

STUDENT SUCCESS BEST PRACTICE: DABNEY S. LANCASTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE



ADDRESS: 1000 DABNEY DRIVE
CLIFTON FORGE, VA 24422

WEBSITE: WWW.DSLCC.EDU

STUDENT SUCCESS CATEGORY --

- ACADEMIC PROGRAM
- STUDENT SERVICES
- WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
- COLLEGE BUSINESS PRACTICE
- TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION
- OTHER:

TITLE: "WRITE NOW FOR THE ROAD AHEAD AT DSLCC"

PROCESS

In January of 2013, Dabney S. Lancaster Community College opened the doors to the Writing Center. The Writing Center is part of the Quality Enhancement Plan initiative for improving student learning through written communication skills. The creation of the Writing Center was an unforeseen necessity for improving student learning, long before its doors opened in January 2013. In November 2011 a task force was charged with determining the areas of greatest need for student learning, in the college community. The task force included: IT Director, OT Program Coordinator, IE Director, IE Assistant, Rockbridge Regional Director, Library Director, and four full-time teaching faculty.

This task force conducted surveys by email, in-person interviews, and web page links, to obtain information from the community, local businesses, faculty, staff, and student to see where they felt the greatest need to support student learning. Additionally, the Graduate Exit Survey was used extracting results for Student Engagement, Faculty Interaction, and Help Seeking Behaviors.

Many topics surfaced, including: student engagement, written communication, a cafeteria, four day classes, transportation, and a child care facility. All findings were compiled and the task force held three focus groups to narrow these findings. The focus groups consisted of: 1.) Community 2.) Faculty/Staff 3.) Students -consisting of 6-8 members each to discuss the finding. The focus group saw a common theme emerge- Improving Student Learning Resources and Student Engagement. In March 2012, the task force recommended to the DSLCC Leadership Team: Improving Student Learning Resources on Campus and Student Engagement. Leadership approved.

In April 2012, a Steering Committee was appointed consisting of : Business Office staff member, Achievement Center staff member, four full time faculty (already serving on previous task force) and one additional full time faculty, Director Student Services, Director of IE , and Library Director to co-chair the committee. The Steering Committee conducted a Literature Review on student engagement, resources, and opportunities to incorporate academic engagement and student effort, using national and institutional data. Sources used included: Academic Program Assessment reports, General Education outcome assessment, employer and career data, National Bureau of Labor Statistics, local employers, Achievement Center data/demand

STUDENT SUCCESS BEST PRACTICE:

PAGE 2

for services, course completion data, and English placement scores for the past five years. After careful review of all sources, the Steering Committee concluded that there was a strong need for resources to improve student's Written Communication skills.

The Steering Committee proposed Written Communication as the topic of the QEP. This topic was then endorsed by: Presidents Council, Curriculum and Instruction Committee, Local Board, and Student Senate.

STRATEGY & IMPLEMENTATION

With all levels of approval, the Steering Committee continued forward, discussing the next steps to providing students with the resources and services needed to improve learning through written communication. Referring back to the previous literature review, surveys, and interviews, it became apparent that one element of this endeavor would be a place for all students to receive professional writing assistance. On August 2012, plans for a Writing Center evolved. In addition to the Writing Center, the committee began to work on ways to assess student writing across the curriculum. Working closely with the Instructional Effectiveness Director, the committee decides to use an ePortfolio as a way to assess students' written communication.

In August 2012, the Steering Committee began the Marketing and Communication stage of Writing for the Road Ahead – Improving Students Written Communication Skills. Discussions were had and decisions were made on the location of the Writing Center, the Writing Center Coordinator, and Writing Center Staffing. After careful consideration and discussions with faculty and students, it was decided that the Writing Center would be housed in the Library. The Library Director would oversee and coordinate all aspects of the Writing Center. Students, faculty, and the community were informed about the Writing Center through a marketing campaign, materials were created, press releases were submitted to the local papers, and a grand opening was held on January 2013. In addition to the Writing Center, strategy implementation began by creating an ePortfolio template using Google Sites and five courses were chosen to pilot the ePortfolios, to provide a baseline for assessment. SDVI00 courses were piloted to include professional communication. Writing Center tutors were hired and trained.

ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

In January 2014, DSLCC Writing Rater Committee was formed to rate 100 pieces of writing from the student writing ePortfolio pilot courses. The Committee consisted of QEP Director, IE Director, English Program Head, Nursing Program Director, Forestry Program Head, and the lead Writing Center tutor. A collection of baseline data from student pilot courses was established. January 2017, the Writing Rater Committee will reconvene to rate 100 pieces of student writing ePortfolio courses to assess the scores and compare with the baseline report.

Additionally, data for English III beginning Fall 2013 through Fall 2015 indicates that students using the Writing Center had a higher mean cumulative GPA and a higher mean semester GPA in ENG III than students who did not use the Writing Center. Students using the Writing Center services earning a C or above is 100% opposed to students who do not use the Writing Center earning a C or higher is between 80-86%.

In May of 2014, ePortfolio courses were added to the college catalog. New pilot courses expanded and Writing Center tutors began providing Writing Workshops in the classrooms, when requested by instructors. All SDVI00 courses included Writing Center workshops to introduce students to the Writing Center and to provide basic writing help in the classrooms. Writing

STUDENT SUCCESS BEST PRACTICE:

PAGE 3

Center Coordinator collaborated with faculty to establish strengths and weakness of portfolio and to promote the Writing Center.

In 2014, only 8.5% of graduates reported that they used the Writing Center. In 2015, the percentage of graduates reporting that they used the Writing Center increased to 20.7% and in 2016, it increased again to 27.7%. In 2014, 23.8% of graduates reported that they didn't know the Writing Center existed. That percentage dropped to 6.7% in 2015 and was 7% in 2016. As you can see, usage of the Writing Center by graduates continues to increase while the number of graduates who are unaware of the center has decreased.

PLAN FOR SCALE & SUSTAINABILITY

The Writing Center was once just a thought but now has become a reality that students and faculty expect to always be there. It is an intricate part of the library and the college. The success of the Writing Center is through the hard work and dedication to student learning by EVERYONE at DSLCC. Much of the success of the Writing Center can be attributed to faculty engagement, increased awareness through out the DSLCC campus, and student success oriented staffing.

As we move forward, we will continue to make classroom visits, facilitate faculty engagement, insure proper staffing, and promote Writing Center services to all courses at DSLCC. The Writing Center and student writing has improved substantially but at this time we have not reached every student. We will continue to reach out to first year students and work with faculty to target students who are struggling with writing. Beginning Spring 2017, the Writing Center will provide supplemental support for ENF2 courses. Students enrolled in ENF 2 will be required to meet with Writing Center staff on a weekly basis.

COLLEGE DESCRIPTION

The College's service area supports over 1,800 square miles with the DSLCC main campus located one mile west of downtown Clifton Forge and the Rockbridge Regional Center is located at 35 Vista Links Drive in Buena Vista.

The College enrolls approximately 2,000 students each year in certificate and associate degree programs, providing a wide variety of programs and services in the areas of business, culinary arts and hospitality, advanced manufacturing, forestry, education, criminal justice, welding, massage therapy, information systems, nursing and allied health, wind energy, and emergency medical services.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Nova Wright
Library Director/ QEP Director/ Writing Center Coordinator
1000 Dabney Drive
Clifton Forge, Va. 24422
nwright@dslcc.edu
540-863-2868