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Success of the Academic Success Program (ASP)

Meeting the needs of students "At Risk"

Background

➢ In 2004 the Faculty of Business was concerned about the number of "at risk" students

➢ All "at risk" students were invited to attend a meeting to discuss issues affecting their studies

➢ Students completed a questionnaire determining the reasons behind poor performance

➢ Items related to common stressors were classified into 8 distinct categories

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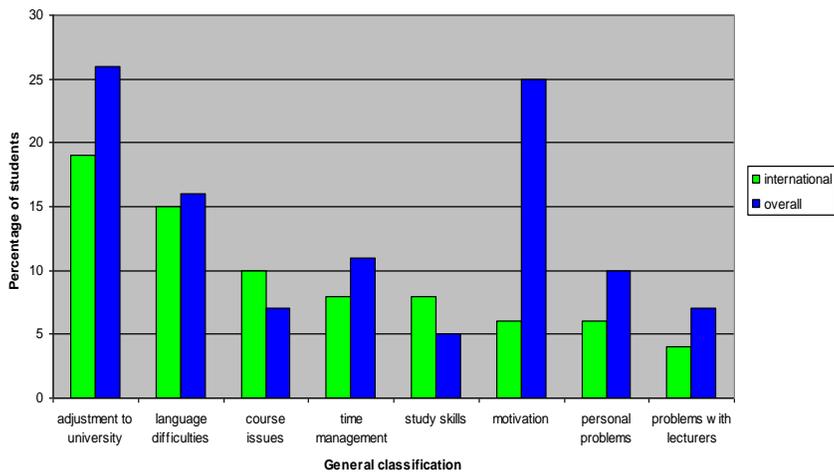## Figure 1. Issues reported by Local Students
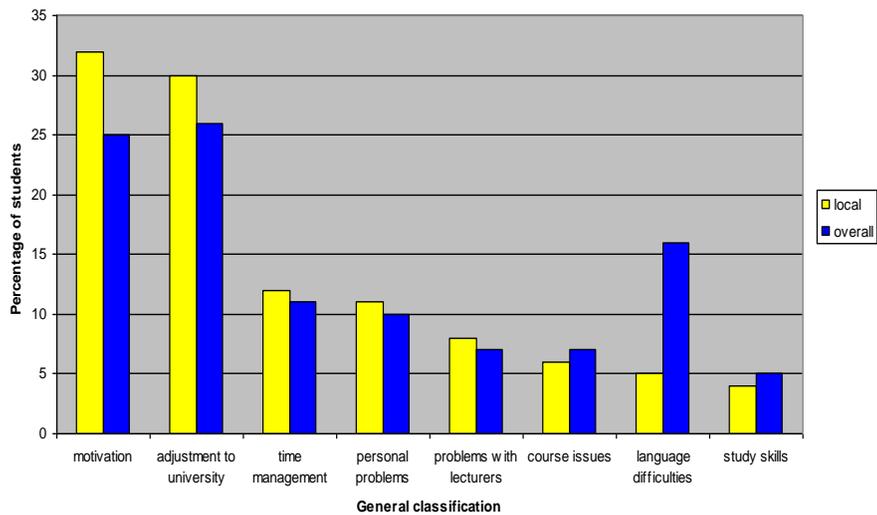
Priority of Issues - Local Students

➢Motivation

➢Adjustment to University Life

➢Time Management

➢Personal Problems

➢Problems with Lecturers

➢Course Issues

➢Language Difficulties

➢Study Skills

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Figure 2. Issues reported by International Students

Priority of Issues - International Students

- ➢ Adjustment to University Life
- ➢ Language Difficulties
- ➢ Course Issues
- ➢ Time Management
- ➢ Study Skills
- ➢ Motivation
- ➢ Personal Problems
- ➢ Problems with Lecturers

Support Programs

➢Pilot project commenced aiming to support these students (Getting Back on Course)

➢Group workshops were offered by Counselling, Access, English Language Centre, and Library

➢Individual sessions were offered by Counselling and Access

➢Other options included information on changing subjects, course or further career advice

➢Students encouraged to develop a self management plan

Outcome of Pilot Project

➢ Initial analysis indicated that students who attended the meeting performed significantly better in the following semester (GPA 12.75)

➢ Based on these positive outcomes it was recommended to extend the project to other faculties.

➢In 2005 all "at risk" students were identified and invited to attend "Getting Back on Course" meetings.

➢Workshops targeting four main areas were developed and delivered by the counselling staff.

Workshops promoted to students

Making the most of your time

Further study can have a huge impact on other areas in your life especially if you have other important commitments such as work and family. Learn ways to organise your time so you have balance in your life.

Make stress work for you

Understanding the pressures and stress in your life is not easy. This workshop will help you develop practical ways or organising yourself, improving your problem solving strategies, and reducing your stress levels.

Getting and keeping motivated

Feeling that your enthusiasm and interest in hour course is running low? This workshop will show you various ways of getting your motivation back so you can focus on your study goals.

Preparing for exams

Learning how to prepare for exams is a set of unique skills. Learn how to make the most of your preparation time, how to put exams into perspective and deal with exam anxiety. You will be given professional tips about how to handle the day of the exam.

Academic Success Program

➢ In 2006 the project name was changed to Academic Support Program (ASP) and expanded to run each semester targeting ALL students

➢ Taken up officially by Progress Review with students "at risk" **<u>strongly</u>** recommended to attend.

➢ ASP workshops were put online end of 2006 – with all registrations forwarded on to the relevant faculty

➢ ASP attendance is one major criteria considered by Progress Review panels

Format of ASP workshops

➢Students register online for each workshop – a reminder is sent via SMS two days beforehand

➢All counsellors are trained to facilitate the workshops – the basic content follows the online format.

➢Each workshop is run six times each semester at different timers and days in order to cater for varying student timetables

➢Interaction between students is actively encouraged – often students follow-up with one on one counselling.

Results – Impact on marks (2006 – 2008)

➢In 2006 a comparison of marks of students who had attended the ASP workshops indicated an average GPA increase of 7 points.

➢In 2007 comparing Semester 2 with Semester 1 results indicated 70% of attendees improved their GPA (based on available data for 76 students).

➢In 2008 comparing pre 2008 with Semester 1 indicated 74% of ASP attendees improved their GPA (based on available data for 62 students).

Table 1. Impact on marks (2009 – 2011)

	2009 Semester 2 (n=127)	2010 Semester 1 (n=110)	2010 Semester 2 (n=98)	2011 Semester1 (n=68)
Pre ASP GPA	46.9	45.5	47.6	45.4
Post ASP GPA	56.9	54.2	58.0	55.0
Mean difference	**10.0**	**8.7**	**10.4**	**9.6**

Table 2. Feedback from students 2009 - 2011

	Program overall	Time	Stress	Motivation	Exam Prep	All dayASP	%students Good/VG
2009 Sem1 (n=177)	**4.5**	4.4	4.5	4.3	4.6	4.6	**91**
2009 Sem2 (n=254)	**4.3**	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	**89**
2010 Sem1 (n=204)	**4.7**	4.7	4.3	4.5	4.2	4.6	**97**
2010 Sem2 (n=191)	**4.5**	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.7	4.3	**96**
2011 Sem1 (n=134)	**4.4**	4.4	4.4	4.6	4.4	4.4	**92**
2011 Sem2 (n=155)	**4.4**	4.5	4.3	4.1	4.5	4.4	**92**

5 Point Likert scale :   1 = Very poor   5 = Very good

Further modifications to program

➢ End of first semester 2008 a fullday ASP seminar for students – Getting Back on Course.

➢ This initiative has been continued and expanded – at the commencement of each semester.

➢ Other campuses have modifications of the ASP - Lilydale runs HeadStart program.

➢ The TAFE sector are keen to incorporate the program especially for their 'at risk' students.

What have we learned   Swinburne

Students tend to be reactive rather than proactive

Once students can work out the WIIFM principle they are more likely to attend workshops

Still need to actively remind students to attend workshops regardless of focus

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What have we learned….

More efficient and productive to keep to same time and place

Important to get the academic staff onside – ultimate aim is to get into the classrooms

The vast majority of students regard attendance at the ASP workshops a positive experience

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Thank you!

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