

Learning Center: Academic Improvement Plan (AIM)

Assessing Study Skills of Students on Academic
Probation 2012-2013

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2011

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Introduction

For over a decade, the Learning Center at Shippensburg University has been charged with the task of providing programming to students on academic probation. The AIM program assists students on academic probation by determining students' needs and providing them with resources that the University currently provides such as subject specific tutoring, study skills tutoring, workshops, and referrals to Career Services, Counseling Center, or the Office of Disabilities Services. The goal has been to give these students the means to overcome obstacles to their academic success. Over the past six years, the program has moved from a group model to an individualized approach. By accurately and efficiently assessing the individual needs of these students via a diagnostic instrument such as the LASSI, inhibitors to student success can be identified and accurate referrals can be made so that students are matched with the proper resources. As a result of specific pinpointing of factors contributing to low academic standing, these students are more likely to succeed in their courses and get off academic probation.

The LASSI (Learning and Study Strategies Inventory)

The LASSI is a 10-scale, 80-item assessment of students' awareness about and use of learning and study strategies related to skill, will and self-regulation components of strategic learning. This tool focuses on both covert and overt thoughts, behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs that are linked to successful learning and can be altered through educational interventions. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that these factors contribute significantly to success in college and that they can be learned or enhanced through educational interventions such as academic coaching and study skills courses.

The LASSI provides standardized scores (percentile score equivalents) and national norms for ten different scales (there is no total score since this is a diagnostic measure). The LASSI is both diagnostic and prescriptive. It provides students with a diagnosis of their strengths and weaknesses, which is compared to other college students, in the areas covered by the 10 scales and it is prescriptive in that it provides feedback about areas where students may be weak and need to improve their knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and skills. When utilized as a posttest near the end of the semester, the LASSI can help students identify areas in which they have demonstrated significant improvement and acknowledge persistent weaknesses that need continued attention.

Publisher

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Website: <http://www.hhpublishing.com/>

Cost of the LASSI

College Version of LASSI		
Version	Quantity	Prices
Web LASSI	1-99	\$3.50/each
	100 +	\$3.00/each

Number of LASSI Required per Year

Each academic year, approximately 900 to 1000 students are placed on academic probation at Shippensburg University (\approx 350 students in the Fall semester and \approx 650 students in the Spring semester). About 20% of these students participate in the AIM program. In other words, we can anticipate at least 200 pre surveys and 200 post survey LASSIs for each academic year at a total cost of \$1200.

Other PASSHE schools who use LASSI

According to the LASSI website, http://www.hhpublishing.com/_assessments/LASSI/popup_users.html, 2275 colleges and high schools have used the LASSI in some fashion, including the following schools in Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE): Bloomsburg University, Cheyney University, Clarion University, East Stroudsburg University, Edinboro University, Kutztown University, Lock Haven University, Mansfield University, Millersville University, Slippery Rock University, and West Chester University.

AIM's Goals

AIM is a part of the Learning Center and seeks to carry out its mission: The Learning Center is the university's primary academic resource center and is available to all Ship students. Our goal at the Learning Center is to help students develop skills and strategies that will enable them to become independent, active learners and to achieve academic success.

Specific Learning Outcomes that will be assessed in Spring 2012 include the following:

- Students will complete the orientation to AIM at the beginning of the semester. They will watch a series of three online orientations where an overview of the AIM plan requirements are provided. Learning Specialists will keep track of students who complete this program via the email AIM students send to the Learning Center upon completion of viewing the PowerPoint.
- Students will complete an Individualized Success Plan with an academic coach. To determine an Individualized Success Plan, students will meet with a staff member in the Learning Center. At this time, students will take the LASSI to determine what academic skill areas they need to focus

on for success. *Using the results of the LASSI*, the student and staff member together will create an individual plan for success. **Through the identification of areas contributing to the students' lack of success in achieving good academic standing, students can begin to learn strategies that will help them improve academic competencies.**

- Students will view online workshops that provide strategies for areas of identified needs. College success workshops are provided online for students to peruse at their convenience. Topics will include Time Management, Note-taking Strategies, Tips for Approaching College Textbooks, College Exam Strategies, and Dealing with College Stress. Academic Coaches will use these workshops as a base for discussions with students on how to personalize strategies in their own lives. Academic coaches will keep track of the number of workshops students have completed.
- Once identified areas of academic subjects have taken place, students will be encouraged to meet regularly with peer tutors to work on content areas in which they need assistance. Monitoring of tutoring sessions will take place through TutorTrac.
- Students will attend study skills tutoring with an academic coach to develop more effective strategies **identified by the LASSI** to succeed in the college environment.
- At the end of the semester, students will again take the LASSI as a posttest to determine areas that have improved and identify any weaknesses that still may exist. Through the posttest, a plan for continued improvement can be developed so students can learn to persist in improving any identified areas of weakness. It must be noted that some students will need continued assistance from academic coaches and the Learning Center, and a posttest is crucial in helping students understand the interplay of academic strategies and success.

Timeline for spring assessment

ACTION	TENTATIVE DATE (S)
Students on academic probation will receive a letter readmitting them back into SU.	Between Dec 19 th and January t th
The Learning Center will contact students about the AIM program and completing the online orientation and the LASSI	Week of January 9 th
Administration of LASSI Pre-Test	January 17 th -February 3rd
Interpretation of Pre-Test Data	Students will sit down with a learning coach after taking the LASSI to discuss results and schedule a follow-up visit to develop a specialized learning plan.

Corrective Measures to Improve Students' Performance	January 17 th - March 2nd
Administration of Post-Test	April 23-May 11th
Interpretation of Post-Test Data	April 23 – May 11th
Corrective Measures to Improve Students' Performance	Discuss a revised plan for students who need continued support from an academic coach.
Publication of Final Results	June 1 st . Results will be tabulated in our annual report.
Follow-up with Students	Students who remain on academic probation will be contacted at the beginning of the fall semester of 2012 and be encouraged to visit an academic coach when they arrive on campus.