Northern Illinois P-20 Network

Student Support Services Work Group Meeting

January 12, 2015, 1-3 p.m.
Northern Illinois University, Lowden Hall 304
Call in number – 815.753.0011

Notes

Attendees – Eric Weldy (NIU – Convener), Marilyn Bellert (NIU), John Coffin (ECC – phone), Paul Crawford (NIU), Kaitlyn Curta (HBR), Amy Franklin (NIU), Melinda James (WCC), Beth Metzler (Econ IL), Nancy Partch (Kish), Debbie Pixton (NIU)

Welcome 

Eric Weldy

Updates

Build a comprehensive menu of financial literacy activities for P-20 students and families

- Financial Literacy Survey
  - The financial literacy survey has seen an initial good response from community college staff. They have a soft deadline of the end of the week.
  - Distribution of the survey to school districts has been postponed to go out with the needs assessment request. Those are scheduled to be distributed to work group institutions this week.
- FAFSA Completion Workshops
  - The survey should give us an indication of which institutions are offering FAFSA workshops and where the gaps are. These can be overlaid with the workshops offered by ISAC.
- IOER tool may be a good first step that would allow us to create a usable, dynamic, online menu of resources. Alternate formats need to be considered for addressing accessibility issues.
- There is an issue of communications that will need to be addressed.
  - Consider a communications campaign that considers cultural differences that discourage families from seeking help and using resources that are available.
  - Needs to go beyond “go to college” – they’ve heard that message.
  - Need a parent group or to conduct parent focus groups across the region. Perhaps we can partner with existing community organizations that families already look to as a resource and trust.

Build a comprehensive, coordinated student support system that includes “soft skills” training, orientation courses, course advising, career planning, counseling and coaching, financial literacy, financial aid advising, impact of current choices on life, systems navigation, and mentoring.

- Needs assessment survey is undergoing final modifications. The survey will be distributed to community colleges next week. Melinda James will be a co-signer on the cover letter to community colleges.
- An alternate needs assessment designed for school districts will be distributed Wednesday (1.14) along with the financial literacy survey.
Organize a northern Illinois regional network of peer mentors who receive training and support, to increase the success of students in high school and college.

- Needs assessment surveys ask for institutions to indicate a person responsible for student-to-student peer mentoring program.
- Identified individuals will be contacted to be a part of planning for a peer mentoring conference the second or third week of June that can build on the NIU internal conference that’s planned for March.
- The conference should have sessions that address different kinds of mentoring – high school to community college, community college to four year university, within the community college, within the university, between staff and students, between alumni and students, and between students.

Next steps

- Next meeting—February 25, 1-2:30 p.m., Northern Illinois University, Room TBD, Call in Number – 815.753.0019
- Collect and analyze data from the financial literacy survey and the needs assessment
- Debbie will administer a Doodle poll the first week of February to see about potential dates for the peer mentoring conference to all members of the work group and individuals identified in the needs assessment.

Meeting materials
Documents related to this topic are posted online at www.niu.edu/p20network. Click on the Resources tab and then on the Student Support Services Work Group under Meetings and Materials. Feel free to send links to other documents that you recommend for this group to Debbie Pixton (dpixton@niu.edu).

Always in Mind

Goal – Coordinate student support systems across institutions in the northern Illinois region to ease transitions and increase student success.

Revised Assignments

- Build a comprehensive, coordinated student support system that includes “soft skills” training, orientation courses such as UNIV 101, course advising, career planning, counseling and coaching, financial literacy, financial aid advising, impact of current choices on life, systems navigation, and mentoring.
  - January 2015 – Report on a survey of institutions to assess strengths and gaps in the region’s student support services and identify additional targets for development of regional services.
  - September 2015 – Present project plans to coordinate student services in areas of need.
- Build a comprehensive menu of financial literacy activities for P-20 students and families.
  - January 2015 – Identify existing programs at all levels and needs for development of new programs.
  - September 2015 – Share a full continuum of financial literacy activities for schools and post-secondary institutions with identified providers and resources.
• Organize a northern Illinois regional **network of peer mentors**, who receive training and support, to increase the success of students in high school and college.
  
  o **January 2015** – Identify existing programs and best practices in peer mentoring, plus training and support. See ISAC Student Assistance Corps for one model.
  
  o **September 2015** – Report on a regional conference on peer mentoring held in summer 2015 and next steps to expand and improve peer mentoring.