TASSR Newsletter

Newsletter of the Tennessee Association for Student Success and Retention

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President's Letter

Dr. Billy Wesson, TASSR President
May 2012

I trust that all of you are well and in good spirits after the completion of the 2011-2012 academic year. May your summer plans be as joyous as many of us rest, travel, etc.

The TASSR Executive Board has been busy planning the 2012 Fall Conference. The conference is in Dickson, TN at the Renaissance Center (24-26 October 2012). The conference theme is **"A New Name...A New Beginning**." Innovative conference sessions have been planned (see newsletter).

You are encouraged to submit your proposal (now) to present at the conference. To date three proposals have been submitted. Also, please consider nominating a colleague and/or a student from your campus for the awards for excellence in Learning Support. The Award Nomination form is on the TASSR website. Finally, please encourage colleagues from outside of the Learning Support area to attend our conference. We hope to have participation from areas such as Advising and Mentoring, First Year Programs and Cohorts, and Student Enrollment and Retention.

The TASSR Executive Board continues to work to bring you a grand conference in 2012.

Your Servant Leader,

Billy Wesson

Billy Wesson

TASSR Conference Format Innovations

Meredith Anne Higgs, Middle Tennessee Alternate Representative

The second annual TASSR Conference will host several innovations designed to maximize participants' conference experience. For example, in response to participants' feedback, a new format of conference presentation will be piloted this year. Speed Conferencing will be tested as a new format of presentation. The TASSR vision of Speed Conferencing has session attendees dividing into small groups that move around a room to visit, in order, several different poster-style mini-presentation stations. The entire session time is evenly divided (roughly 10-12 minutes per station), and a bell marks the time for groups to rotate to the next mini-presentation station. Each room is thematically organized to heighten the amount of information gained in one conference session on a particular theme. The themes selected for this year's TASSR Conference include "Advising and Mentoring," "First Year Programs and Cohorts," and "Student Enrollment and Retention." Each theme has a moderator who is responsible for the Speed Conferencing presenters and timing. Speed Conferencing Moderators include:

- *Advising and Mentoring:* Rosie McCray (rtmccray@southwest.tn.edu)
- *First Year Programs and Cohorts:* Meredith McCoy (mmccoy@columbiastate.edu)
- *Student Enrollment and Retention:* Stacy Onks (onkss@etsu.edu)

If you are interested in being a mini-presenter for a Speed Conferencing session, fill out the form available under "Call for Proposals for 2012 Conference" and forward the completed form to the appropriate Speed Conferencing Moderator. Be sure to include "Speed Conferencing Mini-presentation Proposal" as the subject line of your e-mail.

Please note that these modified directions are ONLY for mini-presentations on the selected themes. All other conference proposals should follow the directions on the form.

Spring into an Enhanced Life

Meredith Anne Higgs, Middle Tennessee Alternate Representative

Student success professionals are a busy, caring group. However, in order to better serve our students, we must first take care of ourselves. This spring, commit to one daily activity that could improve your quality of life. Even small improvements could make a difference.

With all of the beauty that surrounds us each day, revel in simple joys. Some suggestions might include quietly enjoying a glass of iced tea or lemonade (sugar-free if needed); reading an inspirational book or story; making a list of people and things for which you are thankful; or giving back to your community through service. Especially this year with all of the lovely flowers in bloom, be sure to take a moment and just enjoy the beauty of this spring.

Enjoy the spring!

2012 TASSR Conference
"New Steps to Student Success and Retention"
October 24-26
Renaissance Center
Dickson, TN
Call for Proposals still online at
www.tassr.org

Check out the TASSR website (www.tassr.org) for conference information, newsletters, links to webinars, and more. Feel free to suggest some links to websites of interest. Email Daryl Stephens (stephen@etsu.edu) with your ideas.

Annette Williams Wins NADE Award at 2012 Conference

Meredith Anne Higgs, Middle Tennessee Alternate Representative

TASSR congratulates Middle Tennessee State University Assistant Professor Annette Williams. At the 2011 TASSR Conference, Professor Williams was selected as the winner of the TASSR Award for Outstanding Service to Students in Learning Support Programs. Her award tally grew at the 2012 NADE conference. The inaugural Gladys R. Shaw Award for Outstanding Service to Developmental Students was presented to Professor Williams at the Awards Luncheon. Professor Williams is truly a staple in our organization and a beloved teacher. In total, she is credited with several decades of service to TNADE and TASSR and, specifically, with 8 years of experience as the Webmaster and TNADE Newsletter editor.

Congratulations, Annette! TASSR is so very proud of you!

ETSU Moves Learning Support to Labs

Daryl Stephens, ETSU (TASSR Newsletter Editor)

Gone are the days when students took 3-hour DSP courses. New legislation and policies have mandated that TBR universities, while still able to admit and serve students with some skills below college level, can no longer teach credit-bearing developmental courses for those students. Instead of a uniform sequence of courses across the TBR system, each institution was given the flexibility to find a way to give students the tools they need to be successful in their college-level classes.

After long discussions and some rejected pilots, the plan being implemented at East Tennessee State University is that students will take zero-credit-hour labs which meet for two hours a week, all with the course number 1011. Students will pay a $100 fee for each lab. In English, students will take ENGL 1011 concurrently with ENGL 1010, the freshman English composition course. To replace developmental reading, students will take one of three general education core courses (GEOL 1040 Exploring Geology, SOCI 1020 Intro to Sociology, or SPCH 1300, Intro to Communication Studies) paired with a 1011 course (Learning Support in Reading) with the same department rubric as their core course. In the 1011 lab for reading, students will learn strategies for reading textbooks by actually using the textbook for the general education course they are taking. In mathematics, students with ACT math subscores below 17 will take MATH 1011 (Learning Support in Math) first to master the five competencies, then take their general education math course the next semester. Students with ACT math scores of 17 or 18 will have the option of taking 1011 separately or concurrently with a section of MATH 1530 (Probability and Statistics-Noncalculus), which is the general education math course required for about 90% of ETSU students.

The Office of Information Technology is developing a screen in Self-Service Banner so that instructors can easily check off which learning support competencies students have mastered in their 1011 classes. Pilots of these courses in spring 2012 seem to show that students do as well as in a traditional DSPM class, but show more success than before in English.

Austin Peay Program Sets Up Students to PASS

Kacie Hutson, Title III Advising Coordinator, PASS Instructor, Center for Teaching and Learning, Austin Peay State University

More than ever, colleges and universities are being charged with increasing student retention and graduation rates. This is especially a challenge in the case of improving the rate of success for at-risk students. Research shows that a significant percentage of students entering college are underprepared for the expected level of work; as a result, they often do not persist due to a lack of skills to cope with unexpected challenges and failure to integrate into the institution (Tinto, 1993, 1998).

In November 2008, the Austin Peay Center for Teaching and Learning was awarded a two million dollar U.S. Department of Education Title III grant. One initiative of the grant was to establish an academic strengthening program for at-risk students to help improve their persistence and retention rates. The PASS 0900 (Promoting Academic Student Success) course was created to specifically address the needs of probationary students and students returning from an academic suspension. The PASS course provides instruction in study skills, encourages awareness and utilization of campus resources, and assists students in the development and articulation of their academic and career goals. According to Tinto (1993), "institutions and programs should continually assess their actions with an eye toward improvement." In light of this principle and in an attempt to expand and improve the current academic strengthening course, a pilot version of the course was created and implemented in the spring semester of 2012. This pilot course provides our at-risk students with a comprehensive academic success program that incorporates an additional study and academic coaching session as part of the curriculum.

Academic Coaching and Guided Study Sessions are two new components for the pilot course. Coaching Sessions are framed to support the student individually and encourage academic and personal development. Coaching focuses on self reflection, academic planning, academic goal setting, and individual support for accomplishing improvement (Robinson and Gahagan, 2010). Students have regularly scheduled meetings with their academic coach throughout the semester to supplement the course. Guided study sessions occur once a week and are mandatory attendance for students in the program. Two tutors are provided for each class giving the students opportunities to have specialized tutoring with their homework. Students have also given feedback on the sessions. One student wrote in the course evaluations, "Guided study sessions ensure that I have one hour of study time each week. I know I can count on that one hour even if other things happen throughout the week."

The pilot course was conducted in three PASS sections; two sections specifically for students coming back from suspension or who successfully appealed their suspension and one section for probationary freshmen who self selected into the pilot program. The other eight PASS sections were conducted with the same syllabus, content and organization as in previous semesters. Students were asked to complete an evaluation survey in the pilot sections. Overwhelmingly positive responses were reported on the structure of the course including effectiveness and helpfulness of the Academic Coaching sessions and guided study sessions. Students appreciated the personal support as well as the group support. Many students mentioned how helpful it was to know other students had the same issues or challenges. Pass rates and retention rates for the pilot sections will be tracked at the end of the semester to determine if the program had a significant positive outcome. Currently, the program coordinators are trying to incorporate elements of the pilot into the existing course structure in order to offer extra support for the students in the PASS program.

Resources:

Robinson, C. & Gahagan, J. (2010). *Coaching Students to Academic Success and Engagement on Campus*. About Campus, September-October. DOI: 10.1002/abc.20032.

Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college* (2nd Ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V. (1998). *Colleges as communities: Taking research on student persistence seriously.* The Review of Higher Education 21(2): 167-177.

Learning Support Progress at Roane State

Ben King and Mike Hill, Roane State Community College

Roane State Community College has now piloted a full year of its redesigned Learning Support Math at the main campus in Harriman. The redesigned course will be implemented across Roane State's service area for the summer 2012 semester.

Using Pearson's MyLabsPlus, the redesigned course allows students to work through five modules independently, so that material which previously had taken two semesters to cover can now be handled in a single semester or less. Students must meet in the Learning Support lab for their designated class time with the instructor who serves as a facilitator. The instructors are assisted by Learning Center tutors.

Although there were some initial concerns that the self-paced software program would decrease the amount of interaction between faculty and students, the supplemental instruction that students receive in the lab with their professors and tutors has actually increased the interaction. Students feel more comfortable asking questions in the lab environment because they do not have to speak in front of an entire class or interrupt a lecture. The self-paced model has also been shown to increase student motivation in that by working diligently through the software inside and outside of class, they can master the materials much more quickly than in a traditional setting where they are limited to the progress of the class as a whole.

Clearly, the redesign of writing and reading presents a very different challenge from the redesign of math. These skills are not as adaptable to self-paced software or a computer lab classroom in that students progress through writing and reading course materials via written and oral feedback from the instructor as they work on comprehension, content development, grammar, organization, and revision.

Roane State has, however, completed a small scale pilot with two sections of Learning Support Reading on the main campus this semester, with plans to implement the redesign for all reading courses on the Harriman campus and the Oak Ridge branch campus for the fall. The pilot for Learning Support Writing is scheduled for fall 2012, with full implementation projected for fall 2013.

The major concern for the reading and writing redesign is how to comply with the A-100 Guidelines' directive that students must be allowed to move through a learning support class independently of others enrolled in the course, while simultaneously preserving the close interaction between faculty and students that might be achieved in traditional small group settings and individual conferences or tutoring sessions. It is hoped that a balance between the two can be struck, with one possibility being to treat the lab meetings as an "inverted classroom," devoted to addressing individual student concerns and holding consultations about particular assignments. Lectures about the material will be provided either through handouts embedded in Desire2Learn or through short videos which can be hosted through iTunes U or YouTube. Those students who are not involved in discussion groups or individual conferences with the faculty member will continue to use the lab meeting to work in either MyReadingLab or MyWritingLab.

Bits and Pieces…

- Learning Support directors from across the TBR system will be meeting in July. If you have any ideas, questions, or recommendations you would like to see addressed at the system level, please share them with your institution's learning support director before then.
- Websites with data that might be of interest:
  - http://www.completecollege.org/state_data/
  - http://www.gettingpastgo.org
  - http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/02/28/10228.pdf -- A report called "Using State Policies to Ensure Effective Assessment and Placement in Remedial Education"

MTSU Out Front in Redesigned Gen Ed Math Courses

David Otts, University Studies Department, University College, MTSU

The following article published online by *Inside Higher Ed* summarizes a report from Complete College America (CCA) that proposes alternative to traditional remediation sequence in US colleges and universities. The highlighted word <u>report</u> provides a link to the CCA full report.

In the report, CCA offers 4 steps states should take immediately to prevent students from quitting higher education before graduation. The steps are

1. Strengthen high school preparation.
2. Start students in college-level courses with built-in, co-requisite support.
3. Embed needed academic help in multiple gateway courses.
4. Encourage students to enter programs of study when they first enroll.

MTSU has, since 2006, offered prescribed versions of general education mathematics courses that seem to implement the second step. Students have the option to take either on-ground or online versions of prescribed courses. The on-ground sections meet for an additional hour of class time per week, and both options have mandatory online homework components, optional on-ground lab support, provide additional background material, and use the same textbook, same course requirements, outcomes, and take the common final as the non-prescribed sections. Students who successfully complete prescribed sections earn the same 3 hours of credit as those who complete non-prescribed sections. At Middle, this has proven to be a cost effective way to help students get a successful start on their general education courses.

New Data on Remediation, and Proposed Fixes

April 18, 2012 - 3:00am

Complete College America today released a <u>report</u> that diagnoses the failure of the current national approach to remedial education. The study, which includes self-reported data from 31 states, found that students who place into remediation are unlikely to eventually earn a degree or even complete associated college-level courses. Across all sectors, the report found that 30 percent of students who complete remediation don't even attempt credit-bearing "gateway" courses within two years.

Among the fixes proposed by the group, which is at the forefront of the college completion movement, is the report's recommendation that states and colleges end traditional remediation and instead use "co-requisite models." Under this approach, colleges place remedial students into "redesigned first-year, full-credit courses with co-requisite built-in support, just-in-time tutoring, self-paced computer labs with required attendance and the like."

Read more:
http://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2012/04/18/new-data-remediation-and-proposed-fixes#ixzz1syRauUTM

Inside Higher Ed

TASSR Executive Board 2011-2012

The next board meeting is Friday, September 7. If you have an item that should receive board consideration, please contact your area representative or President Wesson.

President: **Billy Wesson** Jackson State Community College 2046 North Parkway Jackson, TN 38301 731-424-3520 bwesson@jscc.edu	President Elect: **Karen Siska** Columbia State Community College 104 Claude Yates Dr. Franklin, TN 37064 615-790-5654 siska@columbiastate.edu	Past President: **Karen Siska** Columbia State Community College 104 Claude Yates Dr. Franklin, TN 37064 615-790-5654 siska@columbiastate.edu
Treasurer: **Vivian Alley** P.O. Box 376 Middle Tennessee State University Murfreesboro, TN 37132 615-898-5557 vivian.alley@mtsu.edu	Secretary: **David Otts** Middle Tennessee State University P.O. Box 386 Murfreesboro, TN 37132 615-898-2020 david.otts@mtsu.edu	Newsletter Editor: **Daryl Stephens** East Tennessee State University P.O. Box 70663 Johnson City, TN 37614 423-439-6981 stephen@etsu.edu
East Tennessee Area Representative: **Kelly Ormsby** Cleveland State Community College 3208 Montview Drive Chattanooga, TN 37411 (423) 653-7119 prof_ormsby@yahoo.com	East Representative-Elect: **Stacy Onks** East Tennessee State University P.O. Box 70590 Johnson City, TN 37614 423-439-6942 onkss@etsu.edu	Middle Tennessee Area Representative: **Ricky Hardison** Columbia State Community College 1665 Hampshire Pike Columbia, TN 38401 931-540-2717 hardison@columbiastate.edu
Middle Representative-Elect: **Meredith Anne Higgs** Middle Tennessee State University P.O. Box 16 Murfreesboro, TN 37132 615-898-2550 ma.higgs@mtsu.edu	West Tennessee Area Representative: **Letitia Hudlow** Jackson State Community College 2046 North Parkway Jackson, TN 38301 731-424-3520 x365 lhudlow@jscc.edu	West Representative-Elect: **Rosie McCray** Southwest Tennessee Community College 5983 Macon Cove Memphis, TN 38134 901-333-4268 rtmccray@southwest.tn.edu
Nominations Chairperson: **Audrey Lukula** Tennessee State University 3500 John A. Merritt Blvd. Nashville, TN 3709-1561 615-963-5595 alukula@tnstate.edu	Awards Chairperson: **Meredeth McCoy** Columbia State Community College 104 Claude Yates Dr. Franklin, TN 37064 931-540-2698 mmccoy@columbiastate.edu	Political Liaison: **Larry Glover** Nashville State Community College 120 White Bridge Road Nashville, TN 37209 larry.glover@nscc.edu
Cultural Diversity Chairperson: **Jane Asamani** Tennessee State University 3500 John A. Merritt Blvd. Nashville, TN 3709-1561 615-963-5573 jasamani@tnstate.edu	Archivist: **Barbara Kannard** Tennessee State University P. O. Box 9555 3500 John A. Merritt Blvd. Nashville, TN 37209-1561 615-963-7419 bkannard@tnstate.edu	Membership Chairperson: **Tammy Borren** Columbia State Community College 104 Claude Yates Drive Franklin, TN 37064 615-790-4417 borren@columbiastate.edu

Nominations Still Needed

TASSR Award for Outstanding Service to Students in Learning Support Programs

This award recognizes long-term contribution of time and energy to students in Learning Support Programs by a TASSR member. Criteria for evaluation include the following: (a) nominee will have spent approximately half or more of their time serving learning support students through teaching and/or administration for at least five years; (b) evaluation will include both the nominee's record of service and recognition by others; (c) nominee must be a member of TASSR at the time of nomination.

The application should include the following: (1) a letter of nomination summarizing the contributions by the nominee to learning support students (limit two pages); (2) the nominee's resume reflecting the length of service and the diverse ways the nominee has served learning support students. Additional contributions that indirectly affect students, such as leading workshops, conference presentations, and articles in education journals and newsletters could also be included. The resume should contain a record of local, state, or national recognition of the nominee's service to learning support students (limit ten pages); (3) one to three letters (limit three letters and one page each) of support from individual students, advisors, administrators, faculty teaching learning support classes, or colleagues outside learning support programs.

TASSR Award to an Outstanding Alumnus of a Learning Support Program

This award recognizes a student who has been in a learning support program and who has distinguished him/herself in other areas of life. Criteria for evaluation include the following: (a) the nominee must have completed at least two learning support courses or participated in at least two of the following support program activities: TRIO Upward Bound, TRIO Student Support Services, high school-to-college bridge program, special admissions program, enrollment in learning support classes (e.g., math, writing, learning strategies, reading); (b) the nominee must have outstanding accomplishments outside the classroom.

The application should include the following: (1) a letter of nomination that includes specific learning support classes taken and/or learning support programs in which the person participated and the individual's out-of-class accomplishments (limit two pages); (b) one or two letters of endorsement from college faculty, including learning support faculty (limit one page each); (c) nominee's resume summary (limit two pages); (d) one or two letters from current work supervisor and/or community leaders (limit one page each).

Submit portfolios for either award to:
Meredeth McCoy
Columbia State Community College
104 Claude Yates Drive
Franklin, TN 37064
931-540-2698
mmccoy@columbiastate.edu