



Divisional Strategic Planning Brief – Social Science and PE
5/31/2017

College Goal: Learning Assured

Campus Objective: 4. Continue to address, review and improve low-performing programs and Courses

BACKGROUND

ECO2013 (Macroeconomics) is a Social Sciences front-door General Education course that has historically maintained a student success rate below 70% across all campuses at Valencia College, including East (65.5% historically for years 2005 – 2015). High Risk data suggested the need for targeted intervention in this course to foster greater student success and lower student withdrawal rates. Moreover, we sought to develop an intervention model for future high risk courses in the Social Sciences.

INTERVENTIONS

Targeted Conversations with Professors

Economics faculty convened in early Fall 2016 in order to examine student success data for ECO2013 (Macroeconomics) and ECO2023 (Microeconomics), including looking at the data by modality and part of term. Data suggested that, for ECO 2013, success rates had historically been below 70%. A deeper analysis by the SSPE Dean revealed three part-time economics professors had student success rates that were very low (30-39%) longitudinally, across a number of semesters, and extending across all sections of ECO 2013 they had taught. These longitudinal and cross delivery method data suggested possible teaching issues that could negatively impact student learning thus, necessitating intervention.

The data provided the opportunity to have targeted conversations with these three part-time professors. Each professor reviewed their success data with the Economics Chair and the SSPE Dean and were offered mentorship under the guidance of a fulltime economics faculty member for one year. Two of the three opted out of the mentoring offer and chose to teach on other campuses. The third professor accepted a mentorship plan and was paired with a full time professor.

This mentorship included a review of the part time professor's course, the syllabus, online content, attendance policies, communication with students, assessment techniques and instruments, overall course expectations and constant review by the mentoring faculty to ensure rigor. The part-time professor taught two sections of ECO 2013 in the Fall 2016 semester, and produced a student success rate of 76%.

Tutoring/Student Engagement

Full time Economics professors chose to have some of their student engagement hours in the tutoring center in building 4. One hour of their face to face office hours was held there each week, each professor on different days of the week and at different times, in order to accommodate the maximum

number of students. Both students and the professors reported positive experiences from this strategy.

Learning Support

Full time professors made an increased effort to make the part-time professors and students aware of the existing resources provided by the Academic Success Center, with a special emphasis put on onsite Economics Tutoring Services and availability of the Smarthinking tutoring program. Additionally, students and faculty had expressed frustration with the text and online program MindTap. For ECO 2013 we changed to a different book and the McGraw Hill program Connect and provided training for professors with the online program MyEcon Lab.

RESULTS

ECO 2013

Macroeconomics was chosen as the focus for these interventions, as it enrolls the most students (815) and is the “front door” course for General Education requirements.

Macroeconomics (ECO 2013) appeared on the high risk list each academic year since 2005-06. The success rate over the last five academic years was 65.6%. The 2015-16 success rate was just 62.9%. Following the implementation of the above interventions, the Fall 2016 student success rate rose to 71.7%, lifting this course off the high risk list. We also decreased the withdrawal rate from 13.3% (Fall 2015) to 10.6% (Fall 2016). These positive outcomes extended across all three modalities offered.

ECO 2023

Microeconomics (ECO 2023) was not the main focus for these interventions, as it enrolls fewer students than its Macro counterpart (355 vs. 815) and is not a front-door Social Sciences General Education course. Still, this course had a history of high risk, appearing on the high risk list 6 times since 2005-06, including a success rate of 62.9% in 2015-16.

In Fall 2016, the success rate rose to 67.6%, suggesting that the targeted interventions for ECO 2013 contributed to student success in other economics courses.

Intervention Model

Given the success of our work in ECO2013, we have now developed the following model for high risk interventions in Social Sciences courses:

- Conglomerated Tableau data analysis of student success and withdrawal rates by the SSPE Dean, Chairs, and discipline faculty.
- Individualized review of Tableau Data on student success by faculty and the SSPE Dean with each individual discipline faculty member, full and part-time.
- Identification of faculty who consistently, year to year and by same course, have success rates significantly lower than 70%.
- Close mentoring of these same faculty for one-year by the SSPE Dean and Discipline Chair.
- Full-time faculty holding some face-to-face office hours weekly in the vicinity of the Tutoring Center.
- Promotion and communication of tutoring services, both onsite and online by each Economics professor in their respective classes.
- Feedback to the faculty on the success of the intervention and collection of suggestions and ideas on how to improve the process.

NEXT STEPS

Based on the success of this plan, we will implement the same set of interventions for ECO 2023, beginning in the Fall 2017 semester. We will develop an appropriate strategy to address another high risk course, POS 2041, as well. We will continue our successful strategies in ECO2013 on an ongoing basis.