Student Support Newsletter
Quarterly Update ~ January 2020

January 2020
Welcome to the first newsletter of the College STAR Student Support Network! We are excited to connect with all of you and share what's happening this quarter with our new national network!

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Quarterly Briefing
In October, we discussed the importance of regular opportunities to get together. We are ready to get that process started, so to keep our momentum going, please join in for our first quarter meeting via
Working Group Updates

K-12 Team
During our retreat, we discussed holding a virtual conference geared towards K-12 partners. Great news - after talking with the team that hosted the UDL-IHE Digicon virtual conference, this is entirely possible with just a few resources such as Zoom, Google Docs, and some time from folks in our network. We will plan on sharing more details in an upcoming quarterly meeting.

Research Team
The Research working group has been collecting data from our Student Perceptions Related to Workforce Readiness Survey and we will continue recruiting students to participate during the Spring 2020 semester. Although we have received some very useful information from participants, we need more Juniors and Seniors to complete the survey.

We have time slots open for students who would like to complete the survey over the phone. Below are links to both the phone sign-up sheet and the Qualtrics online survey. We’d love to have your campus represented in our data. Please sign up below!

Phone Sign-Up sheet: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Whd7Tv4H7hlky2PotQWQFNznCFeebx64XSN3PRcmY/edit?usp=sharing

Qualtrics Online Survey: https://ecu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0pj9b4jee8AJwiR

Thank you for getting your students involved and having them participate in the study. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact Alysha Gray at grayal18@ecu.edu or 252-328-0284.

Resource Team
The Facebook page is up and running! Please share content and participate in networking with each other. Feel free to invite others to join our social media page as well. We look forward to connecting with you all!

https://www.facebook.com/groups/525647224897956/

Best Practices & Strategy Share: Planning System
This quarter our *Best Practice* comes from the STEPP Program at East Carolina University.

Planning and time management are probably some of the most critical skills we teach. To help make this process run smoothly, the STEPP Program equips students with an individualized planner system to help keep track of assignments, due dates, and all things non-academics. These planners are color-coded, specific to the students’ courses, and are updated every week with a mentor. If you’d like to learn more about the STEPP Planner process, please contact the STEPP Program and we’ll be happy to share our resources!

**Weekly View**
The weekly view includes a complete daily schedule of a students' classes, mentor meetings, and study hall schedule. Students can also choose to personalize this with meal breaks, exercise, and other non-academic priorities.

**Daily View**
The daily view features a complete list displaying only one day at a time. It includes students courses, meetings, and study hall. On the right side of the sheet, students may fill in their “to-do” list and their “what's due” list.

**Weekly View - Classes Only**
This view is an example of an incomplete schedule. It only contains a course list. Many times students see this view and think they have a lot of “free” time, however this allows them to understand the importance of scheduling meetings and study hall between their class times. It also helps them learn the importance of time management and creating balance during their day.

**Electronic Planner Options**

- Email calendar options - online calendars that accompany a student’s school email account (*Outlook, Gmail*)
- Learning Management Systems (LMS) - university online platform providing students access to course information, materials, and planning features to keep track of due dates (*Canvas, Google Classroom, Blackboard*)
- Shovel - real-time study planner that allows students to schedule their weekly tasks (*classes, meals, study hall, extra-curriculars*) [https://howtostudyincollege.com/](https://howtostudyincollege.com/)
- myHomework - planner allowing students to track upcoming assignments, exams, projects and other important events [https://myhomeworkapp.com/](https://myhomeworkapp.com/)
ECU STEPP Program

The STEPP Program's mission is to provide access to a college education for students with learning disabilities who demonstrate the potential for postsecondary success. By partnering with students, their families, and a variety of educational communities, STEPP's innovative model fosters a network of opportunities, resources, and supports designed to equip and empower students at East Carolina University and across the nation.

- **Part 1:** The first part of our mission is a commitment to our students! By considering a wider range of admission criteria and offering a comprehensive program based on best-practices for serving students with learning disabilities, the program provides a unique opportunity to a population that traditionally may not have access to college. The program maintains a consistent 93% Year 1-Year 2 retention rate, and higher than 80% progress toward graduation rate.

- **Part 2:** We have a unique opportunity to work and learn alongside our students and share what we learn with our larger educational community. By researching best-practices with students and sharing resources that we find effective, STEPP is committed to helping students across our nation. For example, a free transition curriculum on the program website is downloaded thousands of times each year ([https://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/stepp/curriculum.cfm](https://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/stepp/curriculum.cfm)).
· **Admission and Transition Support:** Students apply to the program during their junior year of high school, enabling the program to help students take one STEPP at a time to prepare for the college environment throughout the year before they transition to ECU.

· **Daily Structure:** The program superimposes an external structure early in the student experience that fades as students gain confidence, independence, and a personalized support structure. For example, required study hall hours enable each student to create a structured schedule with ample time devoted to academics within a resource-rich supervised environment conducive to effective studying.

· **Parallel Curriculum:** Seminar-style classes, that are strategically placed at key transition points in the college experience that follow the student’s major course of study. The curriculum is designed to equip students with the skills and habits essential to academic and long-term success.

· **Mentoring:** Graduate student mentors are available to help students develop ongoing academic routines, provide encouragement, and troubleshoot daily college living issues as needed. First-year students are required to meet weekly with an assigned mentor.

· **Tutoring:** Students connect with the campus Pirate Academic Success Center (campus-wide tutoring center) for most tutoring, but the STEPP program offers peer tutors in high-need areas that are often impacted significantly by learning disabilities (e.g. English and Math). Students include tutoring sessions into weekly planning routines and study hall schedules.

· **Advising:** An advisor in the STEPP Program works closely with advisors in each student’s major using a co-advising model that blends understandings about the student’s learning disability and the requirements of the specific major.

· **Assistive Technology:** The program maintains a varied inventory of assistive technology resources to enable students to explore emerging tools that can help reduce barriers to accessing, working with,
Support Network: The STEPP Program connects students with a network of professionals across ECU’s campus. This support system includes advisors, mentors, tutors, counselors, professors, specialists, and other experts.

ECU News Services features the STEPP Program

Staying Connected

Please mark your calendars for our quarterly full-group meeting opportunities via Zoom:

- Tuesday, February 25 - 11:00-2:00 EST
- Tuesday, May 19 - 11:00-2:00 EST
- Tuesday, September 1 - 11:00-2:00 EST
- Tuesday, November 17 - 11:00-2:00 EST