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Educating Staff on Ethics and Professionalism

Maureen E. Wilson

Bowling Green State University, mewilso@bgsu.edu

Daniel L. Dücker

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toward the needs of student-athletes attempt to present the material in a way that is sensitive to their experiences. One way this occurs is in the content of the assigned readings. For example, career development issues are salient for most students; however, they rarely make for riveting classroom discussion. Whenever possible, readings on career issues written from an athlete's perspective are used in order to increase the students' attention spans. This approach is consonant with the integrative philosophy of the program (Denson, 1992). It is also quite useful for a number of the other topics covered in the seminar. Using this approach takes advantage of the rich metaphors that sports provide, and engages student-athletes by speaking a language that they understand well. Thought-provoking and relevant materials have been found in magazines, newspapers, journals, and books.

CONCLUSION

In the three years Freshman Seminar has been offered, it has received extremely favorable evaluations from students and the model has been well-received by many professionals involved in support services for student-athletes. Ultimately, however, the value of a course such as Freshman Seminar lays in its ability to increase the retention and graduation rates, academic performance, and personal and social growth of student-athletes. Research examining its impact in several of these areas is needed to provide empirical support to match the strong anecdotal evidence of its positive impact.

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Educating Staff on Ethics and Professionalism

Maureen Wilson Dücker
Residence Life Coordinator
Ohio State University

Daniel L. Dücker
Residence Life Coordinator
Ohio State University

In the past several years, society's focus on ethics has increased and public officials in government and education are being held to higher standards of behavior. Professionals in student affairs can capitalize on this educational opportunity to engage students and colleagues in meaningful discussion about ethics and professionalism. Supervisors and educators should teach and enable students to make good decisions. In order to do this effectively, people must engage in activities that build trust. The more people trust each other, the better decisions they will be able to reach together.

At the University of South Carolina, staff members in Housing and Residential Services have developed a training program which initiates exploration of ethics and professionalism with staff and students. The purpose of this program is to increase staffs ability to make ethically and professionally sound decisions. To accomplish this purpose, the program concentrates on four primary goals: (a) to raise the staffs awareness of ethical and professional issues, (b) to begin to communicate acceptable standards of behavior, (c) to build trust among staff, and (d) to encourage individuals to commit to high standards of behavior.

These goals are introduced during Fall training for residence hall directors and graduate assistants at which time professional staff facilitates a discussion that highlights the importance of ethics and professionalism, defines relevant terms (professionalism, ethics, and ethical dilemma), and examines trust in the work place. Following that discussion, staff participates in a game designed to foster meaningful discussion of these concepts.

This game is based loosely on the Milton-Bradley game *Scruples*. Participants are divided into groups with four or five members. Each group receives a game set

that includes rules, situation cards, and response cards. To play:

1. Each player draws four situation cards and one response (yes or no) card from the pile to begin the game.

2. The object of the game is to discard all situation cards. Players do this by examining their situation cards, predicting which other player is likely to answer a situation with the same answer as the player's response card. For instance, a player holding a "no" card looks for a situation in his or her hand to which a particular player is likely to answer "no" and solicits their response to the scenario. If the player predicted correctly, that situation card is discarded and a new response card is drawn from the pile. If the player predicted incorrectly, the situation card is discarded and new situation and response cards are drawn.

The real object of this game is, of course, not to win but to discuss these situations in groups, challenge participants, and debate the issues involved. Players should answer honestly and examine their commitment to the principles involved. Situations address a variety of professional and ethics issues. Examples include:

1. You need 35 copies of a handout for your class presentation tonight. You have no cash to go to the library. No one will notice if you run them on the office copier. Do you run the copies there?

2. You have been given the wrong sticker by the parking office and it gives you better parking. Do you return it for the sticker you should have?

3. You become aware that a student in your area is HIV positive and is sleeping with another resident in the area. The HIV positive student has refused to tell his/her partner about this. Do you inform the other student about his/her HIV positive partner?

4. Two residents on campus have posted magazine pictures of nude people in their window facing a heavily travelled sidewalk. Do you require them to remove the pictures?

This game can be easily adapted for all levels of staff in any area of student affairs. It has been used successfully with resident advisors, residence hall directors, graduate assistants, professional staff in residence life, and is being adapted for a training program with student judicial board members. An open and supportive environment is provided in which to discuss factors critical to successful leadership.

This training program has been effective in raising staff and student awareness of issues of ethics and professionalism. However, there is clearly a difference between knowing the best decision and being willing to make that decision even when it is difficult or inconvenient to do so. The most critical step in this process is

for staff members to commit themselves to making the best possible decisions.

Enabling Students on Probation to Succeed

Lora Munsell
Academic Counselor
Ohio University

Kristin Cornwell
Graduate Assistant
Ohio University

Students who are reinstated to an institution after being dismissed for poor academic performance need a program to assist them in overcoming the problems that contributed to their poor performance. One college at a mid-sized public university provides a holistic reinstatement program (Excel) that addresses the many needs of these students. The purpose of this article is to describe the Excel program, which is designed to contribute to the success of reinstated students and consequently improve the university's retention rate.

Colleges and universities across the country have designed programs to promote student retention. Evaluations of these programs have shown that the more support students receive, the more successful they are in meeting their goals. Programs requiring structured, regular meetings with advisors or counselors have student success rates (removal from probation or continuation at the institution) as high as 64% (Garnett, 1990; Patrick, Furlow, & Donovan, 1988; Shelhamer & Walters, 1988; Taylor, Powers, Lindstrom, & Gibson, 1987). Studies by Kriner and Shriberg (1992) and Schultz, Dickman, Campbell, and Snow (1992) show that less structured programs are less successful.

The Excel program assists students by addressing the factors that contribute to their poor academic performance. An indicator of these factors is the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI), (Weinstein, Schulte, & Palmer, 1987), which assesses students' learning and study habits. Students in the Excel program complete the LASSI, and the majority of them score below the 50th percentile in *each* of the 10 scales the LASSI measures. Based on information from the LASSI and review of other programs, Excel was developed as a structured, weekly program which provides each student with individual attention and support.

Reinstated students are required to sign a contract which includes meeting 1 hour per week with a peer advisor, spending 15 hours a week in the library, devel-