CHARLOTTE W. NEWCOMBE ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP FOR MATURE STUDENTS

Highlight of New Initiatives and Programming at Towson University

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PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT STEPS

1) Statement of the Problem
2) Best Practices
3) Program Components
4) Implementation Timeline
5) Evaluation
THE CORE ISSUES (PROBLEM)

- Mature students comprise over 40% of the college population
- Difficult to define: can include degree seeking, job training, etc.
- Studies identify a myriad of reasons why mature students enroll in college but reasons are usually financial
- Women and men enroll for the same reasons
- But, women tend to be in different life situations
Mature women who enroll in college are more likely to make less money than their male counterparts AND have more complicated life situations. Why?

**Figure 2. Wages or Salary Income of Unmarried, Employed 25- to 29-Year-Olds by Gender, 2006–08**

Source: American Community Survey Public Use Microdata. Lines indicate 95 percent confidence interval, an indication of uncertainty around the estimate.
Population Demographics

- Average GPA - 3.17
- 18 Seniors, 11 Juniors
- 50% of them have children
- At least 6 of them are single parents
- 4 of them are taking care of a sick child or parent
- 5 of them were recently laid off or had to leave work because of illness & injury
- 100% of them have clear career goals
CHALLENGES

- Lack of data on retention
- Best practice data anecdotal
- Only semi-captive audience
- Dearth of personal experience
WE NEEDED A PROGRAM THAT...

- Acknowledges the students’ different experiences
- Recognizes how gender impacts retention and completion
- Provides peer support
- Establishes a sense of connection to TU
- Accommodates their lifestyles
- Always keeps their career goals/needs in mind
The goal of the Charlotte Newcombe Scholarship program is to support students 25 and older in the completion of a first bachelor’s degree so they can advance their careers and receive a more equitable salary after completion.

Three Key Areas:

1. Completion
2. Community
3. Career
Create a cohort of 30 scholars
Allows for larger awards

Create a structured two year program

Meet regularly with students twice a semester
COMMUNITY

- Fall scholarship dinner
- Monthly peer support group for mature students
  - Open to all mature students on campus
  - Includes lunch
  - At a time where students already have childcare
- Future goals?
  - Mothers support group at University Childcare
  - Mutual Mentoring Program
Students set clear career goals
- established vs. new careers moves

Partnership with Career Center
- Special events for mature students
- OR students can do one on one appointments at Center
  - Once in the first year, twice in the second

Identify and meet with a mentor

Future goal
- Track graduating students to see if/how they experienced career improvement
Secure funding for new programming
Create on-campus partnerships
Implement less-intimidating measures first
  - Support Group
  - Banquet
Focus on new program members and juniors
Hold off on developing more extensive programming until after student feedback
  - Career
  - Mentoring
EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS

Student Engagement
- Attendance above and beyond
- Anonymous evaluations

Program Outcomes
- Academic progress
- Completion of goals

Long-term impact
- Impact on careers
- Student Participation
Some Early Indicators

- **Challenges**
  - Building investment is tough
  - High anxiety levels of students, making things *required* makes this worse
  - Differences in academic departments

- **Successes**
  - Group bonding (scholarship dinner)
  - Connections with other mature students
  - Partnerships with other departments
FUTURE GOALS

- Create more of a sense of a cohort by engaging students earlier
- Develop specialized career workshops for mature students
- Establish a mutual mentoring program with traditionally aged students
- Partner with academic departments to offer programs in most common majors
  - Example: Praxis study groups
- Investigate employment opportunities for high need students
CITATIONS

- National Center for Education Statistics
  - Nces.ed.gov


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