Student Success Initiative

Credit Accumulation Initiative

Sponsor: Emanuel Pollack, VPUA

Project Team Lead: Tom Moss

Project Management Plan

Prepared By: Tom Moss
Date: 4/28/2015

Content

Purpose

The Credit Accumulation Initiative aims to promote students attempting and earning at least fifteen credit hours per semester. Students will be strongly encouraged to attempt and earn fifteen credit hours each semester, starting with their first to stay on track and finish on time. Advisors will work with students to establish fifteen-hour semesters—or, in some cases, an average of 15 hours per semesters--as the norm. Parents and students will be provided information about the financial implications of not taking fifteen hours each semester.

Scope

The Credit Accumulation initiative will promote this agenda through marketing and training of key constituents including advisors, faculty, staff, and students. We do not seek a mandatory requirement as some colleges do. We do not seek a policy exacting consequences from students for not complying beyond those described in our marketing campaign (i.e., lost wages from not being in the workforce for one or two extra years, extra cost of tuition, increased debt load, etc.) We understand that some degrees (Engineering and Architecture, notably) require up to 128 credit hours and would therefore require *more* than fifteen credit hours per semester or summer session to finish in four years.. We also understand that a modest number of students have extenuating personal circumstances that make attempting fifteen hours per semester untenable.

Project Outcomes

Research and data collecting – the working group will research and document the benefits of a credit accumulation campaign. Methods will include interviews with campus stakeholders, focus groups, data analysis, etc.

White paper – The Initiative will result in a white paper which will present and explicate the research to support the initiative, the rationale for the policy. The paper will be distributed broadly and made available on the Initiative Web Site.

Marketing Campaign – A marketing campaign will be developed to encourage students to attempt and earn 15 credit hours each semester.
- Campaign Name – A branded name will be created to support communication about the initiative.
- Presentations – A presentation will be prepared for Orientation sessions explaining the value of attempting at least fifteen credit hours.
- Banners – Campus banners will be purchased through marketing to promote this campaign during Orientation
- Brochures/flyers – Materials will be created for stakeholders to share with students, family and staff, etc.
- Training – UARC will develop a training module for advisors and support unit personnel regarding credit accumulation.
- Web Site – A web site will be created to provide information to students, parents, faculty and staff regarding the initiative. Misc. Marketing Opportunities – Other opportunities will arise and the team will take advantage of those as appropriate.

Assessment plan – Assessment of the initiative will include data analysis of credit-taking rates over time. In addition, surveys and focus groups about advisor and support personnel attitudes will be administered.

Project Management Outcomes

The work group will work with the Project Manager to develop the following documents and project management tools:

- Project Management Plan (this document)
- Project Work Breakdown Structure
- Project Workplan,
- Project Log,
- Meeting documents,
- Regular Status reports,
- End-of-Project Report

Assumptions

- We assume the explicit support of the project sponsor and the Office of Project Management for Student Success Initiatives.
- We assume the project participants and identified stakeholders have the time to accommodate this project in addition to their daily workload.
- We assume that regular status reports about the progress of the work will be shared with the campus.
- We assume that there will be general agreement among many that initiative is worthwhile. We do expect that there will be some resistance from colleagues across campus who believe that students who take fewer credit hours will perform better than those who take more credit hours, which is an position that does not hold up when considering the data.
- Also, the data show that students who earn 15 or more credit hours tend to do better than those who earn less. We recognize that some students are unable to earn fifteen credit hours however due to remedial math and writing placement. We are eager to work with colleagues in other SSI working groups who are attempting to reform remedial coursework, which will then have an impact on our work.
- If issues arise that are beyond the authority of the working group, we will refer them to the sponsor.

Assessment Plan

At the simplest level, we seek to increase the number of students who attempt and earn fifteen hours each semester, starting with their first at UIC. Data analysis consistent with what OIR has already provided to our working group could be continued.

We further seek to ensure that the campus culture is one that expects students to take fifteen credit hours, except in relatively rare circumstances in which a student's personal situation does not permit it. We would seek methods to measure campus climate.

Monitoring and Control

The working group will continue to meet regularly during the initial rollout of the initiative campaign. As issues arise, they will be discussed in the working group meeting and forwarded to the appropriate unit or individual to address. If issues arise that are beyond the authority of the working group, we will refer them to the sponsor.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role/Assigned Parties	List of Responsibilities
Provost and Vice Chancellor ● Barbara Henley, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs ● Eric Gislason, Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost	● Ultimate authority and responsibility for the project scope, timeline, and budget ● Provide high level leadership for the entirety of the project and its needs/goals ● Assure availability of essential project resources
Student Success Initiative Implementation Management Team ● Linda Deanna, Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of Students ● Emanuel Pollack, Interim Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs ● Tom Moss, Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs ● Negar Mansourian-Hadavi, Project Manager	● Provide guidelines and support for the initiative and act as the liaison for the leadership, the project teams, and the campus ● Provide support for executive-level communications ● Assist in issue management by removing obstacles inhibiting the Project Team or its stakeholders from forward progress ● Ensure project objectives are being met, in collaboration with the Project Lead and/or Project Manager
Project Manager (s) ● Negar Mansourian-Hadavi, Project Manager	● Manage overall scope and schedule for the Initiative, including regular reporting and communication ● Work closely with the Management Team and the Project Leads to ensure the objectives are being met and issues are addressed ● Assure alignment of project steps for achieving the project outcomes ● Dedicates time for initial training and continues to provide support for streamlining the process ● Mitigate issues and risks ● Own project management plan, and project documentation, including providing general support and project management framework to Project Lead ● Make sure there are clear communication paths between all identified project roles ● Updates the Students Success Initiative's website with regular "status reports" of all projects.
Project Sponsor(s) ● Emanuel Pollack, VPUA	● Provides necessary support to ensure the progress of the project ● Assures availability of essential resources for the project ● Receives updates on the Project Team meetings and participate as needed

	● Responsible for executive-level communication of the project as applicable

Project Team
    ● Tom Moss
    ● Eileen Doran
    ● Lillye Hart
    ● Elsa Soto
    ● Philip Vasquez
    ● Joey Volpe
	● Carry out and responsible for daily project tasks
	● Create/contribute to project deliverables as applicable
	● Contribute to creation of project guidelines and procedures as well as regular project updates
	● Serve as first line of defense in issue and risk mitigation
	● Serve as liaisons and project advocate to all project stakeholders

Project Lead ● Tom Moss	● Coordinates Project Team meetings and share updates ● Serves as central point of communication for the project, with the sponsors, the team, and the project manager. ● Oversees day-to-day operations of the Project Team ● Co-manages key project documentation with Project Manager ● Ensures project objectives are being met, in collaboration with the Management Team and/or Project Manager ● Mitigate issues & risks; address problems as they arise, reaching out to available resources, including the project sponsor. ● Support and execute project communications plan

Communication Plan

The following chart exhibits how the entire target audiences will be communicated using the tools, channels and roles that have been defined.

Tool	Purpose	Audience	Owner	Distributor/Channel	Frequency
Project Status Update	Provide status on project	Project Sponsor(s) / Management Team/ Project Team	Project Lead	Project Lead / Email	Once per month
Actions and issues follow-up	Facilitate completing tasks and resolving issues	All Project Participants	Project Manager/ Project Lead	Project Lead and or Project Manager / Email & Phone Calls	As needed
The Initiative Status Report	A roll-up of the individual status reports designated to communicate Student Success Initiative progress status with the campus	The UIC Campus	Management Team / Project Manager	Campus mass email/ Student Success Initiative website	At least once per term

Change Process

Any proposed changes to the project described here should be submitted in writing to the Student Success Initiative management team.