

Evaluation of Transfer Student Services: Grant Task 1.3.3

Targeted Outcome and Logic of the Activity

Prior to 2005, transfer students were required to select a major in order to enroll at UW-Stout. In fall 2005, UW-Stout modified the policy and began allowing transfer students with undeclared majors to enroll at the university. The Title III Grant implemented the Transfer Student Services to help maintain and eventually increase the retention and graduation rates of transfer students enrolled at the university since students that fail to declare a major have a higher tendency to drop out of the university than those who enter with a decided major. The grant supported transfer services focus on assisting transfer students with career and academic advisement and include efforts to increase their engagement levels, which have been linked with improved student retention and graduation.

Results and Analyses

Transfer Student Retention is defined as the number of transfer and re-entry transfer students that return to the university the following year (students that graduated are also counted as retained).

Comparison Groups

To determine if the grant supported Transfer Student Services helped maintain and/or increase transfer student retention rates, transfer students prior to grant implementation were compared to transfer students after implementation. In order to keep the groups as similar as possible, comparisons are made up of cohorts that attended UW-Stout after it became a laptop campus in 2002. A cohort is made up of students that started at UW-Stout the same year and have similar characteristics (Age, Transfer GPA, and ACT scores).

The Title III Grant was implemented in 2005. However, since 2004 was a transition period, the comparison groups include all transfer students in the cohorts prior to grant implementation, 2002 and 2003, in comparison to all transfer students after implementation, 2005 and 2006. Statistically, all four cohorts have similar characteristics.

Transfer Student Services Impact on Retention

According to the results, there were no statistical differences in retention rates prior to or after grant implementation (as seen in Figure 1). This suggests that the Title III Grant Transfer Student Services helped maintain the transfer student retention rates, whereas one would expect retention rates to drop with the addition of an 'at-risk population' (i.e. undecided transfer students). Future goals are to continue to develop and sustain Transfer Student Services to assist with improved retention and graduation rates of all transfer students.

Figure 1. Retention Rates of UW-Stout Transfer Students

Fall Semester of Entrance	Cohort Head Count	Retention Rate After**		
		1 Year	2 Years	3 Years
2002	684	76.5%	68.3%	65.8%
2003	542	78.6%	73.2%	70.7%
2005*	650	76.6%	71.5%	
2006	677	77.0%		

* Title III Grant Transfer Student Services Implemented
** Fall retention rates of all transfer (transfer and re-entry transfer) students
Retention rates include all students that were retained and/or graduated from UW-Stout