

SEAMLESS TRANSITIONS: A GUIDE TO LATINO STUDENT SUCCESS

22nd International Conference on the First-Year Experience

Montreal, Canada

July 20-23, 2009

Session: 99CT 9:30am-10:30am

I. NEIU Overview & NEIU-EL CENTRO CAMPUS Overview

II. Program Components

- **RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS** – Staff collaborates with Chicago area high schools, community centers and community colleges to identify, inform, and guide prospective students and their families through the admission, financial aid and registration processes.
 - NEIU-El Centro observes the general admissions criteria of the University for freshman and transfer students. Alternative Admissions Program - Students that do not meet the general admissions criteria, but demonstrate academic potential may be considered for alternative admission to NEIU. To be eligible students must participate in a pre-admission interview, submit a personal statement, and two letters of recommendation from counselors and/or teachers.
 - Summer Transition Program (STP) - STP is a six-week evening program, which prepares high school graduates and recent GED holders for a successful transition to Northeastern Illinois University.
- **ACADEMIC SUPPORT** - designed to help students make reasonable progress towards graduation.
 - **ACADEMIC ADVISING** (at least 3 per semester) Academic advising sessions are to take place in the month of February, March, and April for the spring semester and September, October, and November in the fall semester. First Meeting (beginning of semester) to get acquainted, review student/advisor expectations, discuss your classes, resources, and answer any questions you may have. Second Meeting (mid semester) to discuss your progress reports, make GPA projections, and develop a plan to complete the semester successfully. Third Meeting (near the end of the semester) to evaluate the current semester and plan for future semesters.
 - **PROGRESS REPORTS** Progress reports will be mailed out to faculty during the months of March (spring semester) and October (fall semester). Upon receipt of completed progress reports, academic advisors will meet with advisees to review progress reports and address any issues or concerns. Academic plans will be developed for students who are not performing satisfactorily in their courses.
 - **ACADEMIC WORKSHOPS** (at least one per month) These workshops will help student develop the skills they may need to be a successful student. The topics include writing, presentation skills, study skills, time management, goal setting, major selection, etc.
 - **GUIAS** Guidance Inspiration and Academic Support Peer Mentoring Program is to help NEIU-El Centro freshmen students to persist and make reasonable progress towards graduation by providing the resources necessary to obtain academic success. GUIAS focuses on fostering an environment of student support, motivation, learning, and guidance through peer-mentoring. GUIAS strives to cultivate strong relationships between mentors and mentees through individual mentor/mentee contact and group activities. Mentors provide information about university resources, tutoring, and social support as their mentees strive to reach their educational and personal goals.
 - **FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE (FYE) Seminar**- FYE is a university-wide initiative that engages students in activities designed to ensure their success in higher education through a series FYE 109 courses with a

Chicago theme and out of class events specifically targeted for first-year students. Course topics include: Political Science 109: Civic engagement, Spanish 109: Hispanic influence, Art 109: Latino art thought and revolution, and Linguistics 109: Language and diversity.

- **TUTORIAL ASSISTANCE** in math, writing, chemistry, biology, and other general education classes.

- **CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS**

NEIU-El Centro coordinates with various departments and offices including the Student Union and the Student Alliance for Leadership and Education (SALE) to organize programs and activities to enhance the social aspect of the college experience. Co-curricular programs include: open mic sessions, violence prevention, walk/run-a-thons, job and health fairs, self-defense boxing, stress relief zone, and cultural programs

III. ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

The program has been assessed using quantitative and qualitative using institutional data, student surveys, and focus groups. Information gathered includes: student demographic data (gender, GPA, ethnicity, cumulative hours, enrollment status, etc.), campus involvement, work and family responsibilities, program attendance/participation, and program evaluation.

Selected Results (see slides)

IV. KEY ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

- Is your program's mission in line with the University's mission?
- Do you have institutional support (financial resources)?
- Have you identified a set of peer programs (on or off-campus) for comparison purposes (benchmarks)?
- Does your program meet its objective to contribute to the recruitment, retention and graduation of students?

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Review best practices around the world.
- Begin with a clear mission and set of goals – what is the problem you want to address and develop an action plan.
- Secure institutional commitment.
- Continue to revise the program regularly using qualitative and quantitative measures.

Best practices from other HSIs: An Excelencia in Education Report, 2008 (California, New York and Texas Experience).

CONTACT INFORMATION

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