

The Florida College STOA: Executive Summary

August 6, 2007



The Origin

In the spring of 2004 the college began development of its Quality Enhancement Plan. Several useful ideas were considered, but the process soon focused on a long standing issue: increasing students' ownership of the educational process. To this end the college developed the **STOA: Success through Tutoring, Orientation and Advising**. The acronym was adopted because of the academic emphasis in the word 'stoa,' the name of the ancient Greek porch that has become nearly synonymous with the philosophers' 'love of wisdom.'

The Premise

Students who understand and value a liberal arts education will be motivated to take responsibility for their own education. This increased responsibility and engagement in the educational process will result in greater effort and success.

The Theme

Creating motivated, self-directed learners through a multifaceted approach: **1.** increasing students' understanding of the value of a liberal arts education in orientation, **2.** helping students plan for the acquisition of a liberal arts education through quality advising, **3.** providing the tutoring in general study skills necessary for students to acquire that education, and **4.** supporting these efforts by the development of faculty and staff.

The Goals

- *Overall:* Students will become self-motivated learners.
- *Orientation:* From their first contact with the college students will increase in their understanding and appreciation of the value of a liberal arts education.
- *Advising:* Students will be taught to be active and responsible in planning their own education.
- *Tutoring:* Students will develop the academic skills needed to acquire a liberal arts education.
- *Faculty/staff development:* Everyone with student contact will understand and value a liberal arts education and be trained to help students in understanding, planning and acquiring an education.

The Major Interventions

- Directors of the summer camps, which are one of the principle recruiting tools of the college, will be encouraged to emphasize the nature and value of a liberal arts education.
- The college web site will be redesigned to emphasize the importance of a liberal arts education and of students taking personal responsibility for their own education.
- Orientation will increase emphasis on the value of a liberal arts education and self-motivation.
- A student advisory board will guide the implementation of the STOA.
- A common reading program for entering students will emphasize the importance of a liberal arts education and encourage personal responsibility in the educational process.
- A newly formed Advising Office will support faculty advisors in "advising as teaching."
- Students will write an essay on the nature and value of a liberal arts education prior to registration each semester.
- Faculty advisors will establish email contact with entering advisees during the summer.
- During orientation faculty advisors will meet with their entering advisees in a group session prior to the individual advising sessions.
- The college will employ a Supplemental Instruction program in critical first year courses in order to teach general study skills as well as providing tutoring in those specific subjects.
- Students who are on probation in their second semester will be assigned special faculty/staff mentors in addition to their regular faculty advisors.
- A development committee will conduct regular training of faculty and staff in STOA activities.

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