Outcome Evaluation for Career Exploration Class: Grant Task 1.1.3
Fall 2005 and 2006 Cohorts

Executive Summary

The Career Exploration classes were developed to help increase the retention and graduation rates of students enrolled at the university. It has been empirically established that students who fail to declare a major have a higher tendency to drop out of the university than those who enter the university with a decided program of study. Consequently, the career exploration courses target this risk group of undecided-majors by providing curriculum to help students investigate career options, explore individual career paths, and choose the appropriate major to reach their goals.

Retention is defined as the number of first-year, full-time students that return to UW-Stout the following fall.

Analysis of student participants’ retention rates suggests that the Career Exploration Class has minimal impact on student retention. Central findings are summarized as follows.

- Fall 2005 Cohort (41 student participants)
  - There were no significant differences in retention between the controls and the workshop group.
  - There were no statistical differences between the workshop group and UW-Stout’s overall year 1 retention rate.

- Fall 2006 Cohort (201 student participants)
  - There were no significant differences in retention between the controls and the workshop group.
  - The career class and at-risk control group had a significantly lower year 1 retention rate than UW-Stout’s overall retention rate.