed, implemented and evaluated by the e-Scholar Assessment Council. The plan mapped the assessment of student success related to the e-Scholar program with specific focus on student learning.

- » ***Electronic Portfolio***

Development of a viable campus electronic learning assessment portfolio system has had a few wrinkles. Year 1 saw extensive exploration of venues and the choice of Folio-21 as the vendor.

- o ***Assessment Institutes*** in Year 1 and Year 2 introduced faculty to the electronic portfolio. Faculty **knowledge** of the uses of the electronic portfolio increased as did their perceived ability to **use** an electronic portfolio. Faculty and staff that attended the Year 2 *Assessment Institute* were able to create their own portfolios using Folio-21.



- o Through the use of UW-Stout peer trainers and the cooperation of instructors, Folio-21 was “rolled out” in several programs in Year 2 and 176 undergraduate students created portfolios.
- o A support website for students and faculty for Folio-21 use that included Stout-specific training resources was developed.
- o Three new affiliate groups were created and were activated in fall 2007.
- o However, operational problems with Folio-21 during Year 2 made implementation difficult and unrewarding. By the end of Year 2 focus was shifted away from vendor-specific utility to the conceptual benefits of using an electronic portfolio to assess student learning. A search was begun in Year 3 for a system that could flexibly meet these needs. Additionally, to offer a viable alternative electronic portfolio to programs, creation of a UW-Stout web-based portfolio template began.
- o Plans are underway for the faculty summer *E-Portfolio Institute* for Year 3.

Acknowledgements

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Grant Team

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Further information on Title III activities and impact can be found at

Title III website: <http://www.uwstout.edu/mba/t3project/>

Institutional Assessment Information: <http://www.uwstout.edu/bpa/>