

Final Report for Next Chapter Grant

“Expanding and Improving Student Services at WSU Rochester”

Craig Johnson and Gar Kellom May 31, 2013

Narrative Report

Activities Conducted During the Project

1. The first activity conducted during the project was a meeting of all the staff involved in both Rochester and Winona. This meeting took place in Winona on September 18th 2012 and involved the following staff:
 - Karen Dunbar – Education Recruitment Advising Coordinator – WSU-R – ASF
 - Trent Dernbach – Student Success Career Advisor – WSU-R – ASF
 - Joyce Walker- Recruitment and Retention Specialist – ASF
 - Kristi Ziegler – Campus Services Coordinator – WSU-R – ASF
 - Leslie Albers – Academic Advisor/Counselor – Winona – ASF
 - Kate Parsi – Academic Advisor/Tutoring Coordinator – Winona – ASF
 - Kim Zeiher – Academic Advisor/Student Leadership Coordinator – Winona – ASF
 - Craig Johnson and Gar Kellom

The agenda included: introductions, grant background/process, possible data collection (in collaboration with Diane Dingfelder’s Adult Learning Next Chapter Grant project), improving student services for student parents in the short term and through grant writing, and improving student services for First Generation, Low Income Students and Students with disabilities through grant writing and other funding sources. We agreed that next steps were to collaborate on the Noel-Levitz surveys, explore possible grant writing and begin planning for the second and final meeting of the two staffs in the spring in Rochester.

2. Craig Johnson and Gar Kellom attended a meeting with the organizers of the Adult Learner Inventory Focused Institution (ALFI) Toolkit assessments for the Adult Learner Next Chapter grant. It was determined that the Noel-Levitz Adult Learner Inventory (ALI) online student survey would allow results to be segregated by campus. However, it became clear that a separate Institutional Self-Assessment Survey (ISAS) would be needed for the Rochester campus and Craig Johnson volunteered to support that survey with funds from WSU-Rochester. The data collection process was begun and the ALI and ISAS surveys were administered by the Adult Learner Next Chapter Grant team.
3. A unique opportunity to write a grant proposal for both Winona and Rochester emerged unexpectedly from Great Lakes Community Investments and a smaller task team of staff worked diligently to prepare this grant proposal and submit it. The idea was to set up

college readiness academies in Rochester, Winona and towns in between to increase high school student preparedness for college. While this grant was ultimately unsuccessful it led to a new appreciation of the possibilities for collaboration between our two campuses and greater familiarity with Great Lakes as a possible funding source for improving student services in Rochester.

4. Another grant opportunity emerged to write a second Great Lakes grant application for college students and the same grant team that produced the first Great Lakes grant went to work to submit this application, building on what was learned during the first attempt. Kim Zeiher chaired that effort and involved staff in a process that builds ownership, creativity and prepared the way for implementation should that grant be awarded to WSU. We have not received word if we will receive that grant but do know that the competition is high. This process did help clarify to what extent the Winona and Rochester campuses can collaborate on serving first generation, low income students and students of color. That is the focus of this grant application.
5. Craig Johnson arranged for a report of ALFI Toolkit results for Rochester adult students from the assessments administered by Amy Meyer and Jamie Grothⁱ. We are including the data on student services in this report from 303 respondents of the 899 adult learners surveyed (34% response rate). Some key findings were:

- Demographics:

Gender: About 2/3 of our adult learners are female

Age: Rochester adult learners are generally older with about half age 34+

Ethnicity: Both campuses lack diversity in their adult learner population, with Winona campus showing more – given that Rochester is a much more diverse community than Winona, we need to explore this issue further

Marital Status: About half of our adult learners are married, more so in Rochester

Dependents: About half of our adult learners have dependents; age of dependents is higher on the Rochester campus

Class Load: Rochester adult learners are more likely to attend school part-time (60%) vs. Winona (37%)

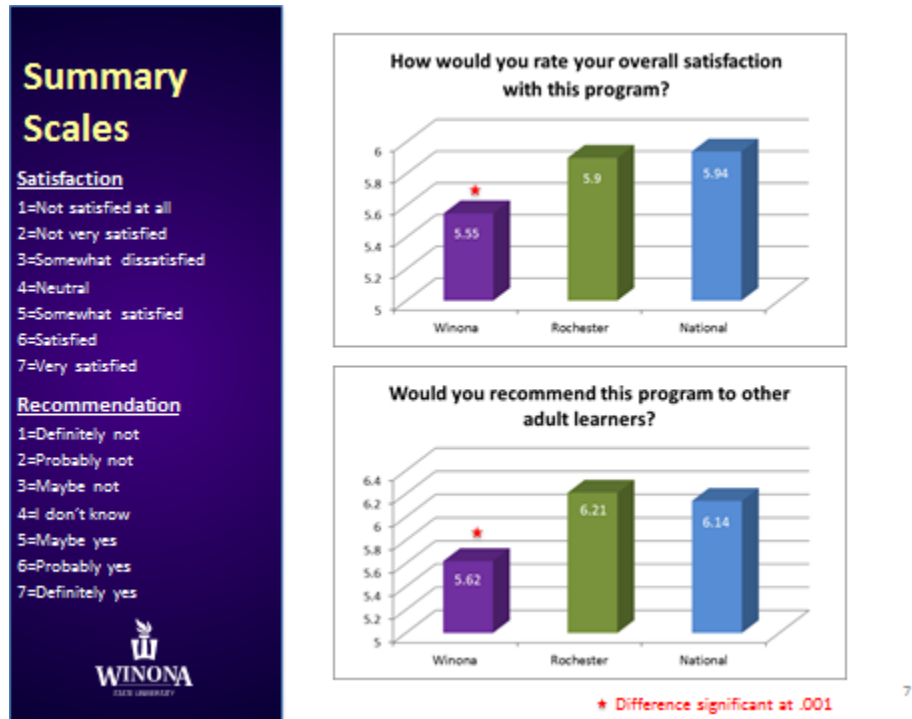
Employment: Rochester adult learners tend to juggle school with full-time workload of 31+ hours per week (58%)

Prior Education: Large percentage of adult learners earned an associate's degree: Rochester: 61%, Winona: 42%

Tuition Reimbursement: Rochester adult learners are twice as likely to have employer tuition reimbursement: Rochester (35%) vs. Winona (18%)ⁱⁱ

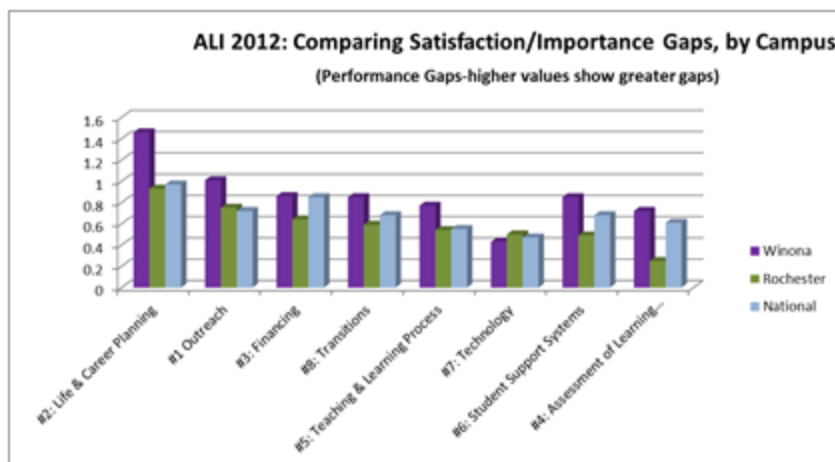
- The overall satisfaction of Rochester adult students with their WSU support services is comparable to national statistics and above adult student satisfaction

with services in Winona. We can explore this issue further to determine why there is a higher level of satisfaction on the Rochester campus than in Winona.



- Analysis of the importance of student services and the satisfaction with student services for our adult learners, and the gap between importance and satisfaction also shows that this gap is smaller at WSU-Rochester than either the national norm or on the Winona Campus. We can explore this issue further to determine why there is a smaller gap on the Rochester campus than in Winona.

Satisfaction/Importance Gaps

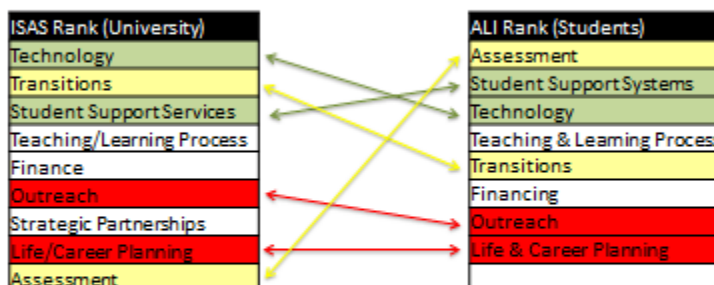


Gap=Difference between student importance rank and satisfaction rank on a 7 point scale

*National group's means are based on 21,939 respondents

- Impressions of adult learners compared to views of WSU administration/staff/faculty who completed this survey assessment also shows that student services is ranked either second or third as a strength of WSU.ⁱⁱⁱ

Rochester Campus: University/Student Comparisons



- Summary findings:
 - Strengths: Technology & Student Support Services
 - Areas needing attention: Life/Career Planning & Outreach
 - Students ranked WSU Rochester higher on Assessment
 - Students ranked WSU Rochester lower on Transitions

- How to leverage the fact that Student Support Services is cited as a strength.

Leveraging Strengths: Rochester Support Services

Scale/Item	Rochester Campus		
	Importance	Satisfaction / SD	Performance Gap
STUDENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS	5.84	5.35 / 1.04	0.49
11. This institution offers strategies to help me cope with the multiple pressures of home, work, and my studies.	5.65	4.80 / 1.52	0.85
19. I receive timely responses to my requests for help and information.	6.52	5.80 / 1.23	0.72
22. I receive the help I need to develop my academic skills, including reading, writing, and math.	5.98	5.57 / 1.18	0.41
28. This institution initiates many opportunities for me to connect with other adult learners.	5.16	5.19 / 1.46	-0.03
31. This institution makes many support services available at convenient times and places.	6.00	5.52 / 1.45	0.48
34. This institution provides "one-stop shopping" for most student support services.	5.76	5.24 / 1.46	0.52

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- Survey conclusions: The data showing that most Rochester adult learners are older, married, with dependents and working indicates that we have an opportunity to leverage the already strong student services in Rochester with expanded student parent services. While there were other conclusions in the report that could be addressed under the umbrella of student services the limit of this grant was to focus on those services connected with Student Support Services, the Student Parent Program or expanded populations we could serve if we received funding from Great Lakes Investments.
- We may also want to consider a few more areas where changes could be made to improve the adult student experience even further on the Rochester Campus through support services. Having student data could help generate some momentum. Here are a few specific items identified by Noel-Levitz as challenges. Could Student Services drive change in any of these areas?
 1. My program allows me to pace my studies to fit my life and work schedules.
 33. This institution explains what is needed for me to complete my program here.
 2. Sufficient course offerings within my program of study are available each term.
 10. I have a clear understanding of what I'm expected to learn in my classes.
 17. My instructors provide timely feedback about my academic progress.
 15. Advisors are knowledgeable about requirements for courses and programs of interest to me.
 26. I am able to choose course delivery that fits my life circumstances.
 39. Information is available online to help me understand what I need to do next in my program of study.
 40. I receive the help I need to make decisions about courses and programs that interest me.

44. I can receive credit for learning derived from my previous life and work experiences.

48. This item was most important to students in terms of our campus-specific questions but with a moderate gap: I have convenient and timely access to in-person student services and resources on campus.

51.and 52. These were also campus specific questions: Student services staff are available during the evenings on weekdays. Student services staff are available on weekends.

6. The second meeting of the two staffs from Rochester and Winona occurred on April 16th on the Rochester campus with the following people in attendance.

- Karen Dunbar – Education Recruitment Advising Coordinator – WSU-R – ASF
- Trent Dernbach – Student Success Career Advisor – WSU-R – ASF
- Kristi Ziegler – Campus Services Coordinator – WSU-R – ASF
- Deb Hammel – Assistant Director of the Young Student Parent Initiative.
- Deb Ferguson – Administrative Assistant in Student Support Services.
- Leslie Albers – Academic Advisor/Counselor – Winona – ASF
- Kate Parsi – Academic Advisor/Tutoring Coordinator – Winona – ASF
- Kim Zeiher – Academic Advisor/Student Leadership Coordinator – Winona – ASF
- Craig Johnson and Gar Kellom

The agenda for the meeting was the following:

Next Chapter Grant Meeting #2: Improving Student Services in Rochester

- i. Welcome to WSU Rochester (Craig) followed by dinner and team building
- ii. Summary of work to date (Craig and Gar)
 - Adult Learner Focused Inventory data collection
 - Young Student Parent Initiative (regular Tuesday presence at UWR)
 - Pilot SSS presence in Rochester on an as-needed basis
 - Great Lakes Community Investments grant proposal for improving high school ACT Scores of students between Rochester and Winona. Submitted and includes some staffing opportunities
- iii. Current College Great Lakes grant application. Kim Zeiher.
 - Discussion of options for additional staffing in Rochester
 - Recommendation for what to include in the application

- Submission due date: March 14.
- iv. Future grant application opportunities:
- Second Round of MDH grant for student parents (announcement on U.S. Department of Health website expected any day).
 - Future TRiO Student Support Services grant application. Significant changes? (writing begins next year.)
- v. Thanks to everyone and safe travels home.

How We Met the Goals Set Forth in the Proposal

Goal One: To work closely with RCTC and our two WSU campuses to develop a grant renewal application to the MN Department of Health to expand student services for student parents in Rochester.

Work on this goal has gone very well. At the second meeting of the two campuses it became clear that the student parent program has been very successful at attracting Rochester students on a weekly basis to programs that are offered. One of the most successful is the Tuesday Parent Lunch that has a regular core group of 6-8 plus 2 staff who meet. Comments were shared like “I couldn’t make it at WSUR if it weren’t for the relationships I have developed at these lunches” and “I am ready to schedule my classes around the lunch times next year because they are critically important to my success in Rochester.”

The hiring of a student parent to run the program in Rochester has been successful from the beginning and is another one of the bright spots. The regularity of meetings and availability and the connections made for student parents with resources at WSUR and in the community are key. Data is now being analyzed by the MDH from surveys completed by over a dozen students in Rochester and nearly 50 in Winona. Preliminary findings show that the WSU grant is one of the top performers of the 10 student parent centers in MN. Funding for the current two year program runs out on August 31, 2013.^{iv}

Elizabeth Gardner, coordinator of the MDH program that funds our student parent center, has been consistently complimentary about the WSU program and very optimistic about refunding. The Request for Proposals has been issued from the Pregnancy Assistance Fund in Washington and Elizabeth has authored a request for re-funding for the MDH. Student Parent Centers in MN have been asked to submit Commitment Letters to the MDH (ours has been signed and submitted by VP Connie Gores) communicating that WSU is willing to continue the program it has had if refunding is granted to MN.

As one of the 18 states that received funding in the first round and one of the states requesting the funding for 32 states in this round, Minnesota has a high probability of being refunded. Due to sequestration cuts, there will be 25% less funding for programs but the MDH remains committed to keeping all programs who request refunding – although with 25% less budget. WSU has already created

a budget with the one-quarter reduction but it includes continuing and strengthening the Rochester presence. Current plans are to continue the luncheon meetings, expand them to a second lunch focused on student fathers as well as offer office hours for students to meet with staff before and after the lunches. That will mean that two WSU staff will be in Rochester each week as well as the student employee who will be hired to do the events there. This is clearly a successful goal completion.

Goal Two: To develop a component improving student support services in Rochester as part of our renewal application for Student Support Services TRIO funds to the Department of Education.

When we began this grant process a year ago, we thought this might be the most promising approach. We had many impassioned requests for Student Support Services staff in Rochester, particularly from nursing students who had felt a keen lack of student services when they moved to Rochester for their third and fourth years. This was even voiced in their exit interviews as seniors. We obtained approval for a pilot presence of Student Support Services staff on an as-needed basis in Rochester and that was requested a few times this year. The needs of nursing students, however, have been successfully addressed by improvements in the Nursing program that allow student who need more services from SSS to stay in Winona. While there have been some visits by SS staff there does not seem to be a need for a more permanent presence. We discussed having this still open as an option, however.

As the Winona SS staff begins to write a renewal application (due in Fall 2014) serious consideration for a Rochester presence is being considered. The lack of federal funding due to sequestration has made the possibility of increased funding bleak and at least a 5% reduction in funding likely. To get refunded at all is now the goal. Expanding services to Rochester through SSS is less likely.

Although this possibility was not even contemplated when we wrote this next chapter grant application, we became aware of another possibility to improve services by applying to Great Lakes Community Investments - College Readiness Program. At first we were optimistic about setting up this program for high school students in Rochester to improve ACT scores and college enrollment. That grant would have provided academies for improving college enrollment of low income, first generation high school students. That proposal was not funded but was an important “warm-up” another grant application opportunity through Great Lakes Community Investments for first generation, low income students and students of color.

Kim Zeiher gave an update on the status of that grant at the second meeting and how that would impact Winona and Rochester. We won't know about that until August but if successful it would fund an expansion of the number of students that Student Support Services would be able to serve. It would expand Orientation Classes, supplemental advising, workshops, tutoring and most aspects of SSS. As the possibility still exists to serve Rochester students from Winona on an as needed basis, this would also improve services for Rochester.

Goals Not Yet Achieved, Lessons Learned, Reasons Any Goals Were Not Achieved

Goal Three: To develop a proposal in the WSU budget development process of the new administration to address these needs.

With the changes in leadership on the Cabinet level there has not been an opportunity to apply for additional budget funds to improve services. Discussions have been good and with the president's "Hopes and Dreams" process and in his May 10th report it is stated clearly that "Enhancing the Role of WSU-Rochester" is a concept category that has emerged from the analysis and is a priority.

As this process continues this summer sorting and analyzing the data as well as putting a process in place to interconnect planning, budgeting and assessment, this topic may stay on the list and achieve priority. It may be possible for other initiative to be funded in the days ahead but there does not currently appear to be a way to request additional funding at this time. We adjourn our work confident in at least one thing: we have kept the importance of focusing on the improvement of Rochester and Winona collaboration visible in the Next Chapter Grant Process.

Financial Report

Stipends

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|---|---------|
| • 4 @ \$250 for Rochester Staff for Fall Meeting | \$1,000 |
| • 3 @ \$250 for Winona Staff for Fall Meeting | \$750 |
| • 3 @ \$250 for Rochester Staff for Spring Meeting | \$750 |
| • 4 @\$250 for Winona Staff for Spring Meeting | \$1,250 |
| • Project Director – (to be paid after report is filed) | \$5,000 |

Meals and Travel

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| • Travel by Rochester Staff to Winona for Fall Meeting | 0 |
| • Travel by Winona Staff to Rochester for Spring Meeting | \$48.32 |
| • Dinner for Fall Meeting for 10 | \$133.89 |
| • Dinner for Spring Meeting for 10 | \$120.79 |

Duplication, Printing and Supplies

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| • Printing of grant applications | 0 |
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Total	\$9,052.96
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Maximus Approved	\$9,932*
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Projected Surplus	\$879.04
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*The original request of \$14,424 was reduced to o\$9,932 by Vice President Gores sand Dean Johnson

ⁱ Amy Meyer PowerPoint April 23, 2013, “Adult Learning Focused Institution: 2012 Assessment Report”

ⁱⁱ Noel Levitz, Adult learner Inventory” Rochester Campus vs National November 2012

ⁱⁱⁱ “ALFI Report, Identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses to ALFI Principles Comparing results between ALI and ISAS.”

^{iv} Additional assessment data is available in the SSS Directors office from the MDH Assessment Reports.