Training Program Plan

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AET570 – Professional Development in Adult Education

April 20, 2015

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As the company has decided to change the duties of some of its enrollment representatives to play a more involved role in their students’ academic lives, a new division has been created to meet the needs of the students seeking advice from these new academic advisors and counselors. At first, there will only be a retraining of current employees to teach them best practices of academic advising and counselling. Later in the program, it may become necessary to hire new employees into these positions.

Whereas enrollment representatives focus on recruitment and enrollment of new and former students, academic advisors would be more focused on the academic health of current students by assisting them in their path toward success and making progress toward their degree. If a change is needed to make them more successful, an advisor should be able to help them make that change. The representatives that will be retrained are already highly-skilled and talented, as well as successful and dedicated to the cause of education for all. Students have been seeking out enrollment representatives for assistance with academic issues because they have built rapport and strong relationships with them already. That trust is worth building on and nurturing into a full-fledged, functioning division within the company.

The goals of the training program are clear and functional: each representative selected to change divisions is to complete the training program to prepare them for assisting students in the process of decision-making and plotting career paths using the programs available through the school. Once the learners complete the program, they should be equipped to help guide students through their programs to their graduation date and even set them up with an enrollment representative that specializes in higher levels of degree programs should the student wish to continue their education. The ultimate goal and objective of the program is to be able to successfully navigate the problem solving process as an outsider – the person not experiencing the problem – and act as a positive and encouraging force in each student’s life. The phrase “Jack/Jill of all trades” is not inappropriate for an academic advisor or counselor.

**Job & Task Analysis**

Enrollment representatives spend their days calling prospective students in an attempt to set up appointments to visit the school. Once the student sets the appointment and comes to the school, the representative meets with them and discusses the programs, benefits of being a student, and financial aid options. The student will often get a cost estimate based on life factors and make a decision on whether or not they would like to enroll. If they enroll, the enrollment representative is responsible for maintaining a rapport and relationship with that student until their start date and for several keeps or even quarters beyond their initial meeting, while still recruiting new students. This often adds to the stress the representatives are under because the number of tasks they are required to complete are already so numerous.

**Documents & Artifacts**

Student surveys are excellent resources for identifying student needs. In recent surveys – all anonymously collected – many students mentioned the desire to have an advisor to help them address life issues or work-life-school balance issues in real and legitimate ways that are practical and have relevance to their lives. A significant number of resources can be built up over a short period of time with a little bit of research and effort, and these resources can mean the difference between a student being able to stay in school because they have a sitter for their child and having to drop their classes.

**Group Sessions**

Discussions with both the enrollment representative team and the student advisory council may also shine some light on this issue and show where the gaps and needs are. It is obvious that there needs to be an academic advisory team, but the question is what the team needs to do, where they need to pick up the slack, where are the gaps, et cetera. Students do not always know where to look for answers to their questions when they need something to help them stay in school, and representatives often have good ideas to help people, but do not know who needs the information the most. An advisory team is the best answer to connect these two pieces.

**Budget**

The tables included contain estimates with conservative numbers based on assumptions and observations made of a currently operational school. They are figured based on a 12 month calendar and exclude most existing personnel. Since personnel are going to be shifted from one division to a new one, it is not necessary to actually budget for new salaries for representatives, advisors, managers, directors, or support staff. The income sources for these costs will not change from the current sources: the parent company, including the buying and selling of shares of stock; donations of goods and services from local business partners; student tuition, loans, and out of pocket costs; and grants and government funding such as Title IV funding. The income estimates are including all sources, and they are not prorated in any way to discount the number of representatives being moved to the new division.

**Budget Concerns - Annually**

*Note: Considering only the new division being created, not existing divisions.*

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Amount** | **Comments** |
| **Personnel** | $233,000 | Annual salaries for four advisors at $33,000, one manager at $45,000, and one director at $56,000. |
| **Fringe benefits** | $28,000 | Medical insurance, company match on 401K, et cetera. |
| **External staff** | $27,000 | Janitorial staff. |
| **Materials** | $10,000 | Training materials (Clark, 2010). |
| **Technical support** | $43,000 | Already provided through systems support technician on campus (salary). |
| **Equipment** | $25,000 | Computers, desks, printers, et cetera. |
| **Travel** | $6,000 | Gasoline, hotel, car rentals, et cetera – possibly two corporate retreats per year. |
| **Facilities** | $500,000 | Rent, electricity, water, et cetera. |
| **Supplies** | $10,000 | Office supplies – pens, paper, binders, slicks, et cetera. |
| **Miscellaneous** | $7,000 | Miscellaneous needs, i.e. food for late evenings. |

**Total:** $889,000

**Income Estimates – Annually**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Amount** | **Comments** |
| **Parent company** | $1,072,930 | Portion from buying and selling of shares of stock and other sources. |
| **Donations** | $6,000 | Goods and discounts from local business partners. |
| **Participant fees** | $12,375,000 | Student tuition: student loans and out of pocket costs. |
| **Grants** | $721,900 | Title IV funding and grants (United States Department of Education, n.d.). |

**Total:** $14,175,830

**Qualifications and Number of Positions**

The academic advisory team will have a small number of positions to start with but may grow at a later date. To begin with, the team will have four advisors that will be cross-trained from enrollment representative positions. To be considered for academic advisory positions, the representatives must have a bachelor’s degree and two years experience in customer service (Chemeketa Community College, 2015). A degree in an education-related or management-related field would be preferred, but a bachelor’s degree in any field will qualify a representative for the position. Education and experience may be substituted where appropriate.

**Available and Needed Resources**

While most of the representatives that would be interested in the positions have the education and/or the experience required, most of them will also need to be trained in the rules of compliance for counselors and in best practices for student relations beyond initial enrollment. Training materials will need to be written or acquired in order to foster these skills in the representatives, and a database will need to be created – either virtual or hardcopy – to contain the resources needed for the students: bus routes, various phone numbers for social and community services, et cetera. There is no need to have separate rooms or spaces for these advisors; they will continue to operate under recruitment’s banner.

**Performance Evaluations**

As these representatives will be taken from the recruitment team, the director and manager of recruitment will be responsible for the evaluation of their performance. During the pilot program of this division, regional recruitment and operational management will be performing evaluations to ensure that the division is worth the investment of time and money. The dean of academic affairs will also have a vested interest in the performance of the division as their performance has a direct affect on the campus staying open. Ultimately, when the division is established and the program has been put through its paces, the director of recruitment will be responsible for the evaluation of the team’s performance as they will continue to operate under that division’s rules, procedures, and regulations. Student performance and persistence will be the most important factors in their evaluations.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Campus director | Keep the campus running and keep it running smoothly through explicit and implicit direction. | Increase in graduation rates; refocus faculty on educating, rather than administrative and personal issues. |
| Dean of academic affairs | Address students’ academic needs at an administrative level. | Lighten the workload in addressing students’ academic and work-life-school balance concerns and issues. |
| Director and manager of recruitment | Support representatives in keeping the census numbers up. | If no manager on campus – good way to increase team in order to get the numbers required to hire a manager. If there is a manager, that manager can take the management and coaching duties. |
| Students | To graduate with degrees. | Students have been asking for assistance with issues and a separate group would fit that need – they already support this. |
| Faculty | Support and facilitate learning to ensure success of students. | Takes the pressure off – no more absence calls and pushing students about GPAs – this is no longer just their responsibility. |
| Recruitment representatives | Recruit students to keep census up and keep the campus open and running. | Lighten their workload and lets them focus on building the census on campus with new students. |

**Stakeholders and Goals**

*Communication plan: the logo, slogan, and fact sheet are in a separate file.*

**Benefits of the Program**

Adding the academic advisory team provides an additional outlet for students and frees up recruiting representatives from their advisory duties, allowing them to focus on their enrollment responsibilities once their students sit in class and make it to their start dates. This team will allow those representatives that truly excel at advisory duties to focus on that part of the job and serve students in the best way they possibly can. It will provide centralized support for students and keep current, returning, and long-term students from getting pushed to the side in favor of new students.

**Promotional Channels and Materials**

Representatives will obviously need to be notified that these positions will be available. E-mails about the job postings will be sent to the recruitment teams and discussions will take place during team meetings every week. Students will also need to be made aware of the new resource available to them once the new advisors are trained and ready to start working with students. Posters on the corkboards in the halls should be printed and posted. The fact sheet should also be printed off and added to all orientation packets. At least one academic advisor should also be required to attend orientation and registration each quarter.

**Instructional Practices:**

As with the current enrollment representative training program, many of the practices will be “homespun”. Materials will be kept in-house and passed between representatives and advisors. Self-training and peer training are common practices and will continue as they build strength and self reliance in the individual and rapport among the team.

**Individuals Responsible for Evaluation**

The effectiveness of the program will be evaluated by the upper management of the campus, including the campus director, director of recruitment, manager of recruitment, dean of academic affairs, and associate dean of academic affairs. It would be the most responsible thing for these people to request opinions from the other directors on campus – director of finance, director of career services, and registrar – to get a complete picture and make an accurate judgment of the situation. Their evaluation will go to the regional directors of operations and recruitment to allow them the opportunity to judge the situation for themselves. It is unlikely that this program will be piloted at one campus at a time, so the regional directors having evaluations from multiple campuses will allow them to have a better and more holistic view of the situation and the program’s successes and areas for improvement.

**Purpose of the Evaluation and How the Results Have a Positive Impact**

The evaluation is intended to serve as an instructional tool in and of itself and add to the skills of the advisors on the team. The evaluation can be used to refine the training materials, identify areas of improvement and additional gaps in the training, and find out whether or not more advisors are needed to meet the needs of students. Evaluation is a teaching tool used to refine the program and the team to fit the campus and the students, creating a more positive, nurturing learning environment for students of all ages, races, genders, and economic backgrounds.

**Metrics, Methods, Techniques**

There are a number of different metrics and methods that can be used to track the impact and evaluate the effectiveness of the team. Student persistence – students staying in classes beyond their first and second quarters, and most importantly through to graduation – is the most notable and obvious of quantifiable data points. Number of contacts each advisor makes with their students would be an additional data point to track to check effectiveness. Some of the qualitative datasets would be student opinions through collecting surveys and checking in with them at the end of every quarter. Faculty should also have the opportunity to make comments on the advisory team and share their observations.

Resources

Chemeketa Community College. (2015, April 6). *Academic Advising Specialist*. Retrieved from HigherEdJobs.com: https://www.higheredjobs.com/search/details.cfm?JobCode=176045304&Title=Academi c%20Advising%20Specialist

Clark, D. (2010, June 23). *Estimating costs and time in instructional design.* Retrieved from Performance Juxtaposition: http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/costs.html

United States Department of Education. (n.d.). *Federal Pell Grants | Federal Student Aid.* Retrieved from Federal Student Aid: https://studentaid.ed.gov/types/grants- scholarships/pell