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To see the slides from the Forum or other retention information, go to our web site at **castle.eiu.edu/~core**

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Supplemental Instruction Helps Business Students Succeed

Stop by Lumpkin Hall early on a Tuesday or Thursday evening and you will find a small group of students discussing capital budgeting and financial ratios. No professor is in the room; yet, as the students work through problems and struggle to understand equations, they are focused, frequently directing questions to one of their peers. Although not immediately evident, the group is being guided by Jarrod Scherle, an MBA student who just completed his undergraduate finance degree last year. Jarrod is a Supplemental Instruction (SI) Leader. His goal—

and the goal of the five other SI Leaders—is to help students succeed in four of the most challenging introductory business courses.

According to Hurley, Jacobs, and Gilbert (2006), "SI is an academic support program that provides regularly scheduled, out-of-class, peer-facilitated sessions that are open to all students in the course. The students attend the sessions on a voluntary basis" (p. 11). First developed by Dr. Deanna Martin in the 1970s as a support service for students in medicine and pharmacy programs at the University of Missouri at

Kansas City, the SI model had been adopted and adapted by educational institutions worldwide. SI has been thoroughly analyzed in the educational literature where data indicate that the program increases student retention. For further information see the International Center for Supplemental Instruction at http://www.umkc.edu/cad/si.

Since 2004, EIU's School of Business has offered SI in conjunction with business courses that historically have been difficult for many students. Currently, SI Leaders complete a training

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CORE continues to work with the Early Alert System, the registration reminders and surveys, and the financial literacy program in addition to analyzing Eastern's retention data to better understand persistence and attrition.

These data were shared in the fall with the Noel-Levitz recruitment and retention consultants. Dr. David Trites, senior associate consultant, visited campus on Nov. 30-Dec. 1 and interviewed a variety of constituents concerning retention. These focus

groups contributed additional information to the data sets that Planning and Institutional Studies had sent to Noel-Levitz prior to the focus groups. These data include headcounts for full-time enrollment; number of faculty; faculty-to-student ratios; persistence rates; course success rates of high D, F, W courses; academic standing figures; course placement data; retention and graduation data by cohorts; freshman seminar data; stamats survey data; academic policies and procedures

related to admission, retention, and graduation; retention strategies; and advising data.

Dr. Trites' colleague, Dr. Cliff Neel, senior consultant, visited campus on January 26-27 for the Enrollment and Revenue Management System. Additional data were provided for this visit. These consultants were able to analyze data in a way to help Eastern better understand its enrollment and retention data in order to improve practices. CORE wishes to share

Spotlight On . . . Student Success Center

The Student Success Center became fully operational in the fall of 2007 as a result of a five-year $1.85 million Title III Institutional Development Grant. In addition to building a wing onto 9th Street Hall, the grant provided for programs, services, staff to support student success and retention.

Although the grant cycle ended in October 2011, the SSC will remain a presence at EIU by providing an array of services to the campus community. The staff conducted over 200 workshop and classroom presentations over the past five years reaching over 5000 students. SSC podcasts have received over 10,000 views as well.

The SSC makes referrals to other student support services on campus and provides direct services to students designed to improve academic performance and improve retention including the BOOST Program, an alternative admission program developed to provide access to underrepresented student populations. Eighty-seven percent of BOOST students who complete their recommended academic plan are in good standing at the end of their freshman year.

The SSC also oversees the Reinstated Student Program. All students reinstated after academic dismissal are required to

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some of their observations regarding retention.

Dr. Trites' report acknowledges that Eastern's retention rate of 79% "compares favorably to averages of similar colleges" but notes that "the president of EIU has set an annual return rate goal of 85% by 2013."

Dr. Neel's analysis of data further illustrated retention rates of students by academic quality (ACT composite score and high school grade point average), admission dates, and financial need. Eastern's retention rates for each cohort overall (78% for all full-time students) was comparable to that of high financial need students (76%), indicating that financial aid was not the primary reason for attrition.

Academic preparation plays a role in retention. Following a bell curve for the cohort, Noel-Levitz broke Eastern's FA10 new freshmen into a 5-tier system based on ACT composite and high school gpa. The chart to the right indicates the averages for each tier.These FA10 to FA11 retention data show a 21% gap from Tier 1 to Tier 5.

Admission data also play a role in retention rates; they illustrate that earlier admits are

more committed to attending and graduating from Eastern. Again, FA10 first-time freshmen were sorted into groups by admission dates, and their retention rates were computed based on those dates:

Before Oct. 31—84%
Nov. 1-Dec. 31—80%
Jan. 1-Feb. 28—78%
Mar. 1-April 30—68%
May 1-Jun. 30—58%
July 1 & later—49%

Students living off-campus with parents were retained at 84% while those living in the residence halls were retained at 78%. Gender was not a large factor with females retaining at 79% and males retaining at 77%. First-generation freshmen were retained at 76%.

As shown by the above data, the most at-risk population continues to be students with lower academic profiles.

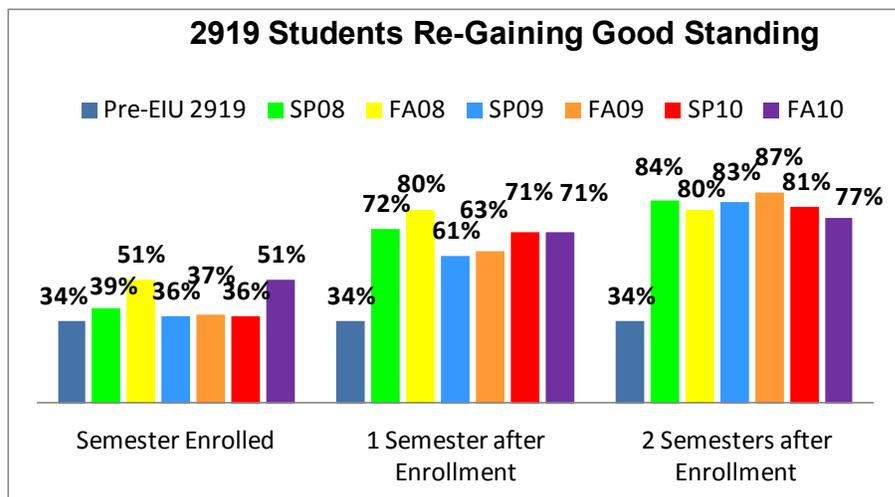| Tiers	Average ACT	Average HS GPA	Retention Rate
Tier 1	28	3.88	91%
Tier 2	24	3.6	82%
Tier 3	21	3.15	80%
Tier 4	20	2.81	75%
Tier 5	18	2.49	70%

Spotlight On cont . . .

meet with a SSC staff member and enter into an academic plan; 76% of these students who complete that plan regain good standing at the end of their first semester back.

The "Virtual Student Success Center" is a parallel on-line presence and is a "One Stop Shop" for students and faculty to access the tools needed to be successful in college. Such tools include podcasts of workshops on study skills and test-taking, testimonials from other students, and materials on study skills and time management.

The heart of the Center's programming is a mandatory, one-credit hour intervention course, EIU 2919: Strategies for Academic Success, for students who reach Academic Warning status (cumulative GPA below 2.00). The course has proven highly effective in helping

students regain good standing at the University; prior to the course, only 34% of students on academic warning ever regained good standing at EIU. That number has jumped to an average of 83% following the implementation of EIU 2919. The chart below provides the percentage of students in good standing following successful completion of EIU 2919 for the past six semesters.

2919 Students Re-Gaining Good Standing

Legend: Pre-EIU 2919, SP08, FA08, SP09, FA09, SP10, FA10

Semester Enrolled: Pre-EIU 2919 34%, SP08 39%, FA08 51%, SP09 36%, FA09 37%, SP10 36%, FA10 51%

1 Semester after Enrollment: Pre-EIU 2919 34%, SP08 72%, FA08 80%, SP09 61%, FA09 63%, SP10 71%, FA10 71%

2 Semesters after Enrollment: Pre-EIU 2919 34%, SP08 84%, FA08 80%, SP09 83%, FA09 87%, SP10 81%, FA10 77%

The Early Alert System: A Faculty Member's Perspective

By Tim N. Taylor, Assistant Professor, English

Because I regularly teach EIU's basic writing class, ENG 1000, the Early Alert System made a lot of sense. What first interested me is that there is precedent for this type of work because a similar alert system works at another institution. A researcher at Mississippi State University has gotten many faculty members on board with reporting attendance data and using that reporting system to intervene with "at-risk students" or students making decisions that will haunt them when grades are due—not coming to class and therefore not turning in assignments.

From my perspective as a faculty member who teaches courses that involve a diverse and healthy mix of small, medium, and larger assignments, I also was happy to see that EIU took the system a step further than Mississippi State's. EIU provides a place to indicate that students aren't turning in assignments on a regular basis. As we all know, students can show up to classes, but if they're not turning in

assignments, that doesn't bode well for their learning and their grades.

So even though I talk to students one-to-one on a regular basis about their work in my course, EIU's early alert system has served as a second voice to emphasize that they need to take their education seriously. This fall when I used it for eight students, the results were encouraging.

Even though I had talked to them individually about how they needed to turn in assignments and realize the importance of writing to their academic future, the emails they received through the early alert system woke them up. They had an "I'll just do the same stuff I did and have the same work ethic I had in high school" mindset, which isn't going to play well in any college course. Right after they had been prompted by the institutional voice of the system, many of those eight students talked to me about how they were going to do a better job in the course. And they did. The early alert mechanism simply reinforced the messages I had been sending in my class.

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The process of using it is simple. You log into PAWS, go to the "Faculty and Advisors" page, and select the course as you normally would when submitting mid-term and final grades. At the bottom of the page, you'll find "Early Alert Reporting System." By hitting that link, you're taken to the check boxes. If students haven't been showing up to class because they've been taken in by the bright lights of Chucktown or for other reasons, you can check "Attendance." If they haven't been doing the work of the course or are struggling with the assignments, you can check "Assignments." And there are separate fields for comments about each student if you want to use those.

For me, the early alert system has served as another way to reinforce my messages about intellectual engagement and the importance of a strong work ethic. I think we want both of those in all of our courses.

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session designed to help them facilitate learning. The SI Leaders are not instructors. Instead, they help students learn how to learn. The SI Leaders are assessed both by an SI Coordinator and by the students. SI depends on the interaction of three critical groups:

- The **SI Leaders** who, because they recently have been successful in the class, have credibility with the students.
- The **class instructors** who encourage students to participate in SI and provide assistance to the SI Leader by identifying difficulty material and providing practice problems and study tips.
- The **students** who take responsibility for their own learning by regularly attending and actively participating in SI sessions.

The key feature of SI is that it targets challenging *courses* rather than at-risk students, thereby eliminating any stigma. SI is open to all students, and students of all academic abilities participate. As a result, students learn not only from the SI Leader but also from each other.

During the first two weeks of the semester, SI Leaders visit these targeted classes and encourage students to sign up for SI. By signing up, the students commit to attend an extra out-of-class session that meets each week. At these sessions, students review notes, work through practice problems, identify organization and study methods, and try to predict test questions.

Many emphasize the practical results of SI such as "I would not have passed this class without SI: and "SI really saved my grade."

Others recognize a broader impact. Rachel Busch, an undergraduate accounting student who first participated in SI as a student and now serves as an SI Leader, summarizes her experiences:

> *SI has benefited me both as a student and as an SI Leader. It has allowed me to retain and understand the course material more thoroughly, giving me greater confidence in my classwork and knowledge. Through the course of my SI sessions each semester I have seen students adopt new study techniques and learning styles into their everyday routine. As an undergraduate SI Leader, I have been able to personally relate to my students; I sat in the same classroom as they did just a year prior. I can make them comfortable in asking questions and encourage them during their struggles.*

SI was developed for use in courses in which 30% or more enrolled students earn Ds or Fs. Other departments with such courses may want to look into using tutoring resources in this way.

Hurley, M., Jacobs, G., and Gilbert, M. (2006). The Basic SI Model. *New Directions For Teaching & Learning*, (106), 11-22.

SI Leader, Chelsea Meinhart, helps Business students organize complex material.