Workforce Education on the Rise

With the growing number of Workforce Program graduates, The Office of Workforce Education and Corporate Partnerships had a need for an analyst who would focus solely on workforce reporting. Mei Wang, AIR Senior Analyst, has been dedicated to providing data and analysis to this Office since September 2013.

System wide, degrees and certificates awarded have continually increased over the last five years. This is especially true for workforce programs. In 2013-14, the workforce program graduated 3,872 students, which was 56.6% of all Lone Star College graduates.

If we compare the workforce graduation numbers over time, we see a 48.6% increase in five years with the majority of that increase coming from certificates earned which represents 65% of all awards.

These are the kind of meaningful data that the Office of Analytics and Institutional Research is able to provide. “Mei has been a fantastic partner,” says Linda Head, Associate Vice Chancellor for Workforce Education and Corporate Partnerships. “It’s helpful for the analyst to tell us what they see in terms of trends. Mei does an awesome job.”

Mei assists with the Annual Report Card data as well as program review. Look for more exciting Workforce Education news in the coming months!

Faculty Success Letters

In August 2014, the Office of Analytics and Institutional Reporting introduced a new efficient model to LSC-CyFair that quickly and accurately sent individualized course completion data to faculty members. In prior years this information was sent using Microsoft Access and took months to program/compile.

This year, with the help of Senior Web Analyst Brock Boothe, the information was quickly compiled using a new tool call SQL Server Reporting Services (SSRS). Over 750 letters were sent, via email, to returning faculty members. The letter included a “Welcome from the Vice President of Instruction,” which highlighted the importance of having access to completion and success data in order to move the needle. The letter also included two years of completion and success data for each course taught by the instructor (comparing the instructor’s average to the system average).

Several faculty members commented that the data was very informative and useful. One new full-time faculty member even commented, “This is very nice. I wish my former university would have done something similar.”

After the new model was piloted at LSC-CyFair a similar roll out was done at LSC-Kingwood, in November 2014. In using the SQL Server Reporting Services to facilitate this process, over 450 letters were rolled out (50% faster than previous roll out methods used). With the help of the Office of Analytics and Institutional Reporting, faculty members can now have access to individualized data that can inform, inspire and improve overall student learning.

Need data? Email AIR at SO-AIR@lonestar.edu.
The Lone Star College-Kingwood math department is piloting innovative ways to tailor math courses to better fit a student’s math skills needs. Typically, a low mathematics score on the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) placement test indicates that students entering college must take a developmental course. Depending on specific math scores, however, students now may choose to accelerate their progress in various ways.

One option is by first enrolling into a two-week non-credit refresher session designed to address gaps in learning. Successful completion of this rigorous session allows students to skip a developmental algebra class. A second course route, known as the New Mathways Project (NMP), allows students to take math courses more applicable to their chosen degree or career, rather than funneling them through a college algebra path. Often, NMP courses are linked to a student success course to further enhance the student’s learning potential further.

In collaboration with the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, LSC-Kingwood is one of nine co-development partners chosen to bring the New Mathways Project to Texas. The Dana Center develops educational materials that incorporate recent studies on how students best learn and use math. The new math curriculum encourages educators to rethink the way they teach and structure courses.

“The New Mathways Project is a great product and encourages student learning by using practical word problems,” said Dr. Stephanie Doyen, math professor and department chair at LSC-Kingwood. Doyen said the project’s framework helps build better thinking skills, but the student needs to do his or her part, too. When a student is willing to put the work in, she has seen them experience life-changing results.

Based on LSC-Kingwood’s success with the NMP pilot program, the Dana Center has recently chosen Doyen to help lead the effort to bring the New Mathways Project into other Texas high schools and other community colleges. Beginning this fall, she will act as a department chair to a faculty-in-residence for the other math instructors across Texas who are implementing the program for the first time.

To view video of Dr. Stephanie Doyen describe her experiences teaching the NMP courses, visit YouTube. For more information on this project, visit LoneStar.edu/new-mathways-project.