

**EXCEL
CENTER FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS
ANNUAL REPORT
July 30, 2006**

Cheryl Rice, Director

DeLandra Hunter, Associate Director & Coordinator of MAP

John Olle, Associate Director for Academic Advisement

Ashley Lewis, Assistant Director for Tutoring and Mentoring

Shanna Fountain, Academic Advisor

Kelly Speir, Academic Advisor

Katrina Mobley, Staff Assistant

Arlene Pace, Senior Secretary

I. Departmental Mission and Achievements

Overview

The Mission of EXCEL, Center for Academic Success, is to provide academic and social support services to all students at the University of West Georgia. To achieve this purpose we offer programs in Academic Advising, Major/Career Exploration, Tutoring in all Core Curriculum courses, Study Skills Training, Peer Mentoring, Multicultural Achievement programming, Academic Service Learning, First Year Student Advocacy, Student Leadership Development, At-Risk and Probation Student Advisement. Much of our focus is in helping the first year student (and parent) make a successful transition to college.

A departmental slogan, personalized for each EXCEL staff member, is “to treat each student, as if he or she were our own.” For our younger staff members and student workers this would mean viewing each student who comes to EXCEL as if he or she were a brother or sister. For the older staff members it means imagining our children in the same situation, needing some guidance. Treating students as if they were a part of this extended “family” does not mean that students are not held responsible for their own success or failure at UWG, but rather we assist in their academic development as needed so that they are able to develop into fully achieving college students, finally independent of our services. This mission works in harmony with the mission of the larger university, “The University aspires to preeminence in providing educational excellence in a personal environment through an intellectually stimulating and supportive community for its students, faculty, and staff.”

Our services clearly fit within the Visionary and Bread & Butter Goals of the university of “providing student services which increase opportunities for academic success and personal development and enhance the climate of campus life” and “affirmation of the equal dignity of each person by valuing cultural, ethnic, racial, and gender diversity in students, faculty, and staff.”

Each individual of EXCEL's staff is prepared to be an important component in the following university goals (listed in a numerical order that is pertinent only for this document):

1. Be a leader within the University System of Georgia in providing educational excellence in a personal environment.
2. Create for students from various backgrounds every possible avenue to intellectual achievement, personal development, and leadership potential without compromising academic excellence.
3. Be recognized for excellence in teaching and learning, research, and public service in undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education.
4. Create outstanding educational experiences, national and regional recognition of selected programs, faculty who excel in their disciplines, superior staff support, and an increasingly capable student body.
5. Provide educational opportunities for a wide range of academically-prepared students that include a strong academic knowledge base for the development of leadership skills and life long learning.
6. Develop both ethical principles and intellectual flexibility for the future, and will celebrate and energize the human spirit through respecting and supporting individual differences in learning styles, identities, and personal/professional goals.
7. Develop pro-active partnerships with public and private schools and other educational institutions, business, industry, government, and cultural and social organizations in order to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, predict, and respond to changing state and regional needs, to support Georgia's educational, economic, and cultural development, and to ensure graduates' readiness for the present and future.
8. Be a unified, clearly focused University with each part contributing to and understanding how every other part contributes to the mission of the University and to the larger society.

II. EXCEL Center Goals & Activities Which Accomplish These Goals

STUDENT ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT & CAREER/MAJOR EXPLORATION PROGRAMS (Goals 1, 2, 4, 6)

Advisement of Undeclared Students:

- **Communications with Undeclared Students Concerning Advisement**

Two weeks prior to beginning of Advance Registration, communications with Undeclared Students included a post card mailed to every undeclared student. Posters and fliers are also distributed across campus.

- **Academic Advisement Numbers**
 - 1321 advisement contacts during advanced advisement periods
 - 1401 additional advisement contacts by individual staff members via email, phone, appointments, walk-ins, etc.
 - 204 Pre-major workshop attendees
 - 1318 pre made schedules for new student orientations
 - Total 4244 advising contacts with students
- **Advance Advisement/Registration Period**

A number of Faculty members from Arts & Sciences and the Richards College of Business, as well as a number of student services staff members, volunteer 10 hours each in the approximately three week advance registration period to assist with academic advisement. We attempted holistic advisement of students as much as possible, i.e., seeking to discover students at-risk and/or students needing to be referred to other EXCEL Center programs or other departments, etc.
- **Athletic Advisement** of Undeclared Students was conducted during the week prior to regular Advance Advisement each semester.
- **EXCEL Center professional staff** were available to students for advising sessions during other times of the semester as well as during the Advance Registration periods.
- **Pre-Made Schedules** for all undeclared and Arts and Sciences majors who were entering freshmen totally around 1300 schedules.
- **Registration holds** were placed on all undeclared first year students to ensure that they receive one-on-one advisement with either a faculty member or a EXCEL Center professional staff member.
- **Ask an Advisor** email FAQ's on EXCEL Center's web page maintained. This service is open to the public to ask questions about academic advisement and gets about four questions a week
- **Academic Advising Program Reorganized**
 - EXCEL Center**
 - Academic Advisement**
 - Organization**

General Organizational Structure

A. Alphabetical Breakdown

A – F **Shanna Fountain**
G **DeLandra Hunter (and minority probation students)**
H – J **Ashley Lewis**
K – R **Kelly Speir**
S – Z **John Olle**
Between the Cracks Cheryl Rice

B. Departmental Liaison Structure

1. John Olle

College of Education
College of Business

2. Shanna L. Fountain

Art
Biology
Chemistry
Criminology
Foreign Language
Philosophy
Math
Music
Nursing
Sociology

3. Kelly Speir

Computer Science
Engineering
English
Environmental Studies
Environmental Science
Geography
Geology
Global Studies
Physics
Political Science
Psychology

4. Ashley Lewis

Anthropology
History
Mass Communications
Theatre

Career/Major Exploration:

- Initial Interviews were conducted, **Discover** Software Program used, second interview included discussion of results with use of addition

instrument or referral to academic department or professional when needed (total of 112, an average of 10 students per month).

- **Notebook of Degree Programs by College** was maintained to provide a comprehensive manual of curriculum requirements for each academic major. This notebook has been distributed to other colleges as a reference tool.
- A **library** of career information books & files on all UWG academic departments' courses of study were kept updated and made available to students as needed.
- **Referrals** were made to academic departments &/or professionals in the field.
- In March, we sponsored and coordinated the fifth annual "**Festival of Majors,**" which we renamed "**Mardi Gras of Majors.**" Over 200 students attended this program and all academic departments were represented with the exception of Computer Science.
- **Advisement of First Year Students on Academic Probation and Suspension Communications** began at the end of each term, when grades were released. During the fall term, the EXCEL Center contacted all first year students on probation or suspension by two rounds of letters asking them to attend a one-on-one meeting with one of the EXCEL Center staff and attend five out of fourteen success seminars offered weekly. During the fall and spring semesters, nearly 300 probation students were seen by one of our professional staff. Those who didn't respond were given a phone call asking them to set up a meeting.

For those who neglected to respond to first and second contacts, another letter was sent to remind them of an **advisement hold** placed on their registration. During the advance advisement period group sessions were conducted with these students.

Referrals were made for students on probation/suspension to professors, tutors, student development and other support departments on campus, in addition to continuing contact with the EXCEL Center.

Orientation Academic Advisement

- **Created** pre-made schedules for over 1200 students.
- **Coordinated** academic advisement aspects of UWG new student orientations with academic colleges.

- **Conducted Undeclared Dean's Meeting @** orientations.
- **Advised** incoming undeclared students.
- **Oversaw registration** of undeclared students on Banweb and assisted at general trouble shooting sessions.

PEER MENTORING and LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAMS (Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

- **HOPE Scholar, EXCEL Center & MAP Peer Mentoring.** The EXCEL Center offered a seventh year of peer mentoring to HOPE Scholars and other students. The MAP Peer Mentoring Program has been active over fifteen years and continued to be very effective.
- **Training of Peer Leaders.** Training of peer leaders was conducted as a series of bi-weekly sessions offered in the EXCEL Center, a weekend session at the beginning of fall term, and the opportunity to enroll in the "What Do You Really Know About Leadership" course.
- **XIDS 20002.** This leadership course was offered to peer leaders in workshop chemistry, EXCEL Center tutors and mentors, and Summer Orientation Leaders.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES (Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8)

- **Tutoring.** The EXCEL Center's tutoring program had it's International certification renewed for a third year at the highest of three levels of the CRLA National Tutor Certification Program. The EXCEL Center offered tutoring to students in all core curriculum courses. We employed an average of 12 student tutors. Our tutors consistently receive excellent to good evaluations of their services. Evaluations of tutors are kept on file in the department office.
- **College Success Seminars.** Each week during Fall semester and biweekly during Spring, basis study skills training was offered to the students in time management, test taking skills, memory enhancement techniques, dealing with stress, computer basics, note taking, reading skills, etc. Faculty and professional staff from a myriad of offices conducted the seminars. A number of faculty offered extra credit to their first year students for attendance and attendance was required for all first year students on probation.

- **Computer Lab.** A yearly total of 2589 students (monthly average of 215 students) used our computer lab for working on their class work, emailing, typing training, writing papers, etc. This aspect of our program had the valuable latent function of giving our staff some one-on-one time with students that was informal, affording us insight into the day-to-day life of the students we may not have had access to, otherwise.
- **Ask Andy** email FAQ's on EXCEL Center's web page maintained. This service is open to the public to ask questions about UWG and University life in general and gets about ten questions a week.

RETENTION OF AT RISK STUDENTS (Goals 1, 2, 4, 5, 6)

- **Students At-Risk Programs.** The EXCEL Center contacts all first year students on probation and suspension, 221 for Fall 2005 & 352 for Spring 2006. At both times, holds were placed on their registration until they have an interview with one of our staff or attended a set number of success seminars. Follow up meetings, referrals, tutoring appointments, etc. were set up.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS (Goal 8)

- Prepare and maintain current **Core Curriculum Guide** for all incoming students and academic departments.
- **FYRST.** In conjunction with Residence Life and Student Development, the EXCEL Center continued its support of the First Year Students Succeeding Together program (FYRST) and coordinated some mentoring training with the FYRST program.
- **Co-Sponsored Programs.** The EXCEL Center financially supported the English Department's Guest Author program. We also supported the Chemistry Department's Peer Led Team Learning program.
- **Faculty Advisors in the EXCEL Center.**
Between 18-22 faculty from Arts and Sciences volunteered to advise in the EXCEL Center. Each faculty advisors volunteered 8 - 10 hours per term to advise undeclared students in the EXCEL Center.
- **Core Curriculum Advising Training for Faculty.** This was the *seventh year* we've offered a campus wide faculty seminar for advising from the core curriculum. We conduct a session each semester.

- **Partnership with the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning.** *Eighth year* of partnership with the faculty's Center for Teaching and Learning, providing program on academic advising and the Core Curriculum.
- **Faculty Resource Packet.** Created and distributed the Faculty Campus Resource Packet to assist faculty members with information about services for students on campus. Packets were distributed at new faculty orientation during presentation by director.
- **Learning Community Coordination.** Registered and maintained registration records for the Learning Community.
- **Learning Support and Testing.** We continued an amiable collaboration with Learning Support as they assisted us during advising times that were hectic for us. We reciprocated when they occasionally needed assistance.
- **Student Development.** EXCEL Center and SD worked closely together on study skills seminars, career exploration and referrals for counseling.
- Team-taught **XIDS 2002** with Department of Chemistry faculty and Student Activities staff member.
- Assisted **Departments of Mass Communications, Nursing, Psychology, and Sociology/Criminology** with their pre-major academic advising programs.

MULTICULTURAL ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

- MAP has remained highly successful with the **Peer Mentor** program. With 151 student participants, this program remained one of the best peer mentoring programs at UWG and is well known statewide & nationally.
- The MAP coordinator contacted all first year minority students who were on **Probation or Suspension** and scheduled a one-on-one meeting. At the meeting the student was referred for peer tutoring, counseling or some other form of support.
- The Twenty-First Annual Minority Achievement Program **Academic Awards Ceremony** was held in April.

III. Statement of Outcomes, Process to Assess These Outcomes, and Assessment Results

Division of Student Services Assessment Chart

Department: EXCEL Center

Assessment	Purpose	Method/Subjects	How often	Most recent use/Response	How results are used
Advisee Satisfaction	To determine students' satisfaction with academic advisement at the EXCEL Center	Survey distributed to all student advisees	At the time of each advisement and academic schedule selection (Once per semester)	Ongoing, each semester/ Spring 2006 *See Assessment Appendices	1). Individual academic advisors will receive feedback and make necessary corrections on how perceived. 2). Director and Staff will make any necessary enhancements to general academic advising program.
Tutoree Satisfaction	To determine student satisfaction with peer tutoring program	Accutrack, a scheduling software program, records student's evaluations and comments	Every first and 3 rd visit. Accutrack offers the tutoree an opportunity to evaluate the tutor	Ongoing, each semester/ Summer 2006 *See Assessment Appendices	1). To evaluate work of the individual tutor and to allow adjustment based on feedback. 2). To correct and enhance components of the tutoring program.
GPA's of Tutorees	To determine if EXCEL Center tutorees improve in their academic performance	If 1 st year student, compare GPA with students of comparable abilities. If 2 nd semester and above, compare to prior semester (Banner report)	Once a semester	Ongoing, each semester/ Spring 2006 *See Assessment Appendices	Director and Staff determine if services need changing or enhancing.
GPA's of MAP participants	To determine if MAP participation improves academic performance	If 1 st year student, compare GPA with students of comparable abilities. If 2 nd semester and above, compare to prior semester (Banner report)	Annually	Spring 2006/ 262	Coordinator determines if the program needs changing or enhancing.
EXCEL Center Utilization	To count the number of students using	Computer and hard copy sign-in	Each Semester	Summer 2006	Director and Staff determine if the program needs changing or enhancing.

Reports	various services	documentation and Staff calendar and contact sheet records		*See Assessment Appendices	
Retention rate of students who participated in EXCEL and MAP programs	To determine if EXCEL Center and MAP participation improves student retention rates	Banner report- Verify if students are registered for subsequent semester	Each Semester	Summer 2006 *See Assessment Appendices	Director and Staff determine if the program needs changing or enhancing.
College Success Seminar Attendee satisfaction survey	To determine students' satisfaction with seminars	Survey distributed at each seminar	Annually	Spring 2006 *See Assessment Appendices	Director and Staff determine need to change seminar content and/or programming.

IV. GENERAL STATEMENT OF DEPARTMENT CONDITIONS

The EXCEL Center is a thriving department, with the number of students who have used the Center's programs averaging around 1500 students a month. We have been in existence ten years, growing from a professional staff this year of six to eight. Because of increase in professional staff we feel that we can now serve the 1300 undeclared students and the other first year students more effectively, hopefully strengthening our attempts to meet the university goal of "educational excellence in a personal environment," and our departmental goal of "treating students as if they were our own."

We are just beginning to see the benefits of the Academic Advisement Program's reorganization mentioned above. This reorganization will allow each undeclared student to have an assigned advisor that s/he will see repeatedly until s/he declares a major.

In addition, because of the increase in academic advisors, we are looking forward to strengthening our Career/Major Exploration program.

V. Departmental Achievements

***Please note that our accounting did not include phone contacts or visits of the numerous students who did not sign in when they used our services.**

Student Use Numbers By Program Categories
August 2005- July 2006

PROGRAM	CONTACT #s	INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS
Academic Advisement	4049	2002
Computer Lab Use	3145	Not Known
Discover Major/Career	113	90
Mentoring	406	406
Orientation Advisement	1366	(in Academic Advisement)
Probation	573	236
Success Seminars Attendance	1383	452
Tutoring Appointments	2434	593
Co-Sponsored Programs	340	No data
EXCEL-MAP Programs, other	1171	No data
Total	14,980	3779

VI. Staff Productivity

Cheryl Rice, Director:

Presentations

“Can This Marriage be Saved: Bridging the Gap Between Academic Affairs and Student Services”, with Rice, Olle, Hunter, Stone. Annual First Year Experience and Students in Transition Conference, with Atlanta, February 2006.

Professional Conferences/Workshops

Georgia’s Advising Best Practices Conference, Georgia Tech, June 14, 2006.

Luminary Series in Leadership, Atlanta, April 26, 2006

National Academic Advisement Association, Atlanta, March 5 – 7, 2006.

Membership in Professional Organizations

Member, College Reading and Learning Association, 2003 – Present

Member, National College Learning Center Association, 2001 - Present

Member, National Academic Advising Association, 1997 – Present

Member, Georgia College Personnel Association, 2002 – Present

Member, Georgia Tutoring Association, 2003 - Present

University Committees

Grade Appeal Committee 2003- Present

Enrollment Management Committee 2001 - Present

Co-Chair, Academic Advisement Enrollment Management Sub-Committee, 2005 – Present

First Year Experience Enrollment Management Sub-Committee, 2005 – Present

Retention, Transfer and Continuing Student Services Enrollment Management Sub-Committee, 2005 – Present

Advanced Academy Advisory Committee 2000 - present.

Delandra Hunter, Associate Director, for Multicultural Programming

Presentations

“Bridging the Gap Between Academic Affairs and Student Services, 25th Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience, Atlanta, February, 2006.

Professional Conferences/Workshops

- Completion of the 2005 Carroll County Leadership Academy
- Attended the 18th Annual National Conference on Race and Ethnicity
- Attended the 4th National Conference on Best Practices in Black Student Achievement

Ashley Lewis, Assistant Director:

Presentations

- “Opposites Can Attract: Marriage therapy for Academic and Student Affairs”
Freshman Year Experience Conference, Atlanta, GA, February 24-28, 2006
- Collaborating with Harrison County High School Freshman 101 program to help high school retention

Professional Conferences

- Participant in Carroll County Leadership Academy- expanded knowledge of opportunities and issues in the Carroll County community.

Membership in Professional organizations

Member, National Academic Advising Association, 2005- Present

Member, College Reading and Learning Association, 2005- Present

Member, National College Learning Center Association, 2005- Present

Member, Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, 2005- Present

John Olle, Associate Director for Academic Advisement

Presentations

- Using Facebook as an Academic Advising Tool. Third Annual Academic Advising Best Practices Event, Georgia Tech Academic Advisors Network, Atlanta, GA, June 14, 2006.
- Poster Presentation: Integrating Service-Learning Into Online and Distance Education. The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: The Cognitive-Affective Connection, Oxford College of Emory University, Oxford GA, March 24, 2006.
- Opposites Can Attract: Marriage Therapy for Academic and Student Affairs. The 25th Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience, Atlanta, GA, February 24-28, 2006.
- Roundtable Discussion: The Difference between Civic Engagement and Service Learning Activities. Southern Consortium of the American Democracy Project, Marrow, GA, November 12, 2005.

Professional Conferences and Institutes Attended:

- NACADA Southeast Regional Conference. Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA, March 5-7, 2006.

- The Foundation Center's Proposal Writing Seminar. Atlanta, June 24, 2005.
- American Democracy Project: Institutionalizing Civic Engagement. Sponsored by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, Portland, June 16-18, 2005

Shanna Fountain, Academic Advisor

Presentations:

“Oops I did it again, Pitfalls of New Academic Advisors, NACADA Southeast Regional Conference. Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA, March 5-7, 2006

Professional Conferences and Institutes Attended:

Graduated from the Carroll County Leadership Academy, 2006.

Resumes of all professional staff are available.