

Students on Academic Probation Experiences and Recommendations

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Being placed on academic probation is a clear sign to an institution that a student is struggling academically and not making progress toward their academic goal. Nationally, nearly 25% of all college students will be on academic probation at some point in their college careers and roughly 50% of these probationary students will voluntarily drop out.

The following are the six most prominent themes that emerged from interviews conducted in the spring of 2010 with 20 UWSP students on academic probation. A description of each theme and recommendations are below. A copy of the full thesis can be found at <http://epapers.uwsp.edu/thesis/2010/sage.pdf>.



Academic Success Strategies

Description	Recommendations
<p>Underdeveloped study skills and habits.</p> <p>Underestimating the level of detail, difficulty, depth, or extent of knowledge needed to be successful in college compared to high school or technical school experiences.</p> <p>Underestimating time necessary to devote to studying outside of class to be successful.</p> <p>Prioritizing other activities (clubs, work, social activities, sports, etc.) over academics.</p>	<p><u>Individuals can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Make semantic changes in promotion of support services (i.e. as expectation of use rather than remediation for deficiency). · Refer students to the Tutoring-Learning Center, Math Help Room, Physics and Astronomy Help Room, or Foreign Language lab. · Recognize where students are developmentally. <p><u>Courses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Education 105 (College Study Skills—8 weeks, 1 credit) · Library Resources 101 (Info Lit Skills for College-Level Research) · First Year Seminar · Health Promotion/Wellness 107 (Academic & Career Planning) <p><u>Campus can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Implement an early warning system. · Implement a mandatory intervention program for probationary students.

Advising and Mentoring Experiences

Description	Recommendations
<p>Apprehensive to visit advisor after failing classes (especially after failing advisor's class).</p> <p>Desired more meaningful, personalized, one-on-one interactions with faculty advisors and less emphasis on schedule-checking.</p> <p>Difficulty navigating different advising systems (peer, staff, faculty advisors) when placed on probation.</p>	<p><u>Individuals can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Recognize that students are grateful when advisors get to know them and take the lead in advising appointments. (This is especially true if an instructor has never had the student in class, but is only their advisor.) · Reach out to probationary students for advising meetings when students do not follow through themselves. <p><u>Campus can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Be clear and timely with information when a student's advisor changes. Repeat as needed. · Implement a mandatory intervention program for probationary students.

Institutional and Instructional Challenges

Description	Recommendations
<p>Lack of seat availability in desired courses.</p> <p>Courses perceived as irrelevant to future education or career goals.</p> <p>Simultaneous enrollment in two or more historically-difficult courses.</p> <p>Taking courses long after placement exam.</p> <p>Few evaluations/lack of feedback before drop date.</p> <p>Mismatch of course delivery or evaluation methods to student strengths.</p> <p>Challenges with online courses.</p>	<p><u>Individuals can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Help students understand the value of a liberal education. · Be explicit about the connection of courses to their career or educational goals. · Use a variety of assessment methods. · Provide performance feedback within the first third of the course and provide feedback often throughout the term. · Be realistic with students about the independent nature of on-line courses. They may not be for everyone. · Analyze courses with high D, F, W rate. · Discourage enrollment in many high D, F, W courses and/or warn students in advance about the difficulties of these courses. <p><u>Campus can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Support enrollment management initiatives. · Align curriculum. · Support professional development for faculty regarding advising practices, active learning strategies, and assessment.

Reluctance to Seek Help

Description	Recommendations
<p>Large class sizes are intimidating to ask questions.</p> <p>Instructors and other students remain unfamiliar.</p> <p>Fear of being judged.</p> <p>Sociocultural value of independence.</p>	<p><u>Individuals can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Provide performance feedback within the first third of the course and provide feedback often throughout the term. · Break down barriers by having students visit support services and make semantic changes in promotion of support services (i.e. as an expectation of use rather than a remediation for deficiency). · Create opportunities for interactive learning, both inside and outside of the classroom. <p><u>Campus can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Implement a mandatory intervention program for probationary students. · Provide official mid-term grades.

Knowledge and Use of Support Services

Description	Recommendations
<p>Unaware of services (tutoring, career services, counseling).</p> <p>Unfamiliar with extent of services offered at various offices.</p> <p>Presumptions about how services are delivered.</p>	<p><u>Individuals can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Remind students often about the support services that could benefit them. Point of need is important! · Make semantic changes in promotion of support services (i.e. as expectation of use rather than remediation for deficiency). · Be clear and specific about how the services are delivered. <p><u>Campus Can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Locate support services in prominent locations and near each other to increase referrals.

Interference from Disabilities

Description	Recommendations
<p>Diagnosed disabilities, not taking medication.</p> <p>Diagnosed disabilities, not registered with Disability Services, no accommodations.</p> <p>Undiagnosed and untreated disabilities.</p>	<p><u>Individuals can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Be sensitive to the medical needs of students. · Consider if a student who isn't completing work may have ADD or other disability. · Inquire with Disability Services about instructor responsibilities regarding accommodations. · Inquire with Disability Services about how to speak to a student about a suspected disability. <p><u>Campus can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Foster an inclusive environment regarding disabilities.