

Low Academic Achievement in First Year Students

Theory Application Assignment

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The Issue

The issue which will be explored in this assignment is low academic achievement in traditional first year college students. This paper will approach the issue in terms a specific type of institution, although it occurs in many, if not all, institutions of post-secondary education. Literature on the topic will be reviewed and a theoretical analysis will be established. I will then propose an intervention targeted first to all first year students and a second aspect targeted towards students who do not meet academic standards after their first semester or first year in higher education. That intervention will include specific goals and explanation of how the intervention meets the goals and why that framework is being proposed. Finally I will develop and outline an assessment model for the intervention.

Overview of the Issue

Low academic achievement is a substantial problem in first year students because it is often the symptom of a problem rather than an actual issue of its' own. My hypothesis, before reviewing literature, is that some of these problems are adjustment to college life, ill preparedness and unrealistic expectations of college academics, and extenuating circumstances of disabilities. These extenuating circumstances would either be that the student does not apply for or receive academic accommodations for their disability or they have an undiagnosed disability.

Setting

As an institutional backdrop to this issue I will be focusing on small to medium sized liberal arts colleges and universities. I have chosen to put the emphasis of this exploration on this size of institution because they tend to have more centralized support services for students. At larger institutions there may be a separate academic tutoring center, tutoring center for the

college of education, tutoring center for the sciences, and so forth. Therefore, some of the services and programs which I will propose in my intervention would need to be adapted to a larger institution because of the coordination of services piece. The proposed intervention could be contained within any department which is housed somewhere within enrollment management at the institution. My approach has multiple prongs that need to be implemented and therefore the hub of my intervention could be the office or person coordinating the different aspects through various offices, or through one central office depending on the size and organization of the institution.

Review of Literature

student characteristics. An article by DeBerard, Spielmans, and Julka summarized their research on possible predictors of academic achievement in first year students as well as retention. Approximately forty percent of college students leave post-secondary education without earning a degree, and first year attrition rates are typically the bulk of this number. The attrition rate for first year students can be as high as thirty percent. A few of the predictors which were examined were gender, high school GPA, SAT scores, social support, and coping strategies. Two hundred and four undergraduates participated. The study found that while ten possible predictors were examined, only one correlated with retention while all of them did correlate with academic achievement. Low high school GPA was the only of these that was statistically significant in its' correlation to attrition. The researchers found that, as expected, high SAT scores and high school GPAs predicted higher academic achievement in college. The findings also demonstrated that students who used acceptance-focused coping (blaming ones' self) had lower academic achievement. Level and amount of social support was positively related to GPA, which led to the suggestion by the researches that counseling center outreach and

student activities can encourage higher student achievement. Researchers also found that alcohol consumption was linked to achievement but is connected because of the relation drinking has with other variables included in the study.

Chemers conducted a longitudinal study of first year student adjustment and achievement as it is been influenced by self-efficacy and optimism. In research before the study he found that self-efficacy is related to persistence and achievement in education. Previous studies found that students with high levels of self-efficacy persist longer when solving problems and use more effective strategies. Receiving positive feedback increases student's efficacy and promotes higher aspirations and more effective strategies. First year students at the University of California, Santa Cruz were studied during the first week of their winter quarter. Results showed that this study supported previous research. Students with higher self-efficacy were more adjusted and more successful. Optimism was also an important factor. The author stated that high school GPA is related to self-efficacy at the college level and that the performance of the student in high school would have been related to self-efficacy at that time, a very precise cycle.

Kuh et al. researched the effects of student engagement on academic success in first year students. College completion rates have stagnated which requires research to be done on why students are not finishing their degrees and how the institutions can assist them. Some of the reasons provided in the article by Kuh are students changing their major, there being a lack of money or a lack of 'fit' for the student at the institution, or family concerns. It is stated that the purpose of this research was to determine if there is a relationship between certain behaviors of students and the institutional practices and environment which are meant to foster student support. This research also aimed to realize effect of student engagement in 'educationally purposeful activities' and the relationship to the aforementioned outcomes. The research was

conducted through the National Survey of Student Engagement surveys across eighteen baccalaureate-granting post-secondary institutions. Kuh et al. found that who students are when they start college (demographics, pre collegiate behavior and studies, etc.) is correlated to how they behave and perform during their first year in college but who they are does not explain all factors of student success in their post-secondary education. The research also revealed that students who engage in educationally purposeful activities were affected differently in terms of GPA attainment based on their previous level of academic achievement. This means that a student who achieved lower previously academically is influenced more (will improve more) when they are involved in these purposeful activities.

curriculum. First-year seminars have been used more frequently as measures to prepare college students for success. In an article by Friedman, two types of seminars are explored for their effectiveness. The two types of seminars which were looked at in the study summarized by this article were special academic themed seminars and college transition themed seminars. The goal of the study was to reveal any differences between the outcomes of the two differently themed seminars and results showed that there was none in terms of overall student GPAs for their first year. However students in transitional seminars felt that the perceived outcomes were more beneficial.

An article by S. Lipka briefly summarized a study by psychologists at Stanford University. The study looked at the impact of two different sessions on social adversity on the GPA of black students. Ninety-two second semester, first year students were divided into two groups. Each group participated in an hour long discussion, one group, the treatment group, read statistics and open responses to a survey that told students that many upperclassmen had been concerned, during their first year, about social adversity and not fitting in. These results also told

students that this passed and that their transition would overall be smooth. The second group focused on more general social and political attitudes in their discussion. Black students from the first group achieved higher GPA's than the second, control, group over the next three years.

While this study focused on closing the achievement gap between black and white students, these findings cannot only be applied to minority. One of the major concerns for most students entering higher education for the first time is fitting in and having a smooth transition. By reassuring them that other students have had similar concerns and experiences, they are more equipped to focus on academics rather than their social concerns. In the study white students did not have the same benefits, but that is not to say that the intervention could not be altered to address their concerns.

Lang assessed the impact made on first year students at the University of Buffalo in New York by a first-year experience course (elective, one credit) in terms of academic achievement and graduation rates. His hypothesis was that his study would be consistent with past research and would show those students who complete this course would earn higher GPA's and earn more credits than students who did not complete the course. Results showed that his hypothesis was correct and his findings were consistent with past studies. Students who completed the course earned higher GPA's in their first through fourth semesters and graduated within six years more often than students who did not participate. Lang explains that students who chose to participate in the course were more involved in their academics; this is correlated to persisting through education towards graduation.

While the two groups of students (control and participant) were matched in many ways to control for outside factors, one cannot control for motivation. It is possible that students who

elected to participate in the course were more motivated to succeed in college and therefore wanted to give themselves as many resources to do so as possible.

pre collegiate programs. A study by Walpole et al. examined the effects of a summer bridge program on retention, credits attempted, credits earned, and overall GPA. The study looked at transition for the first two years of students at a university in two groups. One of these groups of students participated in a summer bridge program the months before beginning their first fall semester; the second group did not participate in any program. The study found that from the first year to the junior year of all the students, 72% of the program student were retained and only 69% of the non-program students stayed at that institution. Program students were more engaged socially and academically over the two years but earned fewer credits than non-program students. While the program students are described as capable and motivated, the researches hypothesized that the results are also linked to previous preparation for academic rigor.

academic probation. James and Graham conducted research on the impact a phone call would make to students placed on academic probation. All students who were part of the research were placed on academic probation for unsatisfactory GPA's. Students in the control group were sent a letter to inform them of their probation status, as was the protocol for that institution. Students in the test group were sent the letter, and received a phone call to inform them of their status as well. The demographics of the students placed on probation were also examined by the researchers. They found that the students were younger, more frequently male and more frequently international students and less frequently received financial assistance. Reasons provided by students as to why they were on probation included personal reasons more frequently than academic issues. Personal reasons mostly included financial or health problems

or lack of motivation and transitional issues. Students disclosing that their probation status was due to academic reasons often stated that the reason was more specifically that they were in an unsuitable program or course. As a result of the study it was found that 36.8% of the control group returned while 40.6% of the experimental group returned. While these are not statistically significant results they are still very informative. This information tells colleges that preventative measures could be effective, by informing students of the possibility of academic probation status before they are in that situation. Also important, personal contact does make a difference, and if struggling students are given more personal contact it may have more than a 4% impact.

An article by Kamphoff et al. detailed different programs and interventions for students on academic probation and looked at the success of a motivational/empowerment model specifically. One of the interventions discussed was classroom and workshop interventions which allow students to interact with peers, faculty, and staff for support. The second intervention discussed was an advising and counseling model where support is given more strongly by faculty and staff. The third intervention discussed was the motivational and empowerment model which balances on four areas of development for students; personal responsibility, positive affirmations, goal setting and life planning, and self-management. The goals of this type of program are for students to become independent and meet academic standards.

Theoretical Analysis

The theory which will be most important to my intervention is Scholssberg's Transition Theory. This theory is so imperative to my intervention because students entering college, regardless of age or background, are going through a major transition. The most salient part of this theory for my intervention are the 4 S's; Situation (college, moving away from home,

change in academic rigor, etc.), Self (personal demographics which individualize the theory to each student), Support (through the institution, staff, faculty, or peers), and Strategies (for students to cope with their transitions). By recognizing that first year students are experiencing an inordinate amount of transitions support from the institution can be implemented accordingly. On a case by case basis, members of university support staff can tailor support to the life experiences and identities of each student and help the students eventually develop their own strategies (Evans, 2010).

While no single theory of racial identity is part of the discussion of my intervention, they definitely contribute to it. By recognizing that students of different racial identities will face different transitions, issues, and struggles not only throughout their lives but especially during their journey in higher education, student affairs professionals can approach programming and consulting in an individualized way. The piece that encouraged this idea was the article about the black students in the orientation and how that had an impact on their transition.

The Intervention

My intervention has two prongs. One is education for all first year students on skills for academic success, institutional resources, and transitional strategies. The second prong is an academic recovery program for students who have been placed on academic probation.

Target Audience

The target audience for my intervention is all first year students. Indirectly though, my intervention will reach students at all semester levels. The intervention is designed to educate students before they do not meet academic standards. They will be educated on the institutional consequences of low academic achievement, and on the skills needed to succeed academically.

My intervention is also designed to bring students back from low achieving semesters to recover their GPA and succeed overall in their post-secondary education.

Interventional Goals

1. Educate first year students on institutional consequences for not meeting academic benchmarks and standards.
2. Inform first year students thoroughly of the institutional resources available to them.
3. Support students as exhaustively as possible through their transition to college, making them aware of how much support there is for them at the institution.
4. Educate students thoroughly on academic skills required to excel in their college education.
5. Support students who have failed to meet academic standards and have been placed on academic probation
6. Support students on probation through counseling, tutoring, and academic skill building.
7. Give all students the opportunity to succeed in higher education by providing support both emotionally and academically.

Intervention

The first prong of my intervention focuses on first year students as they begin their education. The first step is to support students and demonstrate the support which will be available to them during their time at the institution at orientation. During a session at orientation students will learn about the transition from high school to college and the many other transitions which accompany that one. For an outline of the discussion to be held during this session, see appendix A.

Once students complete orientation and begin classes, one of their required courses will be a first year success course (FYS100). The syllabus for this course can be found in appendix B. The course will cover topics including institutional resources, transitions to college, communicating with professors, diversity, co-curricular activities, learning disabilities, budgeting, social networking etiquette, GPA calculation, campus policies, and making career choices. The course will also cover specific academic skills such as note taking, reading text books, time management, outlining papers, writing papers, giving presentations, and research and citations.

In addition to an orientation session and through their first year success course, students will be supported through a peer mentor program. First year students will be paired with a junior or senior student with a similar background. The upperclassman will make an effort to meet with their first year mentee on a regular (weekly or bi weekly) basis to offer them support. This may range from study tips to social support. Upperclassman students must apply during their sophomore or junior year to be mentors as only select juniors and seniors can be mentors. The application materials for peer mentor positions can be found in appendix C and appendix D.

All students will be able to attend weekly academic success workshops organized and presented by the Office of Student Support. These workshops will be heavily advertised to first year students and also to students who have been placed on academic probation. The workshop schedule can be found in appendix E.

Despite the efforts of the early intervention some students will still not progress adequately in their academics. These students, according to institutional policy will be placed on academic probation. After the end of the low achieving semester students are notified of their academic standing. At the start of the next semester students will be educated further on what

that standing means and the resources available to them in order to succeed in the following semesters. At this time they will be given an informational folder, a list of the contents of this folder is found in appendix F. Each document which will be placed in the folder can be found in appendices G-M. These documents are as follows; Academic Probation Information Sheet (appendix G), Statement from Director of Student Support Services (appendix H), Academic Probation Contract (appendix I), Workshop Schedule (appendix E), University Resources (appendix J), Study Skills (appendix K), GPA Calculation (appendix L), and Tutoring Services (appendix M).

Rationale

In the first prong of my intervention I chose to focus on the transition because of the emphasis placed on transition in so many developmental theories. Transitions are imperative parts of student development and can be a point in the life of a student which will change the outcome of their educational career. It is therefore important to support them through education of the transitions which they are going to be undertaking.

The rationale behind the first year success course is education on many topics that students find challenging not only during their first semester or year but throughout their college career. It is also a way of letting students feel supported. According to Friedman, whether a first year seminar is academic themed or transition themed does not matter, but rather the presence of that support system is what makes a difference in the success of students. Including diversity as a topic in this course is in response to the study by Lipka about the impact of a diversity session on the success of black students. This inclusion of diversity in the first year success course will not only support black students and other minority students but also educate non-minority students on issues faced by students different from themselves and enhance their learning in that way.

Overall the study by Lang supported the presence of this type of course for first year students, which is why this is a major part of my intervention.

From the study of James and Graham I learned how important even just a bit of perceived support from institutional staff on the part of the student can be. Therefore, from this study, I believe that by increasing that support a greater impact on the students will be had. By instituting the peer mentor program first year students will feel that they have an additional level of support and tie to the institution. Therefore they will feel more able to succeed and work harder to do so. The intention is to match students with similar backgrounds, which I relate to the Lipka article. By being matched with someone who is similar, students will feel that they can overcome obstacles because their mentor is more likely to have had the same struggles.

The weekly academic success workshops will be offered to establish a further presence on the campus on the part of student services. By doing this students will be more familiar with the office and feel more comfortable using other services provided by the office. Again, this support makes students feel more equipped to succeed academically and overcome transitions during their higher education. At the same time it affords all students the opportunity to brush up on academic skills which they may need to improve upon to succeed in their courses and education.

Each aspect of the academic probation recovery program is designed to support struggling students. Students meet with a staff member in the support office, giving them an opportunity to ask questions, get resources, and feel supported. The tutoring help allows them to seek additional support in classes they may struggle as well as connect in another way with a peer. The workshops offer additional help in improving academic skills. All of the contents of

the folder given to students placed on probation will educate them on their academic standing, skills they need, and resources available to them.

Evaluation Plan

I will evaluate my intervention based on student feedback, GPA change, and graduation rates. Students will fill out an evaluation of the program at the end of each semester, regardless of their new academic standing (appendix N). All of these evaluations will be anonymous so that students feel they can be honest and that they will not be evaluated based on their responses to the survey. GPA change will be tracked using the following formula: $(\text{new GPA} - \text{old GPA}) / \text{old GPA}$. The GPA's will be compared on a semester basis but also a cumulative basis. So the semester that placed the student on probation will be compared to each of the following semesters individually. The cumulative GPA of the student after they were placed on probation will be compared to each of the following cumulative GPAs. This will track the progress of the student. Through this data we can calculate the percent of students who improved their academic standing and how much that academic standing has been increased on average. Graduation rates will also be compared. After collecting data for three to five years of graduating students from probation, these rates will be compared to graduation rates of students who were put on academic probation before the recovery program was put into place. In addition, graduation rates and GPA comparisons will be made between students who participated extensively in the recovery program and those who either participated minimally or did not participate at all.

References

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Appendix A

Transitioning to College
Orientation Session

1. Friends
 - a. Everyone struggles
 - b. Clubs and co-curricular
 - c. Dorms
 - d. class
2. Dorms
 - a. Be respectful of your roommate
 - b. Discuss any conflicts with your roommate directly
 - c. Use your Resident Assistant as a resource for roommate issues, hall issues, or any issue you may be having.
 - d. Adjusting to a smaller space
3. Parents
 - a. Discuss and set boundaries
 - b. Hold yourself to them
 - c. Hold your parents to them
4. Academics
 - a. They are different than high school
 - b. More independent learning outside the classroom
 - c. More of a facilitation in the classroom
 - d. More responsibility
5. Finances
 - a. On campus/off campus jobs
 - b. Scholarships aren't just for tuition
 - c. Book buying and renting options
6. Activities/Time management
 - a. Don't overestimate how many clubs you can join (don't join 15)
 - b. Use your planner
 - c. Make to do lists
 - d. See our Student Support Center for help learning to manage time
 - e. Much more 'free' time
7. Campus Resources
 - a. Financial Aid
 - b. Registrar
 - c. Counseling
 - d. Health Center
 - e. Housing

- f. Academic Success Center
- g. Student Support Center
- h. Tech help
- i. Library
- j. Computer labs
- k. Ask anyone to find anything else you might need

Appendix B

FYS100

First Year Success

Fall 2013 Monday and Wednesday 1-1:50

Instructor: Hilary Chubb

202 Student Support Center

hchubb@hsc.edu

Office hours by appointment

Overview and Purpose

The purpose of the First Year Success course is to give first year student resources to succeed in college. This includes academic skills, social skills, and informing you of resources available to students on campus.

Readings

Readings will be provided by the end of the week for the next week through email.

Attendance Policy

Attendance counts as 20% of your grades. You must inform me of any absences before the missed class either by email or in person. Sickness is an acceptable reason for missing class, but be responsible in your judgment of what is 'sick enough' to miss class. Notes from the health center are preferred when missing class for illness. More than 2 unexcused absences will impact your grade in the course.

Cell Phones

Cell phones should not be used in this class, or any other. They should be silenced (not put on vibrate) and put away during classes.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is defined as the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. All students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts (Faculty Senate Policy 49-20). Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. For any material or ideas obtained from other sources, such as the text or things you see on the web, in the library, etc., a source reference must be given. Direct quotes from any source must be identified as such. Students who are found to be dishonest will receive academic sanctions and will be

reported to the University's Judicial Affairs office for possible further disciplinary sanction. (Penn State, 2012).

Disability Access

Qualified students are encouraged to participate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities, and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell the instructor as soon as possible (Penn State, 2012).

Assessment and Grades

In keeping with the trend for most courses at this institution, extra credit will not be granted.

Attendance (20%)

See Above

Class Participation (15%)

Not participating in class discussions will result in loss of participation points. For classes that are not discussion based you are expected to participate through asking and answering questions as well as demonstrating that you are alert and paying attention.

Homework Assignments (30%) and Projects (35%)

Homework assignments and projects are included on the course schedule below. It is expected that they are complete and turned in at the beginning of class on the day they are marked on the syllabus. For example if on Week 2 Day Monday an assignment is marked, you are to turn it in on Monday, not Wednesday. Rubrics will be provided for projects at least 2 weeks before the due date.

Week	Day	Topic	Assignment
1	Monday	Course introduction	
	Wednesday	Resources for students	
2	Monday	Transitioning to college	5 Things you find hard in the transition
	Wednesday	Outlines	Outline of Mondays' reading
3	Monday	Note taking	
	Wednesday	Communicating with professors	Email to professor
4	Monday	Diversity	Bring news article about diversity
	Wednesday	Reading textbooks	
5	Monday	Time management	Paper: Why you chose this college
	Wednesday	Co-curricular activities	
6	Monday	Writing Papers	
	Wednesday	Learning Inventory and Learning Styles	Complete 2 learning style inventories
7	Monday	Library Introduction	Rewrite of paper

	Wednesday	Research	
8	Monday	Citation Styles: MLA/APA	
	Wednesday	Learning Disabilities	
9	Monday	Study Skills	
	Wednesday	Presentation Skills	
10	Monday	Budgeting	
	Wednesday	Social Networking	Create your Linkedin Page
11	Monday	GPA Calculations and Campus policies and procedures	
	Wednesday	Keeping healthy- Health Center	Research Paper: Choose a Disability
12	Monday	Meet the Administration	
	Wednesday	Presentations	Presentations of Research Papers
13	Monday	Presentations	
	Wednesday	Presentations	
14	Monday	Choosing a Major: Education	
	Wednesday	Choosing a Major: Science and Math	
15	Monday	Choosing a Major: Foreign Language	
	Wednesday	Choosing a Major: History and Political Science	
16	Monday	Choosing a Major : Accounting and Economics	
	Wednesday	Choosing a Major: Psychology, Anthropology and Sociology	

Appendix C
Application for Peer Mentors

2013-2014

Due to the Office of Student Services by 12/15/12

Name: _____

Class Standing (circle one): Sophomore Junior

Major: _____

GPA: _____

Hometown: _____

Co-curricular/extra-curricular activities:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

1. Please explain in 250-500 words why you want to be a peer mentor for first year students.

2. Please explain in 250-500 words what will make you a good peer mentor for first year students.

3. What were your experiences with the peer mentor program as a new student and why do you feel the program is beneficial? (400-700 words)

Have 2 college employees (faculty or staff) complete and return the attached recommendation form.

You may be contacted for an interview during the first week of the spring semester. This form can be returned via email to studentsupport@hsc.edu .

Appendix D
Faculty and Staff Recommendation Form for Peer Mentors

Name:

Position:

Department (if applicable):

Email:

Student name:

Relationship with student:

The student has asked you to provide this recommendation because he or she would like to become a peer mentor for first year students through the Office of Student Support. Peer mentors must be well adapted, academically prepared, and empathetic individuals with outstanding communication and interpersonal skills. If you have any questions about this recommendation or would like to discuss this candidate further please contact Hilary Chubb at hchubb@hsc.edu.

Would you recommend this student for the position of peer mentor? (Circle one) Yes No

If yes, please continue this form.

What attributes does this student have that would make them a good peer mentor?

Will this student feel comfortable continuously reaching out to students?

What concerns do you have about this student in the role of peer mentor?

Please share any other strengths, weaknesses, comments, or concerns you have which are relevant to this recommendation

This form can be returned via email to studentsupport@hsc.edu

Appendix E

Academic Success Workshops

Fall 2013

Presented by the Office of Student Support

September 9	Procrastination And The Negative Impact It Has....Tomorrow
September 16	Write It Out, Successful Note Taking
September 23	Adjusting to College
September 30	A, B, or C. Test Taking Strategies
October 7	Don't Worry, Overcome Your Test Anxiety
October 14	Textbooks As More Than Decorations, How to Read Them!
October 21	What's Your Learning Style?
October 28	Strategies for Learning Foreign Languages
November 4	Time Management
November 11	New Strategies to Make Paper- Writing Fun and Effective
November 18	Preparing for Finals
December 2	Overcoming Stress and Emotional Turmoil in College

Appendix F

Probation Folder Contents

- Academic Probation Information Sheet
- Statement from Director of Student Support Services
- Academic Probation Contract
- Workshop Schedule
- University Resources
- Study Skills
- GPA Calculation
- Tutoring Services

Appendix G

Academic Probation Information Sheet

F.A.Q.s

Why am I on academic probation?

According to university policy, students who earn below a 1.0 GPA for a semester are placed on academic probation. Students in their first four semesters who earn a cumulative GPA below a 1.5 and students who have attempted four semesters and earned a GPA below 2.0 are placed on academic probation the following semester.

How do I get off of academic probation?

Simply, raise your GPA. You can do this through hard work, and using the resources available to you through the university support services. There are specific services designed for students for on academic probation which should be used. These include academic counseling, academic workshops, and tutoring services.

What if I don't get off academic probation?

If you continue to make progress in improving your GPA you will continue on academic probation. However, you cannot graduate with a GPA below 2.0. If you do not make sufficient progress you may be considered for academic suspension and those cases are considered on a very individualized basis. Part of this consideration for students already on academic probation will include their participation in the program and resources for students on academic probation.

What is academic suspension?

Academic suspension is considered for students who show no progress on academic probation or earn a 0.0 GPA any semester. Students considered for academic suspension are given an opportunity to write a letter to the committee reviewing the cases explaining their case and detailing how they plan to improve their academic standing. Some of those letters will be approved and students will be brought for a hearing with the committee to make a final decision on their standing with the university for the next semester.

Students who are academically suspended will not be permitted to attend the university for the next semester. They may transfer to another university or take classes elsewhere with intention to return. Student may reapply to the university after earning a 2.5 GPA or above at another institution.

Appendix H

Dear Students,

I am writing to tell you how much support you have behind you. I have designed the academic probation program and all aspects of it to help you succeed. I know how difficult many of the different aspects of college can be. It is not just about the academics but the adjustment, social factors, emotional changes, and a general maturing process for students. I want to make myself entirely available to each and every student, but especially to students who have been put on academic probation.

Do not think about academic probation as a punishment, it is a new opportunity. You are being given the opportunity to have even greater access to the tools you need to succeed in higher education. Everything you need to earn the required GPA is available to you, and if you don't know how to gain access I urge you to ask me. I will work with you to gain the resources you need. Each student is different, so this program will be tailored to your learning styles, your needs, and your desires for progress.

Your college education overall will be a reflection of your drive to succeed. You have to want it and if you want it, the entire university is behind you. We want to support you so that you can earn what you want; a good education and a college degree.

Good luck and I look forward to meeting with you this semester and beyond!

Sincerely,

Hilary Chubb

Director of Student Support

Appendix I

Academic Probation Contract

As a student who has not progressed adequately in my academics I acknowledge that this has put me in a position to be on academic probation. Therefore I will complete the following requirements which have been designed to help me succeed but also demonstrate my commitment to my education.

1. Complete at least 12 credits with passing grades.
2. Achieve a 2.0 GPA for the semester.
3. Meet with a staff member in the Office of Student Support either every week or every other week depending on their recommendations.
4. Create an academic success plan with my staff member in the Office of Student Support.
5. Meet with my faculty advisor at least three times during the semester to discuss registration, course selection, and career counseling as well as the many other pieces of knowledge they have to offer.
6. Participate in regular one-on-one tutoring sessions and/or group tutoring as appropriate for coursework.

By signing my name below I am acknowledging my academic standing, accepting responsibility for it and for completing the above requirements in order to improve my academic standing.

Name

Signature

Date

Appendix J

University Resources

1. Tutoring
 - a. Individual
 - b. Office Hours
 - c. Study Groups
2. Faculty
3. Advising
4. Career Center
5. Health & Counseling Center
6. Registrar
7. Women's Center
8. Student Activities
9. Office of Student Support

Appendix K
Study Skills Fast Sheet

1. Participate in class
2. Keep up with readings
3. Keep up with assignments
4. Stay organized
5. Ask questions
6. Create a study routine
7. Manage your time, every day
8. Find a quiet place to study
9. Make and keep priorities
10. Study in chunks- studying more than 3 hours is ineffective for retention
11. Explore your learning style
12. Explore strategies for studying which are specific to your learning style
13. Make short term and long term goals
14. Manage your stress
15. Ask for help

Appendix L

How To Calculate Your GPA

Use the below guide to determine the total number of points you've earned

Ex John earned a C, B-, D+, and C- in the fall semester in all 3 credit courses , so he earned $2(3) + 2.7(3) + 1.3(3) + 1.7(3) = 23.1$

Divide that number by the total number of attempted courses

Ex $23.1/12 = 1.925$

- A+ = 4
- A = 4
- A- = 3.7
- B+ = 3.3
- B = 3
- B- = 2.7
- C+ = 2.3
- C = 2
- C- = 1.7
- D+ = 1.3
- D = 1
- D- = 0.7
- F = 0

This calculation can be used for a cumulative GPA as well.

Most usefully for students (since your current GPA is listed on your transcript), this can be used to determine what grades must be achieved in a semester to earn a specific cumulative GPA.

Ex John has a 1.925 for his first semester and wants to know what GPA he must earn the second semester to have a cumulative 2.5

So he needs to earn a 3.075 the second semester ($2.5 - 1.925 + 2.5$). If he thinks he is getting a B in his English class, a C+ in Spanish, a A- in history, and a B+ in psychology he can determine that if he does earn those grades he will raise his cumulative GPA to a 2.5.

Appendix M

Peer Tutoring Services

Individual Tutoring

Request an individual tutor for any introductory courses and many upper level courses by going to the webpage for the Office of Student Support. Meet with your own tutor weekly to supplement your in class learning.

Office Hours

Mondays 6-7 pm	Spanish 101-201
Tuesdays 5-6 pm	Math 110
Tuesdays 6-7 pm	Political Science 101
Wednesday 5-6 pm	Chemistry 101-206
Wednesday 6-7 pm	Biology 101-206
Thursday 5-6 pm	Physics 101-202
Thursday 6-7 pm	Math 101-200

Study Groups

Mondays 3-4 pm	Physics 201
Mondays 4-5 pm	Math 102
Tuesday 3-4 pm	Spanish 201
Tuesday 4-5 pm	Biology 203
Wednesday 3-4 pm	Chemistry 202
Wednesday 4-5 pm	Sociology 101
Thursday 3-4 pm	Psychology 101

Appendix N

Academic Probation Student Survey

This survey is used to improve our academic recovery program to better serve students and is no way used to evaluate your performance.

Please rank the following aspects of the academic recovery program from most helpful (1) to least helpful (5)

____ Peer Tutoring

____ Meeting with a member of the staff in the Office of Student Support

____ Academic Workshops

____ Knowledge of University Resources

____ Signing the Academic Probation Contract

What impact do you feel this program has had on your academic performance? (Positive, negative, none and why)

Once you have moved your GPA above the point of academic probation, which if any of the above aspects of the recovery program do you plan on continuing to use?

What recommendations do you have for us to improve this program to better serve students?

What resources do you think the university could provide to help students avoid academic distress to the point of being placed on academic probation?