Office of Student Academic Support Proposal

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College of Education

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Office of Student Academic Support
Executive Summary

Goals

• Ensure that all incoming CED students, including those most at risk, successfully achieve academic goals.

Strategies

• Provide centralized, accessible, and enriched tutoring in CED courses especially those with a high-risk of failure.
• Provide targeted services to at-risk students.
• Provide skills-building workshops to upgrade all students in academic development.
• Create an Office of Student Academic Support which links students to support service providers to insure communication and coordination of services.

Outcomes and Assessment

• CED students will be retained at higher rates.
• CED Students will indicate knowledge of available services and satisfaction with services.
• CED Students' sense of belonging to the College of Education will be enhanced.

The Office of Student Academic Support will assess whether student use of and satisfaction with specific services is related to:

• GPA
• Retention
• Successful progress toward timely graduation

Resources
• Tutorial Areas (Rooms within the CED)
• Administrative Assistant.
• Faculty Tutors for CED Courses.
• Student Tutors for CED Courses.
• Supplies/Promotional items

Timeline
• Implementation of Office of Student Academic Support in Spring 2015.
• Evaluation of the Office of Student Academic Support services will be completed in Fall 2016.

Operational Cost:
To be determined.

Office of Student Academic Support Proposal

Mission and Organizational Structure of the Proposed Office of Student Academic Support

We propose that the College of Education (CED) establishes an Office of Student Academic Support. The Mission of the Office of Student Academic Support is to facilitate student success in academic progress through centralized and enhanced tutoring for CED courses with high-risk of failure, with additional academic development coaching and co-curricular support programs. The goal is to support students in developing their academic skills to result in persistence and timely graduation. There are at least 3 objectives to ensuring that students are retained and achieve timely progress to graduation. These include:

1) Early identification of at-risk students so that targeted academic support services can be made available.
2) Coordination of a comprehensive academic support program.
3) Guiding and informing all CED students towards the support services that will be provided through the Office of Student Academic Support.

Description of the Organizational Structure of the Office of Student Academic Support

The *Assistant Dean of Student Academic Support* will:
- Coordinate the targeted delivery of academic support services to supervise the assessment of how such services meet the needs of the students found at-risk.
- Collect and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data and report the data annually.
- Use the results of the data analysis to make changes/updates to the Student Academic Support services.
- Interact with the Student Affairs Sector at the CED.
- Generate opportunities for students to engage in meaningful research.
- Maintain the linkages in the Office of Student Academic Support so that students are guided to available services in a timely fashion, before it is too late to help them, as well as strategic engagement of faculty and staff in directing students to a centralized academic support facility.
- Ensure timely reporting on the assessment of the success of targeted academic support services to meet the needs of CED's students.

The *Administrative Assistant* of the Office of Student Academic Support will:

- Coordinate Faculty Tutoring schedule.
- Coordinate Peer Tutoring schedule.
- Manage a database of student attendance.

- Promote academic support services through outreach and awareness events.
- Participate in New Student Orientation meetings.
- Coordinate skills-based workshop schedule.
- Assist with developing faculty and peer tutoring guidelines.

Rationale

At the present time, there are no academic support services offered to our CED students. Establishing the Office of Student Academic Support at the CED, to which students find worthwhile and can connect to, will help them become more engaged in educationally purposeful activities, persist, and achieve their educational objectives. The proposed Office of Student Academic Support is in line with the philosophy behind Qatar University's First Year Experience initiative, which aims at maximizing student chances of success by building their direction and identity, and developing long-term strategies in their first year at Qatar University.

Once students start college, their impressions of institutional quality, willingness to attend the institution again, and overall satisfaction are precursors of educational attainment and other dimensions of student success (Hossler, Schmit, & Vesper 1999; Strauss & Volkwein 2002), and are proxies for social integration (Tinto, 1993). A key factor in student success is the extent to which they take part in educationally effective practices. In their landmark publication, Principles of Good Practice for Undergraduate Education, Chickering and Gamson (1987) underscored seven categories of effective educational practices that directly influence student learning and the quality of their educational experiences, some of which are student-faculty contact, cooperation among students, and active learning. The more students engage in these kinds of activities, the more they learn and the more likely they are to persist and graduate from college.

Student success is also linked with a keen desire for student and personal development outcomes that confer benefits on individuals and society. These include becoming proficient in writing, speaking, critical thinking, scientific literacy, and quantitative skills and more highly developed levels of personal functioning represented by self-awareness, confidence, self-worth, social competence, and sense of purpose. Such outcomes are also in line with those of the CED mission and conceptual framework, Qatar University mission, and the Human Development pillar of the Qatar National Vision 2030.

Student engagement is a strong indicator of student success that has received considerable attention in recent years (Kuh 2001, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini 2005). A substantial body of research indicates that once students start college, a key factor to whether they will survive and thrive in college is the extent to which students take part in educationally effective activities. Student engagement represents two critical features. The first is the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities. The second component of student engagement is how the institution deploys its resources and organizes the other learning opportunities and support services to induce students to participate in activities that lead to the experiences and desired outcomes such as persistence, satisfaction, learning, and graduation (Kuh,

2001). Academic support services have been credited with helping students learn effective study skills and improve retention of course material. The adaptive skills fostered in such services are prerequisite behaviors that have direct and indirect influences on persistence and graduation. Furthermore, when academic support services are designed to meet student-learning needs for particular courses, student persistence is enhanced (Tinto, 2004).

Student satisfaction with the institution is an important but sometimes overlooked variable in determining the quality of the undergraduate experience. Satisfaction represents a sense that the student feels he or she belongs at, and is loyal to, the institution and is highly correlated with engagement, persistence, and academic performance (NSSE, 2005). Student satisfaction seems to have a stronger effect on grades than vice versa. Moreover, the more interaction students have with their peers and with faculty, the more satisfied they are overall with the college experience (Kuh, 2003). Effective partnerships among those who have the most contact with students—faculty and student affairs professionals—are important to creating a campus culture that supports student success (Kuh et al., 2005). Institutions that have established a sense of shared responsibility for student success are characterized by a high degree of respect and collaboration among community members and have made student success important to everyone. Participating in academic support and programs was found to contribute to a stronger sense of belonging among Latinos in college (Hurtado & Ponjuan 2005).

Student-faculty interaction beyond the classroom can also enhance students' sense of satisfaction with the College of Education and Qatar University. Such an interaction was noted to be positively correlated with personal growth in the areas of leadership, social activism, and intellectual self-esteem (Astin 1993), and academic as well as social self-concept (Astin & Kent 1983; Pascarella et al. 1987; Smart & Pascarella 1986). These interactions include the hours per week spent talking with faculty outside of class, assisting faculty in teaching a class, and working on a professor's research project. Moreover, when students are required to take responsibility for activities that require daily decisions and tasks, they become invested in the activity and more committed to the college and their studies. Faculty, peers, and administrators who have routine contact with students must persuade or otherwise induce them to get involved with one or more of these kinds of activities or people (i.e., faculty, peer tutor, or staff members). For example, upper division students at the University of Michigan who were involved in the undergraduate research program in their first year of college described continued and meaningful contact with their faculty mentors (Kuh & Umbach, 2005).

Evaluation Measures for the Office of Student Academic Support Components

   A. Relationship between student use of Academic Services Center support services and students' academic performance:

The Office of Student Academic Support will assess whether student use of and satisfaction with academic support services are related to:

• Type of Program
• GPA
• Retention
• Successful progress toward timely graduation

The three types of services proposed by the Office of Student Academic Support will be:
1. Faculty Tutoring
2. Peer Tutoring
3. Skills-based Workshops

B. Relationship between Student Engagement in the Office of Student Academic Support services/events and Student Academic Performance, Student Retention, Student Progress to Graduation.

• The Office of Student Academic Support will work to empower students to acquire skills needed for academic success.

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