

## Today's Student - Fostering Resiliency Institute: Grant Task 1.7.4

### Executive Summary

The summer institutes are intended to help *increase the retention and graduation rates* of students enrolled at the university through faculty development. Instructors' practice/influence has been found to have a direct impact on students' sense of belonging, motivation, and social and intellectual involvement, which directly impact student retention.

The Fostering Resiliency Institute resulted in significant improvements in participants' self-reported ability to identify factors and practices that foster student resiliency, engagement, and persistence, identify challenges to working with today's students, and develop new strategies to enhance work with students, as well as increased their understanding of UW-Stout's undergraduate student population. Seventeen instructors participated in the institute, 9 of those (53%) also participated in the fall 2007 New Instructor Workshop suggesting that these instructors value opportunities to focus their professional development time on teaching and learning issues in support of the UW-Stout culture. Overall, participants were highly satisfied with the institute experience. Central findings are summarized as follows.

#### Strengths of the Activity

- Results showed the most significant increase in participants' understanding of attributes and characteristics of UW-Stout's undergraduate student population.
- There was a significant increase in participants' self-reported ability to develop new strategies to enhance work with students, identify some of the key challenges related to working with today's students, and identify factors and practices that foster student resiliency, engagement, and persistence
- Participants were highly satisfied with their institute experience, with an average reported satisfaction rating of 6.1 (out of 7).
- The most useful information/activities were the sessions on Establishing a Community of Caring in the Classroom, Rethinking Race/Ethnicity, and the discussions.
- 13 of the 14 participants that responded to the question stated that they would recommend this institute to other instructors.

#### Opportunities to Improve the Activity

- After the institute, participants still had the most to learn regarding identifying factors and practices that foster student resiliency, engagement, and persistence.
- Participants would like to see more time for discussions/group interaction, be provided more examples/strategies/application, and learn more on university resources.

#### Action Plan for Improvement

- Dedicate more time on defining student resiliency.
- Provide more practices and strategies that foster student resiliency, engagement, and persistence.
- Schedule more time for discussions between participants.
- Incorporate more examples of how participants can apply the knowledge learned.
- Create handout on the various university resources and their location.