SmarterMeasure
Learning readiness indicator

Case Study of Anne Arundel Community College and SmarterMeasure

CHALLENGE

INCREASING SUCCESS AMONG ANNE ARUNDEL'S STUDENTS

On December 1, 2009, in an event that included students, faculty, staff, and friends from the community, Anne Arundel Community College President Martha A. Smith, Ph.D., announced plans to help its students be more successful in reaching their educational goals – including doubling the number of AACC students who earn degrees, certificates, and workforce credentials by the year 2020. Included in the announcement was a commitment to:

1. Help all students identify meaningful educational goals.
2. Build systems and programs to track, monitor, and support students' progress in achieving their goals.
3. Involve faculty and staff in examining current practices to identify potential vulnerabilities to students' completing their goals.
4. Make changes necessary to increase students' success.

According to the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation's "Learning On Demand: Online Education in the United States, 2009" report, online enrollments across the nation are growing at about 17 percent annually, much faster than the 1.2 percent overall growth of the higher education population. At Anne Arundel Community College (AACC), the percent of the total student body enrolling in at least one online course is even higher. In fall 2009, 30.6 percent – 5,108 students – took at least one online course, a 26.4 percent increase over the fall 2008 online enrollment.

SOLUTION

IMPLEMENT FIRST-SEMESTER EXPERIENCE THAT INCLUDES SMARTERMEASURE LEARNING READINESS INDICATOR

In collaboration with the college community, AACC's Virtual Campus has created a comprehensive, first-semester experience for first-time elearners. As part of this first-semester experience, they chose to adopt SmarterMeasure learning readiness indicator to help elearners make informed decisions about whether online learning is a good fit for them. Students have access to SmarterMeasure through the Virtual Campus website. In addition, it is integrated in two optional online orientations: one for prospective elearners and one for first-time online students. Students receive a postcard that provides information about the "Meet the Virtual Campus" orientation and the learning readiness indicator; the postcards are distributed at on-campus orientations and distributed by academic advisors. Information about the assessment is available in the college's schedule of classes and promote on the local cable station. Some instructors require students to take the SmarterMeasure assessment.

ANNE ARUNDEL COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S PRESIDENT, DR. MARTHA A. SMITH

We are committed to helping our students be more successful in reaching their educational goals.

SMARTERMEASURE LEARNING READINESS INDICATOR

Web based diagnostic tool that quantifies a learner's readiness to learn in an alternative learning environment like online. It measures 6 areas of readiness.

♦ Individual Attributes

♦ Learning Styles

♦ Life Factors

♦ Technical Competency & Skills

♦ On-Screen Reading Rate & Recall

♦ Typing Speed & Accuracy

PATTY MCCARTHY-O'NEILL, DISTANCE LEARNING COORDINATOR

"SmarterMeasure learning readiness indicator is targeted to first-time online students to help them discover strategies to learn course content more easily based on their preferred learning styles"

IMPACT

The Virtual Campus at Anne Arundel Community College is always looking for ways to increase student success and retention in their elearning courses. One means to this end is to help students make an informed decision if online education is right for them prior to signing up for a class.

Prior to using SmarterMeasure, AACC students had access to a readiness survey (available on the Internet and free to users). Based on the final score, the student would receive an automated response with suggestions as to whether online education would be a good fit.

Unlike SmarterMeasure, this survey did not offer a personalized, detailed interpretation of the student's scores and recommendations. Nor did it provide an administrative panel with customizable reporting functions.

In describing how AACC students use SmarterMeasure, Patty McCarthy-O'Neill, Coordinator of Distance Learning reports, "We use an abbreviated version of the SmarterMeasure assessment, since it is not required. Students have access to the Technical Competency, Technical Knowledge, and Personal Attribute components. Recently, we have added the learning styles component as a separate assessment. The learning styles assessment is targeted to first-time online students to help them discover strategies to learn course content more easily based on their preferred learning styles."

ABOUT ANNE ARUNDEL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Anne Arundel Community College was founded in 1961. It is conveniently located between Baltimore, Maryland and Washington, D.C., and is only minutes away from picturesque Annapolis, Maryland's state capital. In the fall of 1996, AACC offere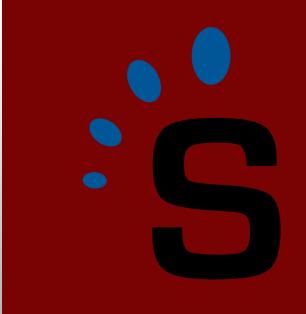d its first online course, Introduction to UNIX. Students can now complete six degrees, eighteen certificates, and numerous letters of recognition fully online; in addition, AACC offers a comprehensive array of online continuing education courses.

SMARTERSERVICES

SmarterServices (formerly eLearningToolBox) provides the following four products: (1) SmarterMeasure - learning readiness indicator, (2) SmarterSurveys - automated data collection survey system, (3) SmarterFaculty - searchable database of thousands of faculty who want to teach online, and (4) SmarterProctors - searchable database of neutral proctors to administer high stakes exams. Our mission is to organize and analyze data that empowers people to make smarter decisions. We help you obtain data about your students, faculty, teachers, employees, and courses. Data-driven decisions create strong strategic plans, maximize efficiency, and foster an environment of learning - learning from our mistakes, learning about best practices, and learning how to do things better. Learn more at SmarterServices.com.

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