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Using Critical Ingredients to Design Career Interventions

Data from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2009) suggest that approximately 19 million students now attend postsecondary institutions in this country and that this number will continue to rise in coming years. These students arrive on our campuses with very high academic and career aspirations and very practical expectations for their education, although many of them enter without realistic plans for achieving their goals. Fortunately, career counselors, faculty and staff advisors, course instructors, and other student success professionals are widely available on campuses to help students establish more realistic academic and career plans. These college and university professionals deliver career education and guidance in diverse settings (e.g., classrooms, counseling centers, residence life) and are using a variety of methods (e.g., individual counseling, groups, workshops, computer career guidance systems). In this article, we will briefly review literature exploring the effectiveness of career education and guidance and describe



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five recently identified critical ingredients that educators and advisors can use to enhance their programs and services.

Career counselors and educators have questioned the effectiveness of their work for more than 100 years. Whereas early efforts to document the effectiveness of career interventions focused on specific methods or student populations, a statistical method referred to as meta-analysis allows career counselors and educators to draw more comprehensive conclusions

about the effectiveness of their efforts (Gore & Minami, 2008). Meta-analysis can aggregate results from previously published research to draw inferences about study, population, or other characteristics that are associated with larger or more positive outcomes. For example, early meta-analyses revealed that not all career interventions are created equal (Oliver & Spokane, 1988; Spokane & Oliver, 1983; Whiston & Rahardia, 2008). Several studies suggest that the effectiveness of career interventions are at least partly dependent on how they are delivered. Individual one-on-one interventions appear to be the most effective (albeit not the most cost-effective) followed by classroom and group-based interventions. Career education and guidance delivered through

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computer-based technologies are less effective but are enhanced when combined with individual advisor, instructor, or counselor contact. Self-help strategies appear to be relatively ineffective in most studies. Results of these studies also suggest that larger benefits are realized when practitioners have clearly defined goals for their interventions and tailor their techniques to the specific developmental needs of their students. Thus, there appears to be overwhelming support for the effectiveness of career interventions in different student populations and when delivered using a variety of strategies.

Meta-analytic efforts have also focused on a more specific question: why do career interventions work? (Brown & Ryan Krane, 2000). Instead of focusing on the career intervention delivery modality (e.g., individual, group, classroom) used in previous studies, these investigators sought to identify which specific education and guidance techniques were the most effective. Although they defined a large number of intervention techniques in their review of the literature, their results suggest that five of these techniques are more effective than the others. These *critical ingredients* are (a) incorporating written exercises, (b) including individualized interpretation of assessment results and feedback, (c) using current and reliable occupational information, (d) bringing in career role models, and (e) focusing attention on helping students and clients develop their support network.

The use of written exercises might include keeping a career decision-making journal or blog, writing an occupational comparison paper, or engaging in behavioral contracting using written goals. The use of career assessment is common to many career interventions. For example, Hildenbrand and Gore (2005) reported that assessment and discussion of career-related interests were the most frequently incorporated career development elements in first-year seminars. Other assessment techniques include helping students understand personal characteristics, their learning strategies, work values, or skills. The use of occupational information is widespread in the career education and counseling literature, and this strategy appears to be quite popular among instructors of first-year seminars (Hildenbrand & Gore). Recent research suggests that few students access information in a comprehensive and systematic fashion (Gore, Bobek, Robbins, & Shayne, 2006). Brown et al. (2003) recommend developing strategies that (a) require students to access sources of career information; (b) include exposure to, and training on, those sources during the individual, group, or classroom session; and (c) promote between session/class exploration. Exposing students to successful role models can be an effective way of promoting career development, choice, and implementation. Practitioners are encouraged to think of modeling opportunities more broadly and to concentrate on the experiences and processes with which their students are currently struggling. For example, graduate student or upper-class peer leaders can be valuable models when discussing the anxiety associated with declaring a major, and recent college alumni can be effective and useful exemplars to seniors preparing for a job search. Finally, some students may benefit from developing strategies to access their network of supportive individuals (e.g., parents, professors, student support personnel, and peers). Colleges and universities provide support structures to help students navigate their

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academic (e.g., tutoring, advising); social (e.g., student activities office, campus recreation, housing); and personal (e.g., counseling center) development. Brown and Ryan Krane (2000) recommend including strategies that help students understand the nature of these services and how to take advantage of them when indicated.

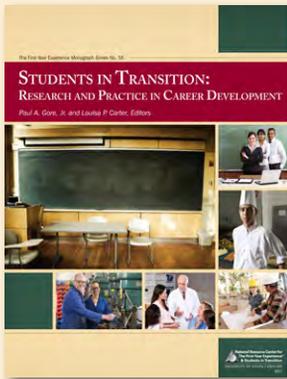
The identification of these critical ingredients in career interventions has important implications for individuals involved in career development efforts on campus. Practitioners need to review the extent to which the five critical ingredients are included in current programs and consider incorporating these ingredients when developing new services.

Conclusion

Findings clearly establish that (a) career counseling and interventions work, (b) some delivery methods work better than others, and (c) some specific strategies or techniques are more effective than others. These same findings, however, reveal limitations in the extant literature. Few published studies, for example, contain more than two or

three critical ingredients. Moreover, few studies have focused on which interventions work best with which students and at which developmental levels. Career education and guidance professionals are strongly encouraged to systematically evaluate the impact of their programs and services and contribute to the published career literature.

A forthcoming monograph from the National Resource Center, *Students in Transition: Research and Practice in Career Development* (Gore & Carter, 2011), provides institutions and career education and guidance professionals with valuable information for enhancing their existing programs and services and more systematically evaluating the outcome of their efforts. Specifically, this monograph offers a review of recent research on the effectiveness of career education and guidance programs and services, tutorials on quantitative and qualitative research methods, and case studies describing the systematic evaluation of career education and guidance programs. By providing evidence-based career education and guidance interventions and evaluating the local effectiveness of those interventions, career education and guidance professionals can be assured they are promoting the long term academic and career success of their students. 



Monograph No. 55

Students in Transition: Research and Practice in Career Development

Paul A. Gore, Jr.
and

Louisa P. Carter, Editors

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A Four-Year Professional Development Model Prepares Students for Successful Careers

Blustein, Prezioso, and Schultheiss (1995) define career exploration as a process by which individuals seek information and make educational and career decisions related to their area of study, as well as about themselves. The Professional Development Seminar (PDS) program at Nichols College, in Dudley, Massachusetts, was created to offer students this opportunity by taking purposeful steps in understanding and improving their interests, abilities, skills, and talents. Career development research reinforces the importance of logical career planning as a preface to successful job searches and long-term career management (Folsom & Reardon, 2003). To foster this development over the duration of the college experience, PDS was designed as a mandatory, one-credit, four-course series beginning with the first college year and ending with the senior year. Grounded in career and student development theories and aligned with Chickering and Reisser's (1993) Seven



Professional Development Seminar career service interns. Used with permission of the author.

en Vectors of Psychosocial Development, each course meticulously builds on the previous, ensuring transitional, career, and professional development support. Together, these courses are intended to provide students with a foundation for career exploration and the capacity to recognize how their skills and abilities can be transported into the workforce. This approach has led to Nichols students being exposed to a comprehensive, purposeful

program that teaches career and professional skills development.

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The Four PDS Courses

Each PDS course is delivered in seminar format enrolling approximately 20 students per section. Courses meet for 75 minutes, once a week, for 12 weeks during a semester. In the fall semester, first-year students and seniors are enrolled in the PDS program, while sophomores and juniors complete their course in the spring semester. A trailer section is offered during the opposite semester for those students who fall out of sequence. Because all PDS courses are required for graduation, offering a trailer section is necessary. Course topics and assignments are created based on each cohort's career transition needs; therefore, program content is developed using a mixed-methods approach of career development theories. The class of 2002 was the first graduating class to complete the entire PDS course series.

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First-Year PDS. During First-Year PDS (FY-PDS), students are provided with campus support services and helpful tips for achieving academic success, including the importance of getting to know their professors, attending classes, managing time, and understanding strategies for research. In addition, students examine their personal values, health and wellness, relationships, and diversity. This course also marks the beginning of individual portfolio development, a capstone project that continues throughout the four-course series. To enhance the learning experience, upper-class students are used as teaching assistants, lending insight and mentoring to first-year students who need help transitioning to campus.

Sophomore PDS. Participation in Sophomore PDS (SO-PDS) provides a forum to address some of the uncertainty associated with the middle years of college by encouraging students to examine where they are and where they are headed in terms of career and professional growth in a structured, supportive environment. During SO-PDS, students continue to develop a sense of self, exploring how their interests, values, skills, and abilities relate to their emerging professional life. Investigative course topics include major/minor exploration; employment options during college; creating and developing one's professional documentation (i.e., cover letters, résumé, mission statement, recommendations, and references); understanding how one's major translates to various industries; and examining how academic knowledge interconnects with employer expectations.

Junior PDS. The Junior PDS (JR-PDS) course allows students to thoroughly explore the job recruitment process, the value of service-learning, and other options for contributing in and out of the classroom. Skills development continues during the junior year as students begin to fully understand employer expectations and how their unique talents transfer to the world of work. Students research professional organizations and social networking as valuable tools to enhance their professional lives. Preparing for, and participating in, an extensive mock interview process is a primary focus of JR-PDS.

Senior PDS. Through the creation of individual recruiting plans, students in senior PDS (SR-PDS) delve heavily into the job search process and the various options after graduation. Here, they are challenged to consider their role not only as students but as emerging leaders in our global society. Students discuss how to negotiate salary and benefits, and manage expectations when taking that transitional leap out of college. Instruction is reality based, as dozens of corporate recruiters, Nichols alumni, and area business leaders share their knowledge and expertise in the PDS classrooms. Other developmental components currently include a business etiquette dinner and instruction in proper professional dress.

Portfolios

Many colleges and universities use portfolios to assess pedagogical effectiveness and student learning, to help students reflect on educational experiences, and to showcase student accomplishment. The PDS career portfolio is a multifaceted compilation of work



Professional Development Seminar students attend career fair. Used with permission of the author.

“Course topics and assignments are created based on each cohort’s career transition needs; therefore, program content is developed using a mixed-methods approach of career development theories.”

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indicative of the personal qualities and skills students obtain during their career development in college. The portfolio project was designed to (a) assist students in compiling individual documentation showcasing transferability of skills within and between industries, (b) help students articulate how their skills and qualities will mesh with that of an employer, and (c) provide an opportunity for continued self-reflection. As such, the PDS portfolio supports the College's mission "... to develop tomorrow's leaders through a dynamic, career-focused business education," and responds to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, 2009) annual The Top Ten Qualities Employers Seek Survey (NACE, 2009). Intended as a PDS program capstone project, students begin creating their portfolio in FY-PDS and continue to build through SR-PDS, as they develop into young professionals.

The PDS portfolio is organized into six content categories: (a) Career and Professional Planning/Growth, (b) Teamwork/Leadership, (c) Communication, (d) Analytical/Problem Solving/Creative Thinking, (e) Technology, and (f) Individual Choice. The Individual Choice category allows students to highlight specific areas of interest not otherwise showcased, such as music, language, community service, study abroad, or organizational memberships. Because the portfolio is structured around the NACE survey, students are aware of the skills relevant to the needs of today's job market and are able to articulate how their talents can increase employability.

Conclusion

The PDS program is assessed in myriad ways: student course evaluations; the College's educational objectives via student portfolios; course content surveys in the sophomore and junior years; corporate recruiter feedback; end-of-semester exit interviews; and anecdotal information from students, alumni, and recruiters. Assessment data are reviewed by a faculty oversight committee. Findings support the value of the PDS program to the students and alumni of Nichols College and have been used to confirm program credibility to the institution's top administrators.

Super (1990) theorized that traditional-aged college students are typically making the transition from tentative vocational preferences to more specific goals and plans; however, many college students are uncertain and greatly concerned about how to establish goals and plans leading to a professional career (Collins, 1998). PDS is designed to grow with students, inviting them to consider what is most important academically, as well as reflect on their own innate talents, interests, skills, and abilities. It is an approach for assisting undergraduates with career decision making and skills building, and a prescription for facilitating life-long career development.

The comprehensive PDS program propels Nichols students into the workplace, ready to accept new challenges and provide value to the employer. It is also a prescription for providing students with a competitive edge over their peers during the recruitment process and long into their professional lives. 

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Sound Practices: Performing College Reading and Writing

Students learn from talking to each other. As Biggs (1999) notes, “People learn ten percent of what they read, and seventy percent of what they talk over with others” (p. 96). Face-to-face learning that recognizes aural and orality as important literacies helps students establish habits of careful reading and effective writing—skills fundamental to college success (National Council of Teachers of English, 2008a, 2008b; Yancey, 2009). A pedagogy of aural and orality ensures that voices other than the instructor’s frequently sound in the classroom. Oral pedagogy gives beginning college students practice in reading a range of texts aloud, from published works to their own writings, as well as practice in hearing literary material performed both recorded and live. These multiple voices create audible, reflective thought whereby students can pay attention to the text and to their own reactions and those of their peers. A pedagogy of orality encourages students to become actively involved, socially-integrated learners who know how to reflect on their own learning and how to transform their life experiences into learning experiences (Bleich, 2001; Gardner, 1999). For these reasons, oral communication deserves

an elevated place as an educational strategy in higher education.

Oral pedagogy focuses on student voices—in whole-group discussion, small-group informal talk, recitation, and performance—as the central learning events in the classroom and as a means for students to practice high-level acts of attention to texts. Aural and oral learning methods make use of the fact that the ear captures and processes textual nuances that the eye misses. In this



Writing student verbalizes her idea for a conclusion to a research paper. Used with permission of the author.

way, aural texts address a problem common to many readers in their early college years: lack of close reading skills to explore what a text really says. Training the ear through aural texts supports the kind of sharply focused interpretation that engenders high-level reading and writing capacities.

As a first-year student success strategy at Colorado Mountain College, oral pedagogy attracts and holds fledgling college students. Students encounter texts as live or recorded performance and then discuss and analyze the works together. For example, rather than silently read a Robert Frost poem, students listen to Frost reading his work “The Road Not Taken” at poets.org. The group listens to the poem three times. Following the first hearing, students discuss initial impressions of the poem’s plot, setting, characters, and figurative language. During the second hearing, students jot down key words and strong images that interest them and comment on their increasing understanding of

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the poem. After the third listening and discussion, students compose a written statement of the meaning or theme of the poem. As audience to a performance, students in turn “perform” as they aurally and orally process their own emerging understanding and build textual analyses from what they hear and talk over with others. Students move from initial, individual reactions to collaborative text analysis, and on to formal writing. This method can be effectively adapted to all genres of texts for literature and composition studies.

Three major learning outcomes arise from the practice of oral pedagogy: (a) multivocality (i.e., multiple literacies and voices in the classroom); (b) aesthetic awareness that fosters critical reading and thinking; and (c) analytic ability. An explanation of each learning outcome suggests how instructors can implement oral and aural learning methods.

Multivocality

Oral pedagogy offers multiple ways for students to master course content. Student responses, comments, and questions constitute elements of instruction, and learners also perform what they know as they acquire new skills and information. In this way, from



Writing students edit each other's drafts of persuasive essays prior to final revision. Used with permission of the author.

the beginning of their college careers, students experience the text and their own critical reflections as interrelated acts.

Analytic Ability

Through embodied expression, students construct bridges from their lived experience to scholastic material and on to larger social realities. The sounding of multiple voices in the classroom closes the gap between individual students and between instructors and students. In addition, a major strength of oral pedagogy is that students are at the center of cultural and intellectual experiences and have daily opportunities to describe their reactions and share their responses with other members of the audience. They learn that their ideas matter.

“Aural and oral learning methods make use of the fact that the ear captures and processes textual nuances that the eye misses. In this way, aural texts address a problem common to many readers in their early college years: lack of close reading skills to explore what a text really says.”

Aesthetic Awareness

Guided practice in listening to and discussing a wide variety of texts helps students develop sensitivity toward the spoken and written ideas of others. In oral pedagogy, students individually and collectively perform the sequence of

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Assessment Practices

Such amplified literacies oblige educators to align learning outcomes, classroom activities, and assessment practices with features of oral pedagogy. The first step is to develop an active, flexible communication style in the classroom, so that discussion, performance, and student talk can transform traditional lectures and other instructor-centered practices into engaging learner-centered processes. The second step is to build a repertoire of measures that assess students' progressive mastery of new skills.

At Colorado Mountain College, faculty who place oral and aural materials and methods at the center of composition and literature studies have consistently received high student ratings, as reported each semester via Individual Development and Educational Assessments (IDEA). In addition, for the past three academic years (i.e., 2006-2009), the students of these instructors have achieved an 81.6% success rate, defined as passing English Composition I with a grade of C+ or better. Moreover, students of instructors fully committed to oral pedagogy reached 92.6% retention between fall 2008 and fall 2009, compared to institutional and national retention rates of 70% or lower in classrooms where oral pedagogy is not practiced (Johnson, 2010; Maricopa Community College, 2008). These findings suggest the positive value of oral pedagogy for today's student.

Conclusion

Aural and oral learning methods bring into play the heightening and brightening of consciousness produced by multiple voices sounding in the classroom. Instructors enlist performance as a teaching and learning technique that encourages students to master college-level reading and writing in a variety of ways. When student voices sound, classrooms become workshops where learners continually practice creating, critiquing, analyzing, and evaluating the social and academic contexts of their lives. e

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The Development of a Case-Based First-Year Seminar

Using a case-based course curriculum can be an effective approach to achieving learning objectives in a traditional first-year seminar. By engaging in discussions of real-world scenarios and analyzing data to reach a conclusion, students have the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills, improve verbal and written communication techniques, and apply theory to practice. The emphasis on dialog, group work, problem solving, and consideration of multiple perspectives can foster an opportunity for reflection and growth in students' personal development of themselves (Bruss, 1996). In addition, with applications such as Facebook, Twitter, and Blackboard, the case discussion can go well beyond the classroom.

Babson College had success in utilizing cases in various multidisciplinary courses offered on campus, and the provost was interested in using this pedagogical technique to infuse challenging topics into the first-year seminar. She challenged faculty and staff to develop cases specifically tailored to the College's undergraduate population rather than relying on available published material, which frequently is written for a broad audience.



To better capture the student voice and perspective, the associate dean of the Undergraduate School asked two students closely associated with the first-year programs (i.e., a sophomore and a junior with demonstrated writing and leadership abilities) to team up, for which they received compensation, and conceptualize a plausible story line. It was also hoped

that with a small-team approach, the two students would be able to efficiently work together to complete the project during the spring 2008 semester. The students were given common seminar transitional themes (e.g., making new friends, diversity, and time management) to incorporate into their stories. The story line they developed focused on two students (i.e., an athlete and an international student) meeting at new student check-in and initiating a friendship. Individual cases described the initial meeting and a series of mishaps and events that occurred throughout the semester as a result of the friendship. Figure 1 illustrates how case topics correlated to the modules of the first-year seminar. The cases were obliquely titled to avoid preconceived notions of the theme and to encourage critical thinking and collaborative resolution (e.g., "The Long Night" addresses alcohol and substance abuse).

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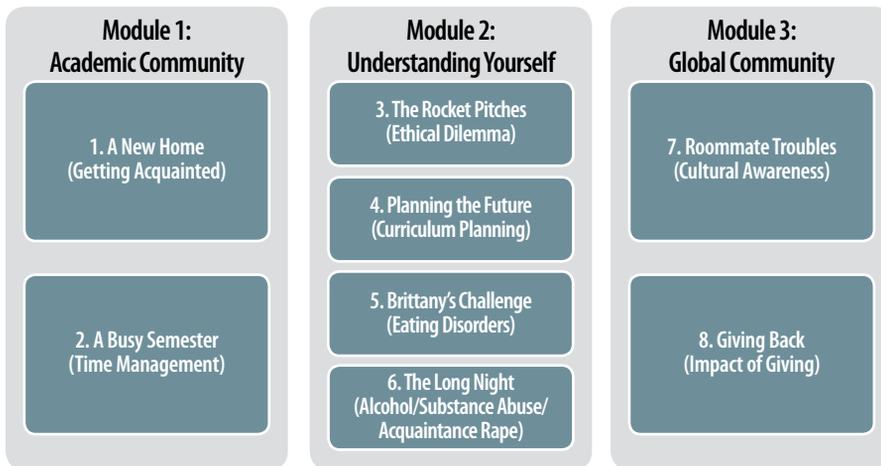


Figure 1. Cases used as teaching tools in the three curricular modules for Babson College's first-year seminar.

A faculty member with experience in case writing edited the student narratives using an appropriate case-based style and developed accompanying teaching notes. The edited cases were sent to student affairs and academic affairs administrators for final corrections and to ensure the material aligned with the learning objectives of the seminar.

In the fall of 2008, two sections of the first-year seminar piloted the material to gauge the student response. Feedback on the cases gathered from class assignments and focus groups held at end of the semester indicated that students reacted favorably to the story. Students reported they were able to relate to the challenges the fictional characters faced and even looked forward to finding out what would happen next. They also found it easier to discuss challenging topics when the issues were being tackled by a fictional character and not themselves.

Based on these findings, the case content was slightly revised for plot continuity and delivery to the entire first-year seminar program. In the summer of 2009, the first-year seminar instructors were trained on effective case use in the classroom. The focus of the training was to facilitate class discussion, develop related assignments, and use supplemental material to support the cases. Upper-class peer mentors, who assist in orientation and throughout the first-year program, also received a session on using cases in their formal training.

At the end of the fall of 2009, students were surveyed to gain both quantitative and qualitative data on the case-based approach. Results indicated 60% of the students *agreed or strongly agreed* that they would recommend using the case series for next year's class. Students were also asked to provide feedback on the cases. One student stated, "they reflect real-life scenarios and helped me feel more comfortable in college because I felt teachers knew what I was going through."

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Format: Submissions should be sent via e-mail as a Microsoft Word attachment.

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Please address all questions and submissions to:

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There are several advantages to developing campus-specific case studies. For Babson, the case-based approach in the first-year seminar has

- Been economical—students no longer have to purchase a book for the course
- Provided institutional relevancy—content is specifically tailored to the campus population
- Established shared ownership of course content—students, faculty, and staff all have input on case development

In addition, the College's experience with this project has created an intellectual investment by all the individuals who are charged with delivering this material.

Babson College will continue to refine its cases based on student and faculty feedback. New cases will be developed using a similar process to add to the case portfolio and accommodate the changing needs and interests of future Babson students. Other institutions should consider a case-based approach, with its learner-centered pedagogy using authentic contexts, to increase engagement, interest, and class participation in a first-year seminar. 

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Retention at Work: Instituting a Student Success Program

Retention is a critical issue in most higher education circles, especially as the economy continues to threaten the stability and functioning of private colleges and universities that are tuition driven. Guilford College, a small (i.e., approximately 2,800 students; 50% traditional-aged students, 50% adult learners), private four-year college in central North Carolina, recognized in its 2003 strategic plan that the cost of attrition could be measured in both human and financial terms. The College's retention rate hit a record low of 68% in the 2007-2008 academic year, and institutional data revealed that the primary reason students were leaving was academic dismissal. Sensing a student population in distress and with a goal of increasing campus retention to 80%, key members of the institution created the Student Success Program (SSP) in spring 2008 to integrate residence life, campus life, and academic affairs in more intentional and collaborative ways to provide extra support for traditional, new-to-Guilford (i.e., new first-years and transfers) at-risk students. These students were identified through admission profiles indicating low academic performance, suggesting a higher probability of academic dismissal within the first year.

Thirty-one students were offered conditional admission in the fall of 2008 and enrolled in the Student Success Program. As a condition of acceptance, students were asked to sign a contract holding them to participation in SSP for one semester, which included weekly meetings with an assigned mentor, abiding by the academic and judicial codes, and enrolling in a one-credit learning strategies class (in addition to the first-year seminar required of all new and incoming students). The agreement also outlined specific milestones that needed to be met to be eligible to continue to the spring semester (e.g., class attendance, minimum passing grade for the learning strategies class, GPA). Failure to uphold the contract would result in dismissal.

Four new positions were created to implement the program: three full-time professional residence hall directors/student success mentors (SSMs) and an academic liaison. The three residence hall directors staffed the two first-year housing units and responsibilities included supervision of student staff, oversight of hall programming, and judicial matters as well as mentoring SSP students. Each SSM was assigned a cohort of 10-11 students to mentor weekly throughout the fall semester, providing academic and life coaching, resource referral, and skills development. Mentees typically lived within the residence halls, unless they were transfer students, who are not required to live on campus. The in-hall contact was effective in both identifying new students presenting at-risk behaviors (e.g., missing classes) and serving SSP mentees since the directors often have additional knowledge of the students' life circumstances.

Academic advising is provided to all new and transfer students by the professor in their section of the required first-year seminar, allowing for deeper advising discussions. The

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SSP academic advising liaison, in addition to the associate academic dean, served as a contact and support for faculty when they had concerns about any struggling student (i.e., SSP or newly at-risk students). The liaison's contact with the SSMs and other campus staff allowed for better follow up, connections, and interventions for all students on campus.

The Student Success Team (i.e., associate academic dean, associate dean of Campus Life, academic advising liaison, and SSM) met weekly to discuss the SSP students and, as the semester and year progressed, other first-year students who presented concerns and needed additional support. These meetings resulted in additional follow up with selected students by an SSP Team member and intentional support when warranted. In addition, a recently instituted academic progress report sent to faculty (online) during the fourth week of the semester, along with midterm grades, provided valuable feedback on all new students and facilitated early intervention.

By the end of fall 2008, 100% of the students enrolled in SSP (after withdrawals within the stated academic deadlines) met the conditions of their contracts and were eligible to continue in the spring. Further, the percentage of overall first-year students suspended or dismissed dropped to 2%, down from 7% in fall 2007. The fall 2009 program added more SSMs and accepted 85 students. Of these, 80 completed the semester with 77 eligible to continue to spring. These same completion and next-semester eligibility results were repeated in the spring 2010 program. Evaluations of the program by the SSP students indicated they appreciated the mentors and felt that abiding by the contract was "helpful." Lastly, the 2003 strategic plan goal was met when the Guilford's retention rate for all first-year students from 2008-2009 hit the 80% mark. The College is expecting approximately 71 new SSP students for the fall of 2010.

Changes to the Student Success Program have included tightening and lengthening the contract to one academic year and adding three more SSMs (i.e., total of six) to accommodate the growing numbers of students accepted into the program. The SSP positions were initially funded with college president contingency dollars but, based on the program's success, have now been made permanent. In addition, a mandatory orientation for all SSP students was implemented in the summer of 2010, peer leaders were added to the team, and a program website was designed. By providing support in the shape of a Student Success Team and a renewed faculty and staff committed to retention and serving students, Guilford College met its institutional retention goal while improving the academic success of at-risk students. Guilford continues to believe that student retention is a team process, and with communication between and among faculty, academic affairs, and student affairs (most importantly residence life), the College can successfully address the academic, social, psychological, and physical issues of all our students. 

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