



News Release

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Century Student Engagement Exceeds National Benchmarks

It was no accident that Century College's measurement of student engagement exceeded national benchmarks in all five categories this year.

For the past half-dozen years, Century has been striving to increase its scores in five areas that are measured by the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). The measured areas are: active and collaborative learning, student effort, academic challenge, student-faculty interaction and support for learners.

For the first time, Century's scores significantly improved as compared to the last administration of the survey in 2009, and all exceeded national benchmarks.

"This is an outstanding testament to the success of all our efforts," President Ron Anderson. "Our results are nothing short of amazing."

One of several strategies that has helped improve Century student engagement is the introduction of the New Student Seminar for students who test into pre-college level reading classes. The New Student Seminar is a credit course that helps students do better in college and in life by suggesting strategies that improve time management, critical thinking, academic planning, priority setting and self-discipline.

In fall 2010, an informal survey of the 500 students enrolled in the New Student Seminar was conducted. Approximately 62 percent of these students said that an instructor or advisor helped them cope with non-academic responsibilities such as work, family and child care. Forty-eight percent of them said that an instructor or advisor talked with them about their career plans.

Century has had such success with the New Student Seminar that in the fall of 2013, all new entering full-time students will be required to take the class.

"To be successful, we have found that our students need help with non-academic areas such as planning, time management and priority setting," said Prof. Kathy Matel, the Student Success Coordinator at Century.

"Our improvements are the result of very intentional strategies that include the New Student Seminar, learning communities, tutors linked to classes and student success advising. We are changing the culture of the college, one student at a time."

Prof. Jodi Elliott, a reading and student success instructor, said teaching the New Student Seminar has been eye-opening for her. "It has changed me as a person and as an instructor," said Elliott. "Through

advising I have become more open-minded and gentle in my judgments. I have found the time I spend advising students is a true privilege.”

Elliott said the course allows students to take a step back from their hectic lives and ponder their current circumstances. In the seminar, students devise a doable plan that will ultimately take them closer to achieving their goals.

Elliott said students in the seminar do a lot of written self-reflection and they begin to see that they do have control of the direction of their lives. “There are many students entering Century who have little or no guidance or support. They are battling the feeling that they don’t belong in college. The seminar helps them successfully navigate the tough things in life so that they can reach their goals. Changing human behavior is very difficult, but it can be done,” said Elliott. “What our students accomplish is nothing short of extraordinary.”

The New Student Seminar reinforces the idea that education is not a one-size-fits-all proposition. “This seminar meets students where they are and elevates them to a place where success can be achieved,” said Elliott. “When you see someone, over time, transform from believing that they can’t to believing that they can, it is thrilling.”