Our Students’ GRIT

Six days into the start of the fall 2015 semester, Julie (not her real name) informed her LSC instructor a tragic accident had taken the life of her aunt and that two of her cousins, ages 14 and 6, were clinging to life. Worse yet, the accident was caused by a family member who was on the run from law enforcement. Julie asked for understanding and flexibility on assignments in the coming weeks as she worked through the grieving process.

This is a true story that illustrates the obstacles our students face every day as they attempt to improve their lives through education. Some challenges are catastrophic, as in the case here, others are less so but they all represent trials our students must push through in order to achieve their goals. What qualities or characteristics allow one student to persevere, while another in similar circumstances quits? GRIT.

Definitions of grit vary, but they all center on one’s ability to use “courage, determination and strength of character to achieve life goals.” Educators, psychologists and researchers have been studying the concept of grit for decades and even though it is currently a trending topic in higher education, there have been no comprehensive studies of grit among community college students. Until now.

LSC-Tomball is conducting a groundbreaking study that aims, among other things, to determine the extent to which a faculty member’s emphasis on grit in the classroom affects the improvement of a student’s success and persistence. The study is a partnership with Dr. Paul Stoltz, a leading authority on the science of measuring and strengthening grit, and Pearson Learning, an education publishing and assessment company committed to improving learning through research. It also represents an internal partnership with LSC’s Analytics & Institutional Reporting (AIR) department.

We know faculty already teach grit to their students and always have, whether it’s through the sharing of personal stories of perseverance, mentoring students through hard times, or helping them set goals and create a plan to achieve them. LSC-Tomball’s GRIT Study will apply a structured and controlled approach to evaluating these activities. It researches to what extent grit grows/improves over the duration of one academic term, and what is the role of feedback and grit in the classroom in that improvement. It also asks what, if any, difference does the degree to which a faculty member emphasizes grit affect the degree of improvement. And, what is the effect of repeated exposure to GRIT in the classroom, as measured by the number of classes a student takes that make use of grit.

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Grit continued...

All full-time faculty, all EDUC 1300 faculty, and almost 4,000 students are participating. Full-time faculty were randomly selected into “No New Grit” and “With Grit” groups; every student in every course taught by a full-time instructor was asked to take the GRIT Gauge™ the first week of the semester and it will be repeated again near the end of the semester. Faculty in the “With GRIT” group are providing students (to whatever degree they desire) with resources and information about the importance of factors that make up “GRIT” – growth, resilience, instinct, and tenacity – and the concept of robustness. All EDUC 1300 faculty/students are in the “With GRIT” group. Faculty in the “No New Grit” group serve as a control group and will teach classes as usual without adding new grit activities.

Julie’s instructor is teaching With Grit this semester and one activity, due this week, is for students to submit a plan on how they intend to manage the challenges and obstacles likely to occur over the next 16 weeks. The faculty member could not have anticipated a story like Julie’s when she created the assignment. Perhaps it will make a difference in Julie’s life.

For more on LSC-Tomball’s GRIT study, contact President Lee Ann Nutt or AIR’s Marian Burkhart.

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Service Center Coming Soon!
Your one-stop-shop for AIR, OTS, HR, and Payroll Services

You will soon be able to submit requests to AIR through the new service portal, Service Center. The site is scheduled to go live September 15 and is designed to be a user-friendly, intuitive, portal to submit questions or service requests to the Office of Technology Services (OTS), Human Resources, Analytics & Institutional Reporting, and Payroll.

Most faculty and staff are already familiar with the current site, powered by ServiceNow, being used by OTS for online requests. Service Center is actually an expansion of the current site to include AIR, HR, and Payroll.

The Service Center form for AIR requests will replace the current online form so that all requests are immediately logged into our ticketing system and can be tracked until they are completed and closed.

Be on the lookout for email announcements as we near the launch date, September 15. The Office of College Services is excited to bring this service to all Lone Star College faculty and staff. We’re looking forward to the site becoming your one-stop-shop for assistance.

Need data? Email AIR at SO-AIR@lonestar.edu.
Scorecards & Dashboards Coming Your Way!

Data can be very powerful when presented visually. Charts and graphs are easier to understand than a slew of numbers and stats. Here’s an example that analyzes what Americans talked about in 2014 using Twitter data:

![THE YEAR IN NEWS](http://www.vox.com/2014/12/29/7463663/twitter-news-2014)

LSC’s Analytics & Institutional Reporting (AIR) team is working on a series of interactive scorecards and dashboards that will make understanding data easier and more useful. Some of the interactive reports are available right now! Over the coming months, you’ll hear two terms referenced a lot – scorecards and dashboards. Both are tools used to visualize data and both are interactive, meaning you can change what you are viewing by clicking on the graphic or using filter tools. It’s easy to distinguish scorecards, they are colorful circles. Dashboards can take many forms – pie charts, bar charts, line graphs, etc. Here are screenshots:

**SCORECARD**

**DASHBOARD**

There are several interactive dashboards available now and scorecards will be added over the next few months. All are accessible via [https://air.lonestar.edu](https://air.lonestar.edu) (log in required).

Need data? Email AIR at SO-AIR@lonestar.edu.
Change is in the AIR

Recently, AIR made organizational changes to be more efficient and improve services to support you! Our new IR Managers are now in place to ensure that you receive the best possible service from AIR’s Institutional Reporting team!

Join us in congratulating Jackie and Deseree on their new roles!

Jacqueline Goffney  
Manager, College Analysts

Jackie has been with Lone Star College for 3 years and was the college analyst for LSC-CyFair prior to her new role in AIR. She manages the IR analysts housed at each of our colleges.

Deseree Probasco  
Manager, System Analysts

Deseree has been with Lone Star College for 7 ½ years and was the lead senior analyst prior to her new role in AIR. She manages the IR analysts housed at LSC-System Office.

Fall 2015 Enrollment

83,932  
86% increase in 10 years

Need data? Email AIR at SO-AIR@lonestar.edu.