

KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY
Academics with Attitude: Building the Foundation for Student Success

Executive Summary: *Academics with Attitude: Building the Foundation for Student Success* (AWA) is a focused five-year Quality Enhancement Plan at Kentucky State University for academically at-risk students to foster attitudes and habits that lead to greater academic success. It is a plan designed to meet a pressing, well-documented need and fits KSU institutional mission. Both a land-grant and liberal studies institution, KSU is also one of the nation's 110 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). As such, KSU focuses on the traditional role of the HBCU in providing educational opportunities to under-represented and under-served populations. Over 80 percent of KSU's new freshmen require remediation in at least one traditional subject area: reading, writing, or mathematics; nearly half require substantial developmental education in all three. Through comprehensive assessment, evaluation, and group discussions, the University community determined that to improve student learning, it must transform the attitudes and habits of incoming students which hinder academic performance.

To thrive at the University, a student must have the proper attitude toward academics and will acquire it through the AWA program. A student with proper "attitude" understands the importance of punctuality, class attendance and timely completion of assignments; devotes a reasonable amount of time and effort to studying; and reads assignments and discusses ideas seriously with others, while exhibiting decorum and respect for opposing points of view. A student with "attitude" belongs to a community of learners who collectively seek to develop academic confidence through continuous improvement in their ability to read, write, and perform mathematical tasks. A student with "attitude" shows a commitment to complete college demonstrates academic achievement, and views faculty, support staff, and administrators as reasonable, caring individuals who desire the success of students.

Through an emphasis on collaboration among faculty, academic and student support services, the QEP personalizes the college experience for the first-year students in need of extensive developmental coursework, personal growth and development, and acclimation to the academic environment. It promotes holistic student development into the second year as well while continuing to relate activities and services to classroom performance. This occurs through a series of interrelated strategies:

- the formation of learning communities, based upon cohorts of 15 students block-scheduled as a group for two-years of course work and who will live together in the residence halls
- an intrusive advising process woven into the developmental and gateway courses.
- a "team" of faculty and support staff assigned to each cohort of students
- a cycle of assessments of student attitudes and performance, initiated early in the semester, followed by rapid faculty-staff "team" interventions when problems are detected
- a developmental curriculum that integrates its subject matter with that of several "gateway" courses the students will later encounter
- A developmental curriculum that integrates innovative course design

Comprehensive assessments and feedback mechanisms provide evaluations of progress and success in achieving each of the QEP's educational goals and overall purpose. Topic selection, its development, and its endorsement involved an inclusive cross-section of the campus community. Such broad-based involvement will continue throughout the QEP's implementation from 2009 to 2014.

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