

Promoting Student Success through Learning Support Programs

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**Presenters from the
Committee on Academic Learning Support**

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Student Success & Learning Support



Focus on
student success



Best freshmen
class ever



Stigma associated
with seeking
assistance

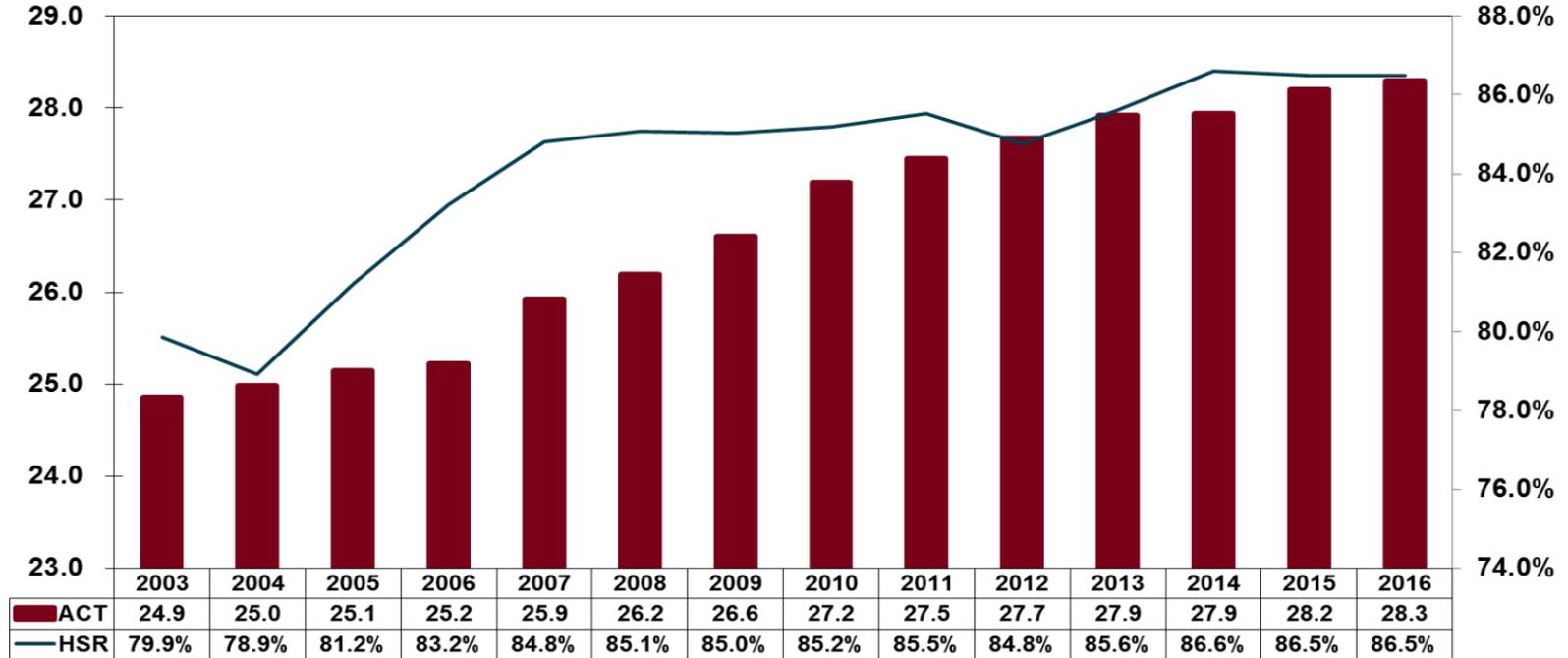


Progress with
mental health and
advising task
force



Continuous “Best Freshmen Class Ever”

Average ACT Composite and High School Rank of Twin Cities Campus Fall Semester Enrolled New Freshmen (NHS)



Before Students Arrive

Freshmen Student Concerns:

56% academic coursework (doing well in class, workload)

49% financial concerns (paying tuition, financial aid, managing money)

48% Registering for classes

44% deciding on a major/career path

43% staying healthy (nutritious eating, physical fitness, healthy lifestyle)

43% mental health (stress mgmt., emotional health, anxiety and depression)

Transfer Students Concerns:

52% academic coursework (doing well in class, workload)

51% financial concerns (paying tuition, financial aid, managing money)

44% Registering for classes

37% mental health (stress mgmt., emotional health, anxiety and depression)

34% staying healthy (nutritious eating, physical fitness, healthy lifestyle)

32% making friends and meeting people



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After the First Year: Why students leave

<i>Leavers</i>		<i>All NHS</i>
2.47 GPA	vs	3.26 GPA
11.7 credits at entry	vs	15.4 credits at entry
21.3 year end credits	vs	33 year end credits

2014
Freshmen
Cohort

32%

*of first year leavers left
because of academic reasons*

43%

*were on academic
probation/suspension tag*

2.09

cumulative GPA



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Academic Success = Student Success



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Committee on Academic Learning Support (CALs)

From the charge to the committee:

- ▶ Review current academic learning support services and outcomes.
- ▶ Review best practices within the learning support field.
- ▶ Identify opportunities to support and enhance academic learning services on the Twin Cities campus.
- ▶ Identify opportunities to connect academic learning support and faculty development initiatives.
- ▶ Identify innovative practices to guide future learning support initiatives, including initiatives based out of the SMART Learning Commons.



Quick Write & Share

What services do you think of when you think about
“academic learning support”?

Who on the UMN campus should take up this charge?



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Initial Committee Members

Jane Benson, *undergraduate student, SMART student employee*

Jeff Bullington, *U Libraries*

Lizzy Cantor, *Multicultural Center for Academic Excellence*

Aurelio Curbelo, *Multicultural Center for Academic Excellence*

Larry Gray, *faculty, College of Science and Engineering*

Matt Hanson, *Student Academic Success Services (Student Counseling Services)*

Kirsten Jamsen, *Center for Writing*

Susan Kubitschek, *College of Science and Engineering Student Services*

Jeff Lindgren, *Center for Education Innovation*

Kate Maple, *College of Design Student Services*

LeeAnn Melin, *Co-Chair, Office of Undergraduate Education*

Drew Smith, *International Student and Scholar Services*

Paul Spangle, *College of Liberal Arts Student Services*

Claire Stewart, *Co-Chair, U Libraries*

Charles Strybicki, *undergraduate student, SMART student employee*

Lynell Williams, *SMART Learning Commons*



Defining “Academic Learning Support”

“The primary mission of Learning Assistance Programs must be to provide students with resources and opportunities to improve their ability to learn and to achieve academic success.”

— *Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education*

“Academic Learning Supports (ALS) are the programs, staff, outreach, and activities that provide students with resources and opportunities to improve their ability to learn and to achieve academic success. Academic Learning Supports complement faculty/instructor-defined learning activities.”

— *CALS committee*

**see handout listing UMN-TC Learning Support Services*



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Environmental Scan Fall 2016

Highlights from focus
group interviews with
11 advisor groups
from 8 colleges
+ 10 tutoring groups

188 people total



- Finding, understanding and knowing how to refer to learning support services is very confusing
- Some services are over-crowded: need more locations, different hours, more tutors, more coverage for upper level courses
- More and different kinds of support needed for certain student communities: transfer, international, commuter, part-time, distance students
- Stigma and student reluctance to utilize services a problem!



CALS Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats (SWOT) Exercise

Strengths

- U of M has a wide range of academic learning support for students across campus.
- Units work well together in co-sponsoring events and services.
- Training for peer staff is exceptional.
- Professional staff in these areas are highly engaged and respected in their field and professional associations.
- There are good examples of units utilizing existing research and data analysis to garner additional support

Weaknesses

- Services are not provided in a coordinated manner and students have difficulty finding the resources when they need them.
- Units operate in silos and expect students to know who to go to for what
- The original “umbrella” concept of SMART is not being used to fullest advantage
- Academic learning support is not integrated well with faculty. Faculty are unaware of academic learning resources and impact on student success
- There is no good process to collectively identify, assess and respond to service gaps on an ongoing basis



(SWOT) Exercise

Opportunities

- More intentional intersections between faculty and resources
- Redesign of library and other campus spaces
- Improve resource findability through google & other web searches.
- Single connection point for all services
- Build a culture where asking for help is normal and expected, not stigmatized

Threats

- Stereotype and stigma associated with students who utilize services.
- Lack of resources for services and current at-capacity status of services.
- Real or perceived “weed out” role of gateway courses means high DFW rates are acceptable.
- Students are overloaded with information and choice. More “just in time” information delivery and embedded support needed.
- Close linkage between academic success and other factors such as mental health, college transition, resiliency, etc.



Recommendation

Establish a campus-wide academic learning support network

The primary goal in forming this network is to improve the visibility, access, collaboration, and overall services offered in order to directly impact student academic success.



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What would this network provide?

- Increased utilization of seamless services by students and faculty
- Enhanced offerings arising from increased collaboration and innovation
- Coordinated communication of learning support across campus
- Strong faculty and teaching environment connections
- Research and assessment activities



What would this network feature?

- Shared branding while highlighting unique or specialized services

- Coordinated outreach efforts

- Common service elements

- Common technology platform

- A Network advisory group

- A campus-wide strategy to support innovation, address gaps, and ensure service standards

- Central staff to coordinate and support the Network



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Discussion

What academic areas do students struggle with?

How do we address the stigma that is associated with seeking out learning support?

What can the University do to help students be successful?

