Academic Advising to Non-Traditional and Apprenticeship Students

Jill English, Academic Advisor/Professor

Julie Stuart, Academic Advisor/Professor



NiagaraCollege.ca

Why this Topic?

Fall of 2015

- 62% of our level 1 domestic student population were considered non-traditional students
- Gender distribution
 - -Females 51.3%
 - -Males 48.5%
- Apprenticeship numbers have increased by 20%



Discussion Focus

- Impact of non-traditional and apprenticeship students in our educational setting
- Defining what is considered a non-traditional student including the apprenticeship student
- Discussing and exploring obstacles and barriers that non-traditional students experience
- Developing strategies that are individualized to each student

Discussion Focus

- Demonstrate real-life application and how effective it can be
- What do apprentices see as their obstacles and barriers and what is needed to assist them with being successful?
- Discuss highlights of strategies developed and initiatives implemented specifically for apprenticeship students.

Niagara College Canada

- Niagara College offers more than 100 diploma, bachelor degree and advanced level programs at campuses in Welland, Niagara-on-the-Lake, and Niagara Falls; as well as more than 600 credit, vocational and general interest Continuing Education courses.
- With over 10,000 students enrolled this is a mid-size college in Ontario

Niagara-on-the-Lake



Welland







Niagara Falls





Impact of non-traditional and apprenticeship students in our educational setting

- Course delivery times have been extended
- Increased scheduling of late afternoon and evening classes
- PLAR Prior learning/work recognition
- Faculty have integrated broader teaching methods
- Enhanced learning experience

Defining the non-traditional student

- Individuals entering into higher education who have population characteristics not normally associated with entrants to higher education
- May also include gender groups in some areas, such as females in engineering and males in nursing, in addition to students with disabilities
- Niagara College continues to experience an increase of enrollment for-non-traditional students.

Defining the Apprenticeship Student

- Apprenticeship is a work-based training program for people who want to work in a skilled trade or occupation.
- Apprenticeship training provides access to well paying jobs that demand high level of skill, judgement and creativity
- Apprentices are paid while gaining work experience and their wages increase with the skill level.
- In Canada Apprenticeship is an equal form of postsecondary education

Source: http://www.earnwhileyoulearn.ca/



Who may be considered a non-traditional student?

- Students delayed in applying to college
- Individuals who are in life/career changes
- Displaced workers
- Sponsored students
- Financially independent
- Students having dependents /Single parents
- Work full-time hours while attending school
- Full and/or part-time student (includes apprentices)
- High school student entering directly into an apprenticeship



Obstacles and barriers that non-traditional students experience

<u>Family</u>

- Coordinating family and home obligations
- Aging parents or sick family members
- Guilt-not being there 100 % all the time
- Always negotiating the best option
- Managing self as they are being pulled in various directions
- Lack of support financial and emotional
- Child care responsibilities



Obstacles and barriers that non-traditional students experience

Work/School

- Completing own school work
- Unidentified learning difficulties
- Difficulty navigating educational system
- Lacking basic skill sets that are needed (ie. Computers)
- Social feeling like the "only one"



Obstacles and barriers that non-traditional students experience

<u>Intangible</u>

- Time management
- Stress
- Anxiety
- Financial support dependent on grades
- Physical barriers including injured workers
- Fear levels



Strategies

- Relocation of advising offices
- Embedded advisors who are trained experts in their portfolios
- Advisors Enhanced communication methods and extended time responses
- Develop strong rapport and develop a professional relationship
- Prescriptive, Developmental, Transactional and Career Advising

Strategies

- Community Based orientation-inviting families
- Evening orientation for apprentices 1-2 weeks prior to classes starting
- Course delivery online and hybrid course
- Extended classrooms evening hours
- Offering student service support extended hours and locations
- Meet more often and spend more time



Strategies

- Faculty integrating broader teaching methods
- Pathways clearly aligned to career concise
- PLAR work experience valued
- Transparent transfer credits streamlined process
- Targeted events including social and professional networking opportunities
- Integration of BEACON Early Alert System



Beacon Early Alert

An early alert and centralized notation system

Specialized, comprehensive assessment program that combines data collection, reporting, organization, and campus-wide integration.

- that capitalizes on a myriad of data
- including non-cognitive factors
- to inform and coordinate interventions with atrisk and success-oriented students

Source: Campus Labs Presentation



Beacon Early Alert

Alert + Predict + Act

Beacon



Apprenticeship Strategy Needs Assessment

- Needs Assessment developed and completed by 69% of the apprentices
- The assessment provided apprentices the ability to self identify their needs and their willingness, and availability to participate in additional workshops, activities or support opportunities
- Interventions were developed and delivered based on the result of the survey.

Apprenticeship Strategy Needs Assessment

- Top 5 workshops requested: Stress
 Management, Test Taking, Staying Motivated,
 Study Techniques and Time Management
- Apprentices were asked if they were Interested in taking a confidential assessment to identify learning difficulties and receive support and strategies to assist you in your career path.

Apprenticeship Strategy Interventions

- Implementation of a learning strategist on site begin available two nights a week from 4:30pm – 7:30pm
- Apprenticeship Conference Saturday morning
- Workshops offered week days 5:30 6:20 (Prior to class – students encouraged "brown bag")
- Counselling available one night a week or by arranged appointment



Scenario

- Kim a 48 year old woman whose marriage has just ended suddenly
- Three children, minimal financial support.
- During her early 20's she worked as a bankteller, and sporadically worked in the family business doing administrative and hosting tasks.
- Kim is in her first week of classes, enrolled in the civil engineering program and having a "meltdown".

She has now arrived at your office, what do you do?

Summary

- As we strive to recruit and retain students we must continue to recognize the importance of the non-traditional student and the impact they have on our educational system.
- In many institutions the non-traditional student is increasingly outnumbering the traditional student. This statistic highlights the need to identify obstacles and barriers that these students are facing.
- Implementing various strategies that can be individualized for these students will enhance their student experience and assist them in their path to success.

Summary

- Apprenticeship Students are a unique group amongst themselves and yet still very much a part of our non-traditional student population
- As in our scenario with Kim, it is important that we maintain a holistic approach to our academic advising. This comes in the form of supporting our students through light intrusive advising and connection with appropriate resources.

Empower students, not control them!



Questions?





