Program Review - Work Experience

Prepared by: Lisa Greer

What are the strengths of your area?: The Work Experience/Intership program has many strengths:

1. Participation in WEXP courses is required or identified as a restricted elective in thirty three certificate/degree areas.
2. An average of 250 students, per semester, participate at community learning sites.
3. During the spring 2014 semester, students participating in WEXP courses volunteered a total of 6112 hours to non-profit agencies.
4. Provides a link for the college to community employers.
5. Students have the chance to "try out" career opportunities before selecting certain career paths or majors.

What improvements are needed?: The program utilizes primarily full-time instructors taking on WEXP courses as overload, along with a few adjunct instructors. This structure limits the number of students that are able to enroll. Access to enrollment for summer sessions would offer additional learning opportunities for students. The CWEE courses generally have high success rates. Because the nature of work experience courses are outside the standard parameters of academic departments.

Describe any external opportunities or challenges.: Because CWEE courses utilizes primarily full-time instructors taking on WEXP courses as overload, along with a few adjunct instructors, access to enrollment each semester is limited. In order to increase opportunities for student enrollment/participation summer session courses are needed. Lack of administrative approval for offering WEXP courses in the summer leads to hardships for students that have opportunities for participation during the summer months. External opportunities for student participation exist on a year round basis. Community programs/employers request students on a year round basis.

Overall Outcome Achievement: Student Survey result indicate that students find the course to be beneficial toward developing career knowledge and self-awareness. Students have also indicated an interest in enrollment opportunities during the summer months.

Changes based on outcome achievement: Based on the identified outcome achievement, faculty would like WEXP sections to be offered in the summer session.

Outcome cycle evaluation: SLOs are evaluated every semester as part of the overall student evaluation. All instructors participating in WEXP courses are involved. Work Experience is unique in that its courses are part of many degree and certificate requirements, yet as a program it does not award certificates or degrees. Because of this uniqueness, traditional program evaluation methods don’t fit. Assessment information related to student success rates can be found in the Document section. In the majority of sections, the rate is eighty percent or above.

Action: Increase Enrollment Opportunities

Increase WEXP opportunities for CTE students by offering WEXP courses in summer school.

Implementation Timeline: 2015 - 2016

Start Date: 06/01/2015
Completion Date: 08/01/2015
Status: New Action

Identify related course/program outcomes: Demonstrate working knowledge of the services offered to clients or customers by employees in the agency or business. Develop self-awareness and interpersonal skills appropriate to student role within agency or business.

Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position): Lisa Greer

Rationale (With supporting data): WEXP courses were last offered in the summer of 2010. Since then, there have been an increasing number of student requests to have it offered again. Often experiences in the summer offer unique learning opportunities. One example of this would be the student’s ability to devote longer blocks of time at their placement site during the summer session. During a Fall or Spring semester, Work Experience hours are often fit into already full student schedules. Because of this, students are often forced to devote only a few hours a week to their placement site. Student schedules tend to be less stressful during the summer session, allowing students to devote more time to their site. These longer blocks of time enable greater focused learning and experience for students.

Another unique opportunity that can only be achieved through year-round work experience is long term employer-student relationships. Employers in the community often use Work Experience as a way to observe and train potential future employees. Long-term employer-student relationships turn into jobs. Employers benefit greatly by being able to hire employees they know to be adequately prepared and well-suited for the position. When Work Experience is offered year-round, students have the opportunity to stay on with a particular agency/organization without having to accommodate the 3-month gap between Fall and Spring semesters, leading to these vital relationships being built.