

Project: ISUcceed

Start Date: June 7, 2011

Client: Indiana State University

Program Director: Dr. Stephanie Jefferson

Thesis Statement:

A comprehensive retention program geared toward African American students will help to increase their rate of retention, increase student's sense of academic capability and persistence to graduation.

Abstract

Indiana State University has increased its commitment to retaining students and helping them to graduate. Goal One of Indiana State University's strategic plan is to increase enrollment and student success and it has 11 initiatives. The African American Cultural Center (AACC) is leading Initiative 11: to develop a comprehensive retention program for the cultural center to assist both students and parents. The overall mission of the initiative is to increase the numbers of African American students who are retained, academically successful, persist until graduation and are on track to graduate within four years.

ISUcceed is the retention program being developed within the African American Cultural Center. The ISUcceed Program has four parts that concentrate on: preparation, support, development and refocusing. Planning for the initiative began in Fall 2010 and started with the ISUcceed Program-Academic Probation component. The academic probation component was developed to help African American Academic Opportunity Program (AOP) students who had been placed on academic probation meet the terms of their probation and to refocus, academically, by helping them to develop successful academic strategies that would help them persist throughout college. The academic probation component began in January 2011.

The ISUcceed Program has three other components that focus on preparation, support and development; the Summer Orientation Parent Session, ISUcceed Prep (fall orientation) and the ISUcceed Scholars Program. Through involving the parents and/or other guardians in the process of preparing their student for college and helping students to:

- transition from high school to college and adjust to the social and academic rigors of campus life;
- learn to navigate the university and develop positive academic strategies and;
- build leadership and professional skills

the ISUcceed program will help students persist in college and graduate.

Introduction

For Indiana State University, the 2010-2011 academic year brought an increase in our freshmen students. This increase included the largest number of African American new freshmen students than have been enrolled in the university over the past 10 years. The number of African American freshmen have steadily increased from 225 in Fall 2000 to 586 in Fall 2010 with the greatest increase from Fall 2009 with 359 full time, first time freshmen to Fall 2010 with 586. While the increase in African American students is good news in one respect, it brings with it some other problems not easily seen.

African American students, here at ISU, are not being retained, not graduating at the same rate as other students, nor are they on track to graduate on time at the same rate as other students. According to information from the Office of Institutional Research, each year since 2004, ISU has been losing 40-45% of our African American freshmen cohort by the fall of their second year. Further, by the end of the fourth year the numbers of African American students prepared to graduate is small and even more students have left the university. Complicating the issue is the fact that a large percentage of the African American students are first generation and low income. According to Indiana State University Office of Strategic Planning, Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OSPIRE), 64% of ISU students are first generation and of this number approximately 78% of the African American students are also low-income.

Research on low-income, first generation African American students have found that less than 50% of these students complete a college degree within 6 years (ACT,2010) and were four times more likely to leave college after the first year than students who were not low income or first generation (Engle and Tinto, 2008). Additionally, research found that low-income, first generation African American students are less likely to be engaged in the academic and social experiences that foster success in college (Engle and Tinto, 2008).

Proposal

Retaining students is very important to the university's strategic mission. The ISUceed program is geared to help retain students who are at risk of leaving the university due to academic underachievement. The goal of the ISUceed Program is to increase the numbers of African American students who are retained, are academically successful, are on track to graduate and persist until graduation. This will be accomplished through the following:

- Involving and assisting the parents and/or guardians in the process of preparing their student for college
- Helping the students transition from high school to college and adjust to the academic and social rigors of college life

- Guide and support students as they learn to navigate the university and develop positive academic strategies
- Helping the students build leadership and professional skills and
- Assisting those students who are facing academic difficulties (on academic probation)

This proposal is to lay out the complete academic year plans for the ISUccceed Program.

In Spring 2011, AACC began the ISUccceed program with the Academic Probation component. The Academic Probation component focused on the African American AOP first year students who were placed on academic probation. This summer, AACC will sponsor a parent session during Summer Orientation. The ISUccceed Summer Orientation Parent Session will help get the parents/guardians involved in assisting their students to prepare for the first year of college. In August, ISUccceed Prep- Fall Orientation program will help new freshmen and transfer students to transition to ISU through a day and a half long orientation prior to the start of classes. And finally, the ISUccceed Scholars Program will provide on-going social and academic support for students at all levels through meetings with Graduate Retention Counselors, academic study skill workshops and leadership development activities. The Academic Probation component will remain with a concentration on students who were placed on academic probation at the end of the 2011 Spring or Summer semesters.

The ISUccceed Program will be available for all ISU African American students regardless of level or admission status (AOP, regular admits, Honors).

ISUccceed Summer Orientation Parent Session [Support]

ISUccceed Summer Orientation Parent Session is an opportunity for parents of African American, entering freshmen students to hear about the ISUccceed Program and other resources and services Indiana State University provides to students. This session will introduce parents to African American faculty, staff and current students and will also be an opportunity for parents to have their specific cultural related questions addressed about campus, classes and, other university activities.

Work Plan

Parents of new students were identified and sent a letter about the ISUccceed Summer Orientation Parent Session. The letter included a short description of the parent session and the ISUccceed program.

AACC has been working with ISU Summer Orientation office to develop this program. The ISUccceed Parent Session will be held the morning of the second day from 8:45am until 9:45am for each orientation section, throughout the entire summer orientation period. The ISUccceed Parent Session will commence on June 7, 2011 and end on July 1, 2011. A continental breakfast will be provided for the parents at each session.

AACC will hire and train undergraduate students to work with the ISUccceed Parent Session. Students hired will be successful students who have at least a 2.5 grade point average. These students will also attend the ISU Summer Orientation trainings from May 23, 2011 until June 3, 2011.

Each parent session will be hosted by the African American Cultural Center staff, Dr. Stephanie Jefferson, Director and Valerie Craig, Coordinator of MAPS. Additionally, invites to other professional staff have been sent, asking them to participate in the program. Currently, Dr. Kenneth Chew from the Counseling Center, Venita Stallings from Student Academic Success Center, Elnora Pitts of the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminal Studies and Dr. Elonda Ervin and other staff from the Career Center will participate in the parent sessions. A short orientation for the professional staff participants will be held on Monday, June 6, 2011 at 4:00pm in the cultural center.

At the end of each parent session, a short survey will be given to each parent to ascertain their comments and opinions of the program and to obtain any suggested changes. Suggestions that will better the program and can be instituted quickly, will be reviewed and incorporated into the remaining parent sessions.

Reporting and Deliverable Schedule

Timeline

May 9 th	Letters sent to parents
May 23-June 3	Trainings for AACC Summer Orientation staff
June 2 nd	Orientation for professional staff volunteers
June 6 th	ISUccceed Parent Sessions begin
July 1 st	Last day of ISUccceed Parent Session

Stakeholders and Management Plan

The African American Cultural Center (AACC) is responsible for the management of the ISUccceed Parent Session. AACC will work with the Office of First Year Programs on the trainings for AACC Summer Orientation staff.

Outcome Assessment

Parents will be surveyed on their thoughts about the program. Suggestions for future programs will be solicited.

ISUccceed Prep - Fall Orientation Program [Preparation]

ISUccceed Prep - Fall Orientation is a voluntary opportunity for African American new freshmen and transfer students to meet with AACC-ISUccceed staff , Graduate Retention Counselors and Undergraduate Academic Mentors and discuss how to be successful at Indiana State University. This orientation program will include sessions that cover: transitioning from high school to college; Financial Aid basics and money management; handling your Sodexo account; ISU resources; successful academic strategies; the benefits of ISUccceed and the role of the Graduate Retention Counselor; engaging with the University and, preparing for college graduation. This day and a half orientation, which will be held prior to the start of classes on Friday, August 19th from 5:00pm until 9:00pm and Saturday, August 20th from 10:00am until 4:00pm and will also include evening discussions and bonding activities led by Undergraduate Academic Mentors.

Work Plan

New African American freshmen and transfer students will be identified and sent a letter about the ISUccceed Prep - Fall Orientation in July. The letter will include a short description of the fall orientation program, the ISUccceed Academic Program and an application. Because ISUccceed Prep is a voluntary program, we will actively recruit among the new freshmen and transfer students both during and following summer orientation and follow up with them to ensure that students sign up and attend. Therefore, students will also receive an information sheet about the program during Summer Orientation and they will be given an opportunity to sign up during orientation. Additionally, a follow up post card will be sent out to the new freshmen and transfer students. In early August, a final information letter will be sent to students who have signed up reminding them of the program and providing any updates.

AACC will develop a schedule of workshops for the ISUccceed Prep Fall Orientation session. Campus units and departments will be contacted and asked to present a workshop for the fall orientation program. Workshops will include: Transitioning from high school to college (new freshmen) and “Getting along at ISU” (transfer students); Financial Aid and basic money management; handling your Sodexo account; ISU resources; Successful academic strategies; the benefits of ISUccceed and the role of the Graduate Retention Counselor. Information from the units and departments will be requested so that information packets/folders can be developed for each of the students. Additionally, AACC will work with Housing to obtain rooms in the residence halls for the students who will be participating in the fall orientation program.

In June, we will create or update job descriptions for Graduate Retention Counselor and Undergraduate Academic Mentor positions and post them with the Career Center and Campus Employment office. All positions will be hourly positions. A Graduate Retention Counselor is a graduate student who will meet with the entering freshmen and transfer students on a bi-weekly basis, share successful tips and strategies and help students problem solve and navigate the university. An Undergraduate Academic Mentor is an upper level undergraduate student who has a least a 3.0 cumulative grade point average. UAMs will act as scholar role models, be

responsible for planning the social and bonding activities and will also assist with the orientation workshops. It is anticipated that hiring for the positions will begin in July. We anticipate that approximately 200 students will participate in ISUcced Prep and that we will need to hire fifteen (15) Graduate Retention Counselors and fifteen (15) Undergraduate Academic Mentors. The GRCs will also work with continuing students who are on academic probation. Dr. Stephanie Jefferson will develop a training program and schedule for the GRCs and UAMs. A two (2) day training will occur the week before classes begin.

Other tasks that will need to be completed for the orientation program include: reserving meeting rooms in HMSU for workshop sessions, creating information folders for program participants and ordering food for the program.

At the end of the program, students will receive a survey to ascertain their thoughts and suggestions for improvement. These surveys will be collected and analyzed by AACC staff.

Reporting and Deliverable Schedule

Timeline

May and June	Identify new freshmen and transfer students. Mail ISUcced letter and application to student's home address.
June 15 th	Develop a schedule of workshops and contact departments for presenters.
June 27 th	Create or update job description for GRC and UAM positions and post
July 18 th	Begin hiring for GRC and UAM positions
	Send reminder post cards and e-mails to students who have signed up for fall orientation program.
July 25 th	Reserve meeting rooms in HMSU for workshop sessions.
August 8 th	Send final letter with information and updates to students and parents Collect handouts from departments for information folders
August 15 th	Create information folders for program participants
August 15 th & 16 th	Training for Graduate Retention Counselors and Undergraduate Academic Mentors
August 19 th	Evening portion of ISUcced Prep will begin at 5pm.
August 20 th	ISUcced Prep full day orientation program from 10am until 5pm.

Stakeholders and Management Plan

The African American Cultural Center (AACC) is responsible for the management of the ISUcced Prep-Fall Orientation program. AACC will work with Residential Life on the housing of the participants and with various departments for the orientation workshops. Students will meet with their academic advisors to select their classes as well as to add or drop classes.

Outcome Assessment

Students who attend the ISUccceed Prep-Fall Orientation will be surveyed prior to the start of the program to ascertain their understanding of the program. They will also be surveyed after the program to see if the orientation met their expectations and needs.

ISUccceed Scholars Program [Preparation and Development]

In addition to the Summer Orientation Parent Session and the ISUccceed Prep Fall Orientation, AACC is developing an academic year program entitled: ISUccceed Scholars Program.

In order to maintain what was learned during the fall orientation, new freshmen and transfer students need ongoing support to learn and develop effective and successful academic strategies that will help them during the first year and throughout their college career. Additionally, these students also need support to successfully engage with the University. According to research, African American low-income, first generation students are less likely to be engaged in the academic and social experiences that foster success in college (Engle and Tinto, 2008). The ISUccceed Scholars Program has been created to provide year long support that will help students stay and graduate from ISU.

The ISUccceed Scholars Program is divided into three parts a) academic mentoring and support; b) student leadership and professional development and; c) academic probation program.

A) Academic mentoring and support. The first component includes intensive, intrusive academic guidance by Graduate Retention Counselors. New students will meet bi-weekly with Graduate Retention Counselors. The role of the GRCs is to help students make a successful social and academic transition to ISU. An additional role of the GRC is to make the university smaller and more personal for the new student. Having a specific individual that can be counted on to answer questions, solve problems or help create a study schedule can help new freshmen and transfer students, particularly low-income, first generation African American students make a quicker adjustment to college and increase their academic integration and self confidence. Research on low-income, first generation students show that academic mentoring and support programs such as what will be provided through the ISUccceed Program can increase retention (Lotkowski, Robbins & Noeth, 2004). This component will also include monthly academic study skills workshops in time management, lecture note-taking, textbook reading and test taking. Additionally, academic mentoring and support will include: undergraduate and graduate level tutors in classes such as biology and chemistry, and other courses in which new freshmen typically do not fare well, and academic grade monitoring.

B) Student leadership and professional development. The second component focuses on providing students with activities and experiences that will allow them to develop skills and abilities that will help them in their lives and professional career. The Mentoring Assistance for Prospective Scholars (MAPS), is a voluntary program, within the African American Cultural

Center, that has been reworked to provide students with the experiences that will help them to develop leadership and professional skills. Students who are accepted into MAPS work with a faculty mentor on proposed, student-led activities that lead to a yearly portfolio and senior capstone project. A complete description of the MAPS program is attached to this document. Programs such as MAPS have been found to increase retention among low-income and first generation African American students (Lotkowski, Robbins & Noeth, 2004). The MAPS program is open to continuing students at the second semester Freshman level to second semester Junior year. Students who are in the program, generally remain until they graduate.

C) Academic Probation component. The ISUccceed Scholars Program will also include the academic probation program that was started in January 2011. In this program, students who are placed on academic probation see a graduate retention counselor to help them meet the terms of their probation contract. This component will include bi-weekly meetings with a GRC and attending academic study skill workshops. The academic probation program will include continuing students who were placed on academic probation at the end of the Spring or Summer 2011 semesters or recently re-admitted students. Continuing the academic probation program will help with retention of continuing students. Having access to a support services such as the academic probation program can help many students get back on track and stay in school until they graduate. Without this program, many students likely would not know where to turn for help and support with their academic difficulties.

Work Plan

New freshmen and transfer students who signed up and participated in the ISUccceed Prep-Fall Orientation will be assigned a Graduate Retention Counselor (GRC) after the fall orientation program and before classes begin. Students who were placed on academic probation will be sent a letter, in July, informing them of the ISUccceed program and given the opportunity to participate. Interested students must fill out an application form and meet with Dr. Jefferson or Ms. Valerie Craig, who will talk with them about the program and expectations. Bi-weekly meetings with GRCs will begin the first week of classes. Academic study skill workshops will begin the third week of classes, following Labor Day (Sept. 6-9).

MAPS will take new applications from students at the beginning of the fall semester and continue until all available slots are filled. This program will begin by the third week of classes.

The academic probation program will begin the first week of classes. Students who are interested in participating and have applied and been interviewed by Dr. Jefferson or Ms. Valerie Craig will be assigned a GRC. Bi-weekly meetings will begin as soon as students are assigned to a GRC.

Reporting and Deliverable Schedule

Timeline

August 20 th	New freshman and transfer students assigned GRC. Students on academic probation also assigned GRC.
August 24 th	First day of classes and the start of bi-weekly meetings
September 6 th	MAPS program begins
September 6 th	Academic study skill workshops begin

Budget

\$165,570 is requested for the implementation of the ISUccceed Program for the 2011-2012 academic year including Summer 2011. This amount includes salaries for the graduate hourlies, undergraduate academic mentors/Summer Orientation staff, MAPS faculty stipends, housing, food and printing/paper and postage costs.

Stakeholders and Management Plan

The African American Cultural Center (AACC) is responsible for the management of the ISUccceed Scholars Program. Students will meet with their academic advisors to select their classes as well as to add or drop classes. Working with the Center for Community Engagement will be an important piece for the development activities in the MAPS program. AACC will collaborate with the Center as we develop the community service and leadership activities that will lead to the capstone project. AACC will also work with Student Academic Success Center and other academic departments with students who are on academic probation as well as the new freshmen and transfer students.

Outcome Assessment

Students will be surveyed on their preparation for college. Attendance will be kept for bi-weekly meetings as well as contact sheets which record the essence of each meeting. Students will be expected to obtain grade reports each month and assessed periodically (3rd, 6th, and 9th week) throughout the semester to ascertain their academic progress. Students will also be surveyed to ascertain if the ISUccceed Prep Fall Orientation workshops aided them throughout the semester and what other information they would have liked to have had. Finally, students will be surveyed at the end of the semester to find out about their knowledge and use of successful academic strategies as well as their thoughts on the program and whether it met their expectations.

The cultural center will also compare the 2011 and 2010 freshmen cohorts to identify any differences in terms of retention and gpa attainment.

Proposed Changes to Mentoring Assistance for Prospective Scholars (MAPS)

Mentors

- Provide faculty stipends. Programs throughout the country offer course buyouts and other incentives to compel faculty to become active mentors in the lives of students. It is felt that MAPS should compensate those who give of their time. Providing faculty stipends would call for some increased responsibility on the part of the mentor. Increased responsibility could mean: more oversight of student activities and agreement to help student develop a senior capstone project.
- Time commitment would not exceed 10 hours per week and MAPS would seek a stipend of \$500.00 per semester for the faculty mentor.
- The creation of a faculty/administration advisory committee to assist in the development of training for our prospective mentors and programming ideas.

Scholars

- Current GPA requirement of a minimum of a 2.3 would convert to a scale, based on year in college:
Level I – 2nd semester Freshmen – at minimum of 2.3 GPA
Level II – Sophomores – a minimum of 2.5 GPA
Level III – Juniors & Seniors – a minimum of 2.75
- The “tier” component of the program would be converted into a student portfolio which would document student activities, both in the program and around campus, which would include campus and community service efforts and leadership activities. These activities could then be documented in the student’s co-curricular transcript, once the program is instituted.
- Juniors will begin to develop a capstone project with the assistance of their faculty mentor. The capstone project would be based on their portfolio. The project will be presented at the end of their senior year in the MAPS program. This project will be a student initiated project but guided and assisted by faculty mentor. Capstone projects should fall into one of the following categories:
 - 1) Law
 - 2) Health

- 3) Community involvement
- 4) Family
- 5) Society & Culture
- 6) African American or other ethnic minority culture (Latino, Native American)
- 7) Technology

ISUccceed Retention Program

Academic Study Skills Specialist Hire

June 6, 2011

Thesis Statement

Indiana State University has increased its commitment to retaining students and helping them to graduate. Goal One of Indiana State University's strategic plan is to increase enrollment and student success and it has 11 initiatives. The African American Cultural Center (AACC) is leading Initiative 11: to develop a comprehensive retention program for the cultural center to assist both students and parents. The overall mission of the initiative is to increase the numbers of African American students who are retained, academically successful, persist until graduation and are on track to graduate within four years. This white paper defends the hiring of a part-time Academic Study Skills Specialist to help accomplish the mission of the initiative.

Introduction/Background

An Academic Study Skills Specialist teaches developmental study skills such as: time management, lecture note-taking, textbook reading and test taking skills, to individual and/or groups of students. Currently, there is no other position of this capacity at ISU. The ISUccceed Academic Study Skills Specialist would work in collaboration with the other support resources on the ISU campus as well as with academic departments.

Previously, the Director of the African American Cultural Center performed these duties for the retention initiative along with her primary duties as director at considerable time expense. However, as the initiative expands to include more students and as the programs for the cultural center increase, it will be necessary to have a specific individual with the appropriate training to teach the academic study skill workshops and classes.

Below are the areas that the position would assume:

1. Teaching academic study skills to groups and individuals and have a special focus on developmental math and science.

This past Spring semester, the ISUccceed program identified several challenges that faced the participants. Among the challenges was the fact that most of them did not have good academic study skills and habits. Additionally, after mid-terms, it was noticed that most of the students, in the program, were failing certain courses, such as Biology 112. The goal of the ISUccceed program is to help students develop these skills. These duties would encompass half of the time for the new position.

2. Develop and lead a class for students on academic probation

ISUccceed began an academic probation component this past semester. Freshmen AOP Students who were on placed on academic probation were required to attend a weekly seminar class geared to help them get off academic probation. With the expansion of the retention program to continuing students (sophomore, junior and senior level students), it is expected that the program will have many more students in need of participating in the academic probation component. These duties would take up the remained of the time for the new position.

Summary

The Academic Study Skills Specialist position would allow the initiative to provide for the needs of the students; expand the program to more students and focus on specific academic areas that would help the students develop positive and successful study strategies.

