

Does Access Mean Acceptance?

Helping under-prepared students
make “Wise Choices”

Yolanda Cooper

Assistant Director, Center for Exploratory Studies

Carol Tonge Mack

Associate Director, Center for Exploratory Studies
Director, Cincinnati Sophomore Initiative

Today's Conversation

- What is Access?
- UC Demographics
- Center for Access and Transition (CAT)
- Center for Exploratory Studies (CES)
- Wise Choices Program
- Student Challenges
- Case Study/What's my major?

What is Access?

- Access is:
 - Holistic
 - Appropriate Connection
 - Opportunity
 - “A set back is only a set up for a comeback”
 - “Access without support is no real opportunity”

Willie Jolley

Vincent Tinto

Rolling Stones

- You can't always get what you want, but if you try, sometimes, you just might find, you get what you need.....

University of Cincinnati (UC) Demographics

- Urban, Research I institution
- Approx 36,518 total number of students (*include grad & professional school*)
 - 27,700 Undergraduate Students
 - Twelve Colleges (*including 2 Branch campuses*)
 - 2% Center for Access and Transition (CAT)

Office of Institutional Research, 2007 Student fact book

Center for Access and Transition (CAT)

- Established in 2004 to provide academic support to undergraduate students who were NOT admitted to one of UC's baccalaureate programs
- Faculty support in English, Math, Reading, and Oral Communication
- Students must complete developmental courses within one academic year
- The Center has transitional agreements with five colleges:
 - Arts & Sciences
 - Allied Health Sciences
 - Applied Science
 - Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services
 - Nursing

Requirements for CAT Transition

- Orientation attendance
 - Degrees of Reading Power (DRP)
 - Math
 - English
- Learning Agreement (signed document with advisor)
- Meet with an advisor 3 times per quarter
- Seamless transition (no additional paperwork)

GPA requirements for transition

- College of Arts and Sciences (2.0)
 - College of Applied Sciences (2.75)
 - College of Nursing (2.5 but prefer a 3.0 to pre-nursing)
 - College of Education (2.5 Criminal Justice, 2.75 Teachers College)
 - College of Allied Health (2.5)
- *College of Business (transition to Exploratory Studies)

No Learning Agreement

- College of Business
- College Conservatory of Music
- College of Design Art, Architecture, and Planning
- College of Engineering

How do you get what you
want?

Center for Exploratory Studies (CES)

- CES established in 2003 to assist students with major selection
- Administratively housed in the College of Arts and Sciences (A&S)
- 6 Professional Exploratory Advisors
 - 4 advisors assigned to A&S Exploratory students only
 - Mandatory advising for first year students
 - 2 university-wide advisors (includes Wise Choices Advisor)

Becoming EXPLORATORY

- It's the largest program in the US and at UC
- 75% of college students change their majors at least once (Source: NACADA, national data)
- Many declared students know they're in the "wrong major" (80% of CES traffic)
- After 5 years of excellent service, the Center is considered one of the top 3 exemplary programs in the country (source: NACADA)

Exploratory cont'd

- Exploratory replaced “Undecided”
 - Different mindset
- Students actively explore options with an “Exploratory” advisor trained in major selection
- Students are referred by admissions if NOT accepted to college/major of choice
- Assistance is offered to ALL UC students in major selection through Exploratory Studies

How do we help students choose?

- *One hour personal conversation
- Exploratory Toolbox
- Major Mentoring
- Faculty connection
- Discover UC course

*Discussions with CAT students focus on developmental coursework, and then major selection

Wise Choices Program

- *Success Challenge* grant to utilize CES services specifically to CAT students
- Satellite office hours located at the center
 - Fall and Winter quarters only
- Collaborate with CAT advisors with newsletter and advertising office hours

Wise Choices cont'd

- Students' files NOT reviewed prior to appointment
- Teach Discover UC course
- Second largest population served by CES
 - 9.3%---2004 (after 7 months of service)
 - 12% ----2005
 - 72% increase in appointments from 2006-2007 academic year
- Class presentations to *College Success* courses

CAT Student Challenges

- Lack of high school preparation for admission to college of choice
 - Math and/or GPA
- Stigma of the Center
- **Academic Status** (end of first year)
 - 2 year suspension (1 quarter to 1 year suspension based on College)
 - Appeal process
 - Inability to transfer to other colleges due to GPA
- Clarity of the transition process
 - “Keep it real”
 - (I said) “More course” = (They heard) “I can’t do it”

Case Study/What's my major?

Does Access Mean Acceptance?

- You can't always get what you want, but if you try, you just may get what you need....
 - Your thoughts?

Thank You!

Yolanda Cooper

Assistant Director, Center for Exploratory Studies
513-556-5877

Carol TongeMack

Associate Director, Center for Exploratory Studies
Director, Cincinnati Sophomore Initiative
513-556-6541