

**Title III Coordinating
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Title III Objectives:

- Develop an information-based student support system that includes early alert, registration, and student tracking.
- Redesign developmental education courses and tutoring to support student success.
- Increase accuracy, accessibility and efficiency of timely institutional data.

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Title III Newsletter

*Strengthening Student Success & Retention through
Improved Information Access and Services*

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Updates From The Project Coordinator

It is December and a Title III Coordinator's fancy turns to completing the mandatory US Dept. of Education Annual Performance Review (APR). In our APR we will report our progress and gains made during our third year of the five year \$1.8M US Department of Education grant. In a 5 year grant cycle, Year 3 is the midway point. We have begun to see trend data regarding what impact Title III funded activities are having on the campus. We are making more and more of our data available to the campus community on the Title III funded Dashboard Project. Successful projects will need to become campus supported projects and we have begun to integrate them into staff responsibilities. We

have conducted our Year 3 compliance review with Tim Culver our External Reviewer. His visit and report found us in compliance with grant guidelines and also provided us with quite a bit of insight on how to better evaluate our project successes. Year 3 focused on our retention efforts with tutoring and the Early Alert Referral system, GS100, building Math Center success, and continuing to develop faculty advising skills. We have converted the FASTeam to be a faculty-led subcommittee of the Retention Committee. I really want to commend the campus for how it has embraced all the Title III research and development activities. Title III is a very exciting grant because it

funds internal campus research and development. Often on a campus, problems emerge and potential best practice solutions that might solve the problem emerge but the campus has no funding to implement the solution in a pilot mode. Within the framework of our grant objectives, DSU's US DOE Title III grant provides that bit of funding that allows us to explore and develop best practice solutions for identified campus needs. It is a very exciting project. Working together to solve problems, DSU really can move from being pretty good to GREAT!

Ethelle S. Bean, Project Coordinator

College of Education Provides New Resources to Students

Students in the College of Education who are seeking additional help in passing their Proficiency Exam and entrance exams have a new option this year thanks to the Title III Grant. Students work with Lori Engebretson to develop a personalized remediation plan based on the student's needs. Students then work diligently on WebCT quizzes and practice quizzes on-line and on

paper. Numerous websites related to general test-taking, math, reading, and writing are recommended for students to review and reflect on. In addition, subject specific study sessions are offered in the Fall and Spring prior to the assessments. Students meet weekly with Engebretson to track their progress and ask questions as needed. Additional assistance to students is being explored

through the use of PLATO software which supports remediation and promotes test preparation.

Lori Engebretson, Remediation Specialist

Title III and the Academic Quality Improvement Program

DSU is a member of the Higher Learning Commission's Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). As defined by the HLC, the AQIP process allows an institution to demonstrate that it meets accreditation standards through sequences of events that align with ongoing activities that characterize organizations striving to improve their performance. As part of the AQIP accreditation process, the University identifies action projects-specific initiatives that focus on

improvement efforts. As action projects are completed or retired, new projects are selected and submitted to the Higher Learning Commission's website www.aqip.org. Dakota State University recently retired the AQIP Project *Designing and Implementing Programs to Enhance Students Success and Retention*. The AQIP reviewer commented that "DSU understands that progress must be tracked concretely and consistently". DSU submitted a new action project titled *Collecting and Analyzing Data to Im-*

prove Student Retention to assess the contributions that the new retention projects (many funded through the Title III Grant) are making toward student retention. The new action project also supports the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan initiative that focuses on retention and graduation rates. This Action Project began in October 2007 and will be completed in September 2009.

Carrie Ahern, Activity Director

WIST Women Bring Speakers to Campus

DSU's Women in Science & Technology program provides an opportunity for women majoring in specific disciplines to meet and learn with others who have similar interests and goals, enabling them to create friendships and support networks early in their academic careers.

The newly established group has been hard at work their first few months of existence bringing many notable speakers to campus. On Monday, September 24, 2007 Dr. Peter Geltenbort from ILL Grenoble, France presented to the women and others from across the state of South

Dakota his ideas on cold neutrons that were announced earlier that month. On October 24th the WIST program welcomed Dr. Scott Meyer, Vice President of Research for the South Dakota Board of Regents. Dr. Meyer spoke to a good crowd about his past experiences with NASA and his work with many of the astronauts in the program.

On November 30th, Dr. Barbara Szczerbinska and nine WIST women took a trip to Sioux Falls to tour EROS (Earth Resources Observations Systems). The girls sat in on a science forum with EROS scientists as well as

met with members of human resources to discuss possible internships in the future.

Thank you to all who have been instrumental in the creation of this program and to the women who have stepped up as its leaders.

WIST Officers

President-Jennifer Pueppke

Vice President-Sarah Rost

Secretary-Kianne Gilles

Treasurer-Heather Specht

Historian-Amanda Clobes

Faculty Advisor- Dr. Barbara Szczerbinska

Angie Rime, Retention Specialist

DSU Rocks Again and Again!!

On October 4, 2007, Tim Culver, Associate Vice-President for Retention Consulting at Noel-Levitz, evaluated the third year of DSU's Title III Grant. Mr. Culver identified 18 specific strengths- a few are listed below. The full report is available on the University's intranet site www.intranet.dsu.edu/titleiii.

Strengths:

"Retention rate increase of five percent"

"Staff are all working together to reach objectives"

"Strong support of retention initiatives by academic leadership"

"Early alert system proving strong outcomes"

"Dashboard has increased from 13 to 30 categories during the past year"

"Parent program in development"

"Strong endowment option"

"GS100-University Experience

Course improvement"

Mr. Culver provided suggestions for the University's next Academic Quality Improvement Program Project which will be related to evaluating the success of each retention initiative. He also recommended that we continue to engage the Retention Committee and the Title III Coordinating Committee so that successful integration can be maintained.

Carrie Ahern, Activity Director

Faculty/Advisor Input Vital to Early Alert at DSU

The Early Alert (EA) Referral System, now in its' 3rd year, continues to grow! As students become familiar with the EA process, positive student feedback has increased. Following a referral, many students follow up with their instructors, academic advisor, or Student Development staff, establishing a valuable line of communication.

For 2007-2008, significant improvements in reporting capabilities have been implemented, including online access to the EA database for instructors and advisors! Faculty may review the status of referrals they've submitted, and those submitted for their advisees, such as interventions taken by the Student Support Specialist or other staff. Of equal importance is the new capability for instructors and advisors to report directly to the Early Alert database.

Faculty may report additional "action" they have personally taken on the referral using an online form; and any "outcome" they've noted following previous interventions.

The information that instructors and advisors may now contribute is vital to the growth and continued success of the EA system. Early Alert is most effec-

tive when regularly utilized by faculty members who consistently report student issues. Gathering any additional information on intervention outcomes they may provide following the referral will assist our continued efforts to evaluate and improve Early Alert at DSU.

Patti Beck, Student Support Specialist

We're on the Web!

For more information on DSU's Title III Grant, check out
www.departments.dsu.edu/assessment/

Title III Pilots New Projects

Each year, new projects are piloted to support the Title III Grant Objectives. During the third year of the grant (October 1, 2006 to September 30, 2007), there were several pilot projects including: development of online material to assist students with proficiency testing, redesigning the Parent's Program, and preparing a guide for new students.

Three faculty received funding to pilot projects to assist our students with the statewide proficiency testing process. The faculty analyzed several data reports which identified specific areas where DSU students would benefit from additional practice. The faculty conducted review sessions for the students who were retaking the proficiency exams in March 2007. During the

summer of 2007, faculty developed extensive online review materials that students can use to prepare for the writing exam. Ten of the sixteen students who were scheduled to sit for the writing exam in March participated in the review sessions and accessed materials on the WebCT site. The average score improvement was 3.9 points! In addition, three 2nd time retesters participated in the review sessions and all three passed the retest in March. These materials were used to help students prepare for the Fall 2007 proficiency tests.

DSU implemented several new retention initiatives during the summer and early fall of 2007. The Information Development Specialist developed procedures for student retention assistants to call the registered freshmen from last year to welcome them back to DSU and to answer any questions they might

have. The Retention Specialist is leading DSU's Parent Program redesign efforts. The Student Support Specialist developed the *Keys to Success*, a guide for new students which was distributed this fall in the GS 100 course.

The Faculty Advising Specialist Team recommended that the Deans appoint additional faculty to serve on the University's Retention Committee. This will ensure that the activities implemented during the first three years of the grant will continue to be evaluated and improved. During Year 4 and Year 5, faculty representatives will also develop and pilot new college-specific Title III projects.

Carrie Ahern, Activity Director



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College of Arts and Science Offers New Opportunities

In the spring, Sociology 285, Information Society, will be a pilot class for service learning. Students taking the class will have the opportunity to participate in a service learning project, working with the Latino community in Madison. Projects may include helping adult individuals to learn English and to better understand American culture, as well as other daily activities in which individuals may require assistance. In addition, opportunities will also be available for students to read to children at the local community center and the library.

This service learning project is one of several activities to increase student engagement and retention. The activities will also further students' awareness of diversity within their own community and to better their

understanding of globalization issues locally and abroad. In addition to working with Latinos, the service learning projects will also give students an opportunity to work with economically disadvantaged and elderly individuals in the community, and to attend on campus and community events dealing with issues of diversity, difference, and tolerance.

*Viki Johnson, Assistant Professor
College of Arts and Science*

Cultivating Success with Senior Experience Seminars

The College of Business and Information Systems has announced a series of seminars targeted at college seniors. The seminars will consist of what is being termed as "Real World" experiences. Topics will include:
Personal finances and budgets,
Your best foot forward – Personal interviews
Making major purchases,
Dealing with adversity,
Personal networking skills,
I landed the job – Now what?,
Soft skills – What are they and how do you hone them?

The seminars will be offered in February, March, and April of 2008. Dr. Wayne Pauli will be leading these seminars, and experts in specific fields will be joining the discussions. Specific topics, dates and times will be announced in the near future.

Wayne Pauli, Center of Excellence Director