

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.