

THE EFFECTS OF ACADEMIC MONITORING FOR STUDENTS WHO
HAVE BEEN ACADEMICALLY DISMISSED AND READMITTED
TO THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-STOUT

by

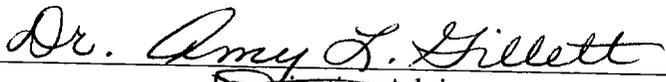
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ABSTRACT

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The Effects of Academic Monitoring for Students Who Have Been Academically (Title)			
Dismissed and Readmitted to the University of Wisconsin-Stout			
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Each semester 250-300 students or approximately 3.6% of the total student body at the University of Wisconsin-Stout are academically dismissed based on university policy. Students have the opportunity to appeal policy guidelines by indicating extenuating circumstances affecting their academic success. Approximately 50% of students choose to appeal and for the years 1997 – 2000, the appeal success rate averaged 85%. Currently, students are required to meet with an academic advisor on a bi-monthly basis during the semester following their successful appeal.

The purpose of this study was to determine the difference in academic success, as measured by grade point average, for students who continued to meet with an academic advisor throughout the semester and those who did not. Dismissed and readmitted

students from the 1999 spring and fall semesters comprised the 172 students in this study. Two groups were formed consisting of students who met fewer than three times with an academic advisor and those who met three or more times. The study hypothesized that students who have regular contact with an academic advisor will also be directed to appropriate university services and will develop university connections that will lead to greater academic success.

Data was obtained from official University of Wisconsin-Stout records for registered credits, completed credits, and grade point average for each subject in the semester following their dismissal. The study also considered the year in school at the time of dismissal.

Comparisons were made between the two groups to identify statistical significance between the variables of grade point average and credits completed in the semester following dismissal for students who met with an advisor regularly and those who did not. No statistical significant difference was found between the two groups when assessing either variable.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Every post-secondary institution has its share of students who fail to meet the expectations for minimal academic performance. This may result in academic dismissal or suspension based on university policy. Many of these students, even though their performance was sub par, wish to continue their education uninterrupted. These students may, under certain circumstances, submit a readmission appeal to a specific individual or a committee for consideration.

Each semester there are approximately 250-300 students who are academically dismissed at the University of Wisconsin – Stout. University policy states, “a student who has been declared academically ineligible to continue at the university may submit a written appeal for readmission to the Admissions and Credits Committee” (University of Wisconsin – Stout Student Handbook Online, 1998, np). This process is handled through the Dean of Students office.

Approximately one-half of dismissed students at UW-Stout each semester will appeal their dismissal status and of those students, many (80% of Fall 1998 appeals) will be granted an appeal and readmitted with conditions. The conditions may include: retaking D' and F's, meeting with the Program Director for their major, career counseling, and academic monitoring. Currently, an appointment with an academic advisor is required for all students who are readmitted. This appointment is usually well attended by students as they are told their registration will be cancelled if they fail to comply. During this initial meeting, students sign a contract agreeing to meet with the advisor on a regular basis and to other conditions as indicated.

The rationale for academic monitoring for students who are readmitted following an appeal is based on the idea that students who receive monitoring will perform better academically. Many students had high school experiences that required little in reading, writing, computing, or learning and students were able to “get by” without much effort. Many college professors will not accept late papers, have firm attendance policies, and expect quality work. Students’ self-confidence may be shattered as they experience higher academic standards and realize that they are struggling to keep up with assignments and other academic expectations (Noel & Levitz, 1999). Students who did little in high school will find the adjustment to college too difficult and the result can be academic suspension or dismissal. Academic advising is geared towards assisting students with goal setting, study skills, time management, and accessing resources. According to Noel and Levitz (1998a), the most powerful retention tool is when at least one person takes an interest in the student and builds a trusting, caring relationship. They also stress that self-referral by the student does not work, as those who need the services most tend to only refer themselves during crisis points. For some students, the crisis point is when they receive their grade report with “dismissal” stamped on the bottom.

Each school must seriously consider how it manages readmission and must establish policies that reflect its philosophy on academic potential. The overlying philosophy at UW-Stout is a strong belief in allowing students a second chance, therefore, many first or second semester students are successful in the appeal of their dismissal status. Along with a second chance philosophy, comes the notion that early intervention regarding student services and the research-based belief that students who form a relationship with a staff member, tend to perform better academically. What we

don't know is whether or not students who follow through on the recommendations and meet throughout the semester with an academic advisor, in fact, are more successful academically than those who do not. Little research has been written about students who have been readmitted following academic dismissal, and most of that research was done 20 or more years ago (Gahn & Hall, 1994).

Currently, at University of Wisconsin-Stout there is a substantial amount of staff time associated with the academic monitoring process and it seems prudent that research be conducted to indicate if, in fact, there is a significant difference between those who participate in the process and those who do not. The university has a strong interest in the retention of its students and has a campus-wide committee studying the current retention efforts and investigating new possibilities. However, as readmission or other retention procedures are implemented, it is essential to study data to determine the effects of these strategies. At a time when resources are increasingly limited in higher education, it is crucial to assess and modify services to best meet the needs of students as efficiently as possible. Perhaps efforts should be redirected or, conversely, intensified based on the results of the study.

A review of the literature shows that students who receive academic advising tend to be more successful than those who do not. Studies have also shown that a powerful retention strategy is when one person takes a caring interest in the student and develops a trusting relationship. Therefore, the research hypothesis for this study is that academically dismissed and readmitted students who regularly attend academic monitoring sessions will demonstrate higher academic achievement in their re-enrollment semester than those who do not attend regular academic monitoring sessions.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study will be to determine the difference in academic achievement, as measured by GPA, for academically dismissed students at UW-Stout during the 1999-2000 academic year, who differ in levels of academic monitoring, as measured by the number of attended advising appointments.

Null Hypotheses

There is no statistically significant difference between grade point average for academically dismissed and readmitted students who experience three or more academic monitoring sessions as compared to those who experience less than three academic monitoring sessions.

Definition of Terms

Terminology used throughout this paper is defined in the following list.

Academic Dismissal – a student is declared academically ineligible to continue at the university for failure to meet the minimum academic standards established by university policy.

Academic Advisor – a staff member in the Student Service's division at the University of Wisconsin -- Stout who monitors a student's academic progress through mid-term grade evaluations and one-to-one contact with the student. Additional assistance is provided with registration, study skills, counseling, and other issues related to academic success.

Academic Monitoring – academic advising that takes place throughout the semester and includes the monitoring of mid-term grade evaluations.

At-Risk Student – any student who is identified as having characteristics that the university perceives as potential interferers or obstacles of successful adjustment to college. These characteristics may include low ACT score, low high school class rank, low income and/or first generation student.

Grade Point Average – equal to the number points assigned each letter grade multiplied by the number of credits for the course. For example: three semester credits of an A (4 points) equal 12 grade points. To determine grade point average for the semester, the grade points for all courses are totaled and divided by the number of semester credits attempted.

Semester – an academic year term in which the student is officially enrolled for seven or more semester credits. If student is enrolled for fewer than seven credits, two such terms are considered equivalent to one semester. A summer session is not considered a semester.

Assumptions

The study assumed the 1999 fall and spring semesters provided an ample and representative group of students who were academically dismissed and subsequently readmitted. The research also assumed the data provided by the Registrar's Office at University of Wisconsin – Stout to be accurate. Additionally, the researcher assumed that data entered into the Student Services database was accurate and up to date and that all available data regarding student meetings with academic advisors was collected and entered.

Limitations

The data collected for this research paper was limited to information from the 1999 academic year at the University of Wisconsin – Stout and may not be generalized to other post-secondary institutions. A limitation of this study may be in the inconsistency of the content and criteria for academic monitoring sessions. The academic monitoring meetings included in this study were based on what each academic advisor considered criteria to constitute a meeting. This could include a student phone call, a brief unannounced visit, or having lunch together and not necessarily an appointment to work on study skills, review mid-term grade evaluations, or to address scheduling issues.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

Introduction

The impact of academic monitoring or advising for students who have been readmitted to the University of Wisconsin-Stout after academic dismissal is of interest to this researcher. A search for literature on the topic of academic intervention following dismissal has yielded no direct studies. However, the review of literature addresses the role of the academic advisor, the use of academic advising as a retention tool, and the importance of student relationships with faculty, staff and advisors. Additionally, this literature review looks at students who are academically dismissed and readmitted and how academic advising is implemented as a condition of re-enrollment for those students. It seems plausible that if the research indicates academic advising as one method of increasing retention and student connectivity to staff as another, that academic advising or monitoring following dismissal and readmission should also improve student success.

Academic Advising

An advisor is one who guides, imparts knowledge, leads, and ultimately helps others become self-sufficient and independent. An advisor can introduce one to new experiences and help one become acclimated to new situations. In addition to these general advising functions, specifically academic advising will, of necessity:

Include schedule planning, appropriate choice of major, and explanation of the curriculum requirements for that major. It will involve teaching students the proper clerical functions to affect their favorable progress through the institution. It will touch on, but not primarily or exclusively, personal adjustment and career choice issues. Finally, good academic advising will teach the student how to locate appropriate

specialized services, such as financial aid, career development, and personal counseling, when these services are deemed necessary. (Wall, 1998, p. 70)

Additionally, academic advisors act as intermediaries between students and virtually every institutional program. They are positioned to identify a range of systemic problems as well as to propose changes that can lead to greater student satisfaction, to increased student retention, and to improved institutional effectiveness (Teitelbaum, 1994).

While many universities are implementing programs aimed at student satisfaction and ultimately student retention, academic advisors can become involved in the research concerning the effectiveness of these efforts. According to King (1993), of Schenectady County Community College, “academic advisors need to be doing research that focuses not only on the effectiveness of the services provided but also on the importance of those services to student growth, to student satisfaction, to student retention, and ultimately, to the achievement of the institution’s mission” (p. 7).

Academic monitoring is a service commonly provided by an academic advisor and implies that the advisor is meeting with the student periodically to monitor their academic progress and overall college experience.

Advising as a Retention Tool

Academic advising has been shown to reduce the rate at which students leave college. Advising can satisfy the need for information and guidance, provide personal interactions, and offer the opportunity to clarify or develop short- and long-range goals.

A study by Astone, Nunes-Wormeck, and Smodlaka (1989) on intensive advising for freshmen at a public, urban institution reinforced the idea of increased retention

through academic advising. The program required a minimum of three hours of academic advising per semester per student. The advising meetings covered such topics as academic and career goals setting, basic skills, attitudes toward college, study skills and academic progress. The rate of persistence increased 10% from the pervious year and the authors concluded that timely information, guidance and personal contact had a positive effect on these high-risk students.

Student Connections to Faculty, Staff and Advisors

According to Noel and Levitz (1998), the single most powerful retention strategy is when at least one person takes a personal interest in the student and relates to that student as a total person. Students are most likely to persist at a college where someone forms a genuine, caring relationship with the student as a real person. Such a relationship is characterized by trust, openness, real concern, and respect (Noel & Levitz, 1998a). A student's ability to connect on campus is vital to the availability and interest of faculty and staff.

Iona College in New York was the site for a study done on the retention of freshman students. The study examined the assumptions, beliefs, and perceptions held by college administrators and faculty. The data indicated that the practice of administrators and faculty working with first-year students appeared to be an integral part of the college's mission. Faculty felt that academic advisement and classroom teaching were the most important parts of their professional lives and that their efforts were positively related to retention (Braunstein & McGrath, 1997).

One reason students may be at risk for academic dismissal is their inability to feel connected to someone on campus. Research indicates that it is essential for a student

who has been readmitted following academic dismissal to establish a trusting relationship with a staff member on campus (Noel & Levitz, 1998a). If this individual provides academic advising and monitoring, other important elements can be encompassed in the relationship.

A study concerning the transition to college was conducted at a large northwestern college during the fall term of 1985. According to Gerdes and Mallinckrodt (1994), the data suggested that students overestimated their ability to adjust academically to college and underestimated their ability to make a personal and emotional adjustment. They found that poor-standing students, following their first semester, did not have clear academic goals and may benefit from career planning. Time management, study skills, anxiety management, and an appropriate course load may also be helpful in building confidence, and, ultimately, academic success (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994). Oftentimes, academic advisors provide these services to students. If students do not develop the necessary connections prior to their dismissal, then research suggests that academic advising or monitoring may be an integral part of their academic success in the readmission semester following academic dismissal.

Academic Dismissal

Most colleges have procedures and policies for academic dismissal and the criteria are usually stated in the college catalogue. The Undergraduate Academic Probation/Dismissal Policy at UW-Stout requires a student to have between a 1.8 and 2.0 cumulative grade point average to be in good standing depending on the number of credits earned (see Appendix A). When a student does not meet minimum academic performance expectations, they are often placed on probation or dismissed. However,

many students want to continue their college careers immediately or sometime in the future. Students at the University of Wisconsin – Stout have an opportunity to appeal their dismissal by detailing the circumstances that led to their academic difficulties, and then describing, in detail how their circumstances have improved and are no longer going to negatively affect their academic progress. Students first file a written appeal that is reviewed by a committee of three staff members including the Dean of Students, Assistant Dean of Students, and the Dismissal Appeals process coordinator. The student's appeal along with the student's entire academic record are reviewed. This results in one of three possible outcomes: the student is denied for at least one semester, the student is readmitted, or the student is granted permission to go before the Credits and Appeals Committee. Students who are readmitted are required to meet with an academic advisor throughout the semester as a condition of their re-enrollment.

Readmission Following Academic Dismissal

Little has been written about students who have been readmitted following academic dismissal, and most of the research was done 20 or more years ago. Although studies have identified some reliable predictors of success for new college students (e.g., high school performance and entrance exam scores), the same criteria do not seem to apply to students seeking readmission after academic dismissal (Gahn & Hall, 1994).

According to Rita, Jr. (1998), "The admission of the student who has failed academically poses a serious problem for the college administrator. There have been few reliable criteria on which to base the readmission decision. Research studies are sparse and spaced far apart across decades" (p. 517). A study done at Bronx Community College in New York investigated 50 variables in predicting the academic outcomes of

86 students readmitted following academic suspension. Students who were successful after readmission indicated dissatisfaction with academic advisement as one of the most likely reasons for past failure (Rita, Jr., 1998).

Advising Academically Dismissed and Readmitted Students

Students who are readmitted after academic dismissal often must agree to follow through with certain activities and services as conditions to their re-enrollment. I think one very (if not extremely) important factor is the formal or informal readmission contract the student agrees to. Colleges need to examine services available to readmitted students and to explore alternatives that might improve their chances for success, such as requiring a personal interview and follow-up advising. (Arndt, 1995, p. 51)

A study done at Florida State University (Kinloch, Frost, & MacKay, 1993) attempted to assess the effectiveness of readmission conditions among approximately 500 social science majors who were dismissed between spring 1989 and fall 1991. It was found that those students who met certain readmission conditions were more successful than others. It is often the academic advisor that implements and coordinates these “conditions” with the students. The student follows with the advisor regarding their success and follow-through with tutoring, career advising, or personal counseling. The academic advisor may also monitor mid-term grade evaluations as a particular condition.

Students on academic suspension at North Lake College in Irving, Texas (Noel & Levitz, 1998b) are required as part of their readmission agreement to enroll in the suspension program. A major component of the program consists of monitoring of academic progress. The results indicated that for students readmitted following

suspension persistence to the next semester rose from 31 percent to 58 percent. “Student comments and evaluations indicate that the intervention has improved their ability to study effectively, manage their time, and learn about campus resources” (p. 6).

As campuses continue to struggle with the dismissal and readmission of students who have failed to meet minimum academic standards, more and more colleges appear to be turning toward one-on-one monitoring and advising as a component of their intervention strategies with this group of students. “At UNCG 83% of these students fall back into academic difficulty. We are trying to come up with interventions for this population. One thing we are strongly considering is a mandatory one on one interview as part of the readmit process. The interview would be designed to look at goals and to create an academic/learning plan” (Murphy, 2000, np).

There are those college administrators and advisors who do not believe, despite current research, that intervention strategies such as one-on-one academic advisement, will improve student success and retention.

Based on the research we’ve done with the LASSI, mandatory meetings, group meetings, and academic enhancement courses, I do “not” believe that one-on-one interviews and planning with students readmitted on probation will be effective. Research aside, my hunch is that students in academic trouble tend to apply for readmission before they are actually ready to come back. My experience suggests that students who are in academic trouble and who have readmitted within a year tend to continue doing poorly. (Balfour, 2000, np)

As post-secondary institutions continue to deal with readmission procedures and practices, it will be essential to continue to study data to determine the effects of the

changes. Ideally, students should know as much as possible about their chances for success upon readmission and also what types of support services will be available to them as “at-risk” students. Students should have a clear understanding of the expectations placed upon them in receiving another chance to continue their education (Gahn & Hall, 1994).

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

The methodology in this study includes a description of the subjects from which the data is collected, the procedure for determining what data was used and how it was obtained, and the methods used for analyzing the statistical data. Also included in this chapter are the limitations of the methods used for this study.

Subjects

University of Wisconsin-Stout is a mid-size, public, midwestern institution with an enrollment of approximately 7,000 full-time students.

The subjects for this study were enrolled students at the University of Wisconsin–Stout who were academically dismissed and readmitted following either the 1999 spring or fall semester.

All of the subjects were originally registered as full-time students during the semester they were academically dismissed. Each student who was subsequently readmitted following the appeal process, agreed to particular “conditions” of his or her re-enrollment. Two groups will be studied: the group of students who met with an academic advisor three or more times and those who did not. The students were identified from the university database. The database queried all students who were academically dismissed in the spring of 1999 and re-enrolled for the fall of 1999 and those students who were academically dismissed in the fall semester of 1999 and re-enrolled in the spring semester of 2000.

Procedure

The data for this study was obtained from the university database and the database housed in Student Services.

The Student Services database contained information regarding all contacts students had with an academic advisor for the identified semester. This database contained records of all student meetings with an academic advisor for the fall and spring semester of the 1999-2000 academic year. The academically dismissed and readmitted students for the identified semesters and the contacts they had with an academic advisor were extracted from this database and merged with the data provided by the university database.

The university database supplied the statistics to assess the dependent variable of academic achievement as it applied to the identified students. Information obtained from the university database included: GPA, number of credits attempted, and number of credits earned for full-time students who were academically dismissed and re-enrolled at the end of the selected terms.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed to look for statistical significance in completion of credits and academic achievement between the group of students who received academic monitoring and the group who did not. Independent t-tests were run using Microsoft Excel to determine if the mean grade point average of academically dismissed and readmitted students who had three or more academic advising sessions was significantly higher than those who had fewer advising sessions. The data was analyzed for each semester and then for both semesters combined. Also data was analyzed to determine the

mean number of credits registered for and the mean number completed for both groups to indicate a student's persistence in completing a full-time schedule as an indication of academic success. Finally, data analysis was conducted to determine the percent of students from both groups who achieved a 2.00 grade point average or higher in the semester following their academic dismissal.

Limitations

A limitation of this study is that only two semesters of academically dismissed and readmitted students were considered and a longer study may indicate a more accurate picture of the benefits of academic monitoring.

This research project only determined student's academic achievement in the semester immediately following the re-enrollment and did not assess student's academic achievements beyond that point.

This study contains extraneous variables that may influence results. The study did not take into account student's admission criteria such as ACT score or class rank as factors in academic success. Also, students may have been academically dismissed for a variety of reasons. For some students, those reasons have been eliminated when they re-enroll, but for others they still exist and may influence academic success again. Additionally, this study does not look at gender, income levels, parent's educational levels, or ethnicity as variables that also can influence academic achievement.

There may be lack of consistency among academic advisors in terms of their approach and what they consider to be important to the process of advising. A set of standards may be beneficial to a study of this nature so that each advisor addresses the same areas. A survey would be beneficial to assess students' perceptions of the various

components of the advising process. This study simply looked at the academic monitoring process as though it was consistent in content for all students.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

The results of this study are based on 172 students who were academically dismissed and subsequently readmitted following the 1999 spring and fall semesters at the University of Wisconsin – Stout. Eighty-five subjects were from the 1999 spring semester and 89 subjects were from the 1999 fall semester. These students were required to meet with an advisor in Student Services following their readmittance to the university. This study divided the subjects into two groups: those who meet with their advisor 3 or more times (n=94) and those who met with their advisor fewer than three times (n=78). The two groups were compared according to achieved grade point average, the number of credits earned, and the percentage of students who earned a 2.0 grade point average in the term following dismissal.

Mean Grade Point Average

The grade point average of students following their semester of readmittance was determined through the University of Wisconsin –Stout Registrar's Office. The groups were divided into those who met fewer than three times with their advisor and those who met three or more times with their academic advisor. The mean for each group is shown in Table 1. On observation, the mean grade point average was similar in both groups with the group that met fewer than three times having a slightly higher mean score. A t-test was run and the results indicated no statistically significant difference at the .05 level between the two groups.

Table 1Semester Grade Point Average

<i>Spring and Fall Semester 1999</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Less than 3 meeting (n=78)	2.011	.888	.338	.367
3 or more meetings (n=94)	1.965	.890		

When separating the group by semester, the results do not change significantly. In fact, the mean grade point average for the semester following spring dismissal was slightly higher for the students who met fewer times with an advisor. The only observable difference is that the mean score for students dismissed in the spring was higher when compared to those who were dismissed in the fall even though they were less likely to meet regularly with an advisor. It appears that students who returned to school with little time between their dismissal and readmittance semester, were likely to meet more frequently with their advisor. Students who were dismissed in the spring semester and did not return for three months were not as likely to follow through on the condition of regular advisor meetings. The t-test indicates there is no statistically significant difference at the .05 level between those who met fewer than three times with an advisor when compared with those who met more than three times when analyzed by semester (See Table 2).

Table 2Grade Point Average 1999 Fall and Spring 1999 Semesters

<i>Dismissed Fall 1999</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Less than 3 meetings (n=25)	1.895	.974	.229	.410
3 or more meetings (n=62)	1.948	.909		
<i>Dismissed Spring 1999</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Less than 3 meetings (n=53)	2.066	.849	.343	.366
3 or more meetings (n=32)	2.000	.866		

Grade Point Average of 2.0 or Above for Term Following Dismissal

The two groups were compared based on the number of students who achieved a 2.00 term grade point average or above in the semester following their dismissal term. Table 3 indicates that for students who met with an academic advisor fewer than three times (n=78), 55% achieved a semester grade point average above 2.00, while 45% of subjects had a grade point average below 2.00. For students who met with an academic advisor three or more times, 51% achieved a term grade point average above 2.00 following their readmittance and 49% had a grade point average below 2.00. When compared with students who met with an academic advisor more three or more times, the population of students who met fewer times consisted of a greater percentage of students achieving a 2.00 grade point average in the term following dismissal. There is no evidence to indicate that the number of contacts with an advisor has a positive relationship on the readmittance term grade point average.

Table 32.00 Grade Point Average

<i>Less than 3 meetings (n=78)</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
At or Above 2.00 GPA	43	55%
Below 2.00 GPA	35	45%
<i>3 or more meetings (n=94)</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Above 2.00 GPA	48	51%
Above 2.00 GPA	46	49%

First Year Students

Of the 172 total students in this study, 61 or 35% were first year college students. Research indicates that these students may do poorly academically partially because they fail to make important connections to an individual who cares about them. These students were separated from the total population studied to analyze whether meeting with an advisor on a regular basis had a greater impact on this group. As Table 4 indicates, the students who attended fewer meetings with an advisor actually had a higher mean grade point average. There is statistical significant difference demonstrated at the .019 level, but the significance supports the null hypothesis that students who attend fewer academic advising meetings tend to have better grade point averages in the semester following dismissal than those who attend frequent meetings with an academic advisor.

Table 4GPA for First Year Students in Term Following Dismissal

<i>First Year Students N=61</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M (GPA)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>
Less than 3 meetings	27	2.126	.835	2.11
3 or more meetings	34	1.667	.807	

Registered and Completed Credits

Grade point average is an important assessment tool in this study, but other variables may also indicate success for students who are academically dismissed and readmitted. One of those variables is the comparison between the number of credits a student registers for and the number of credits they complete. Twelve credits is considered full-time enrollment and for many students insurance and financial aid are dependent on the completion of a particular number of credits. In addition, student's progress toward their degree is determined by the credits they successfully complete. Completing a full-time credit load successfully may be as much an indication of success as a high grade point average with only a few credits completed. Table 5 indicates the completion rate of registered credits for students who attended fewer than three academic advising meetings and for those who attended three or more. The number of credits completed was similar for both groups, with students meeting fewer than three times completing slightly more credits in the semester following their academic dismissal than those who met more frequently. A greater percentage of students (54.1%) who met fewer times with an advisor completed a full-time schedule than those who met more

often (46.8%). The number of credits completed is similar regardless of the number of meetings a student has with an academic advisor.

Table 5

Registered and Completed Credits

	<i>Less than 3 meetings</i>	<i>3 or more meetings</i>
Registered credits Mean	14.13	14.17
Completed credits Mean	10.27	9.97
Percent Completing More than 12 credits	54.1%	46.8%

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Implications and Recommendations

Summary

Each semester students who are academically dismissed have an opportunity to appeal the university dismissal policy. Students who successfully appeal and are allowed to return the following semester are asked to adhere to certain conditions. The primary condition for readmittance is that the students meet regularly with an academic advisor. The basis for this requirement is backed by research that indicates students who make a connection with a staff member tend to do better academically and therefore, are more likely to be retained. In addition, students have an opportunity to receive mid-term grade evaluations, receive assistance on a variety of academic issues, and receive study skills information and strategies. At the University of Wisconsin – Stout, students are asked to meet with an academic advisor on a regular basis, usually once to twice a month at minimum. Students understand that if they fail to comply with this condition, it will weigh heavily in any further appeals to the dismissal policy submitted by the student.

While there were no direct studies of this type, it was hypothesized, based on available research, that students who received academic monitoring would have more academic success than those who did not. The results of the data analysis failed to reject the null hypothesis stating there is no statistically significant difference between grade point average for academically dismissed and readmitted students who experience three or more academic monitoring sessions as compared to those who experience less than three academic monitoring sessions. The two groups were compared using grade point average and credits earned for the term following dismissal. There was no statistically

significant difference between the groups for either variable. It appears that academic monitoring did not impact a student's academic success the semester following their dismissal.

Implications

There are several extraneous variables that could provide insight into the results of this study.

There is no information provided as to the ACT scores or class ranks of the students who were part of this study. It is not known what type of secondary academic success the students had prior to enrolling in the university. Also, for students who are dismissed in their second year of college or later, it may be that other semesters were academically successful and that their dismissal was directly related to a singular limited event. Their subsequent semesters may be free of extenuating circumstances.

Research does indicate student motivation as a high predictor of academic success and this study does not attempt to take this variable into account. Lack of motivation is a complex variable and may not be affected by outside influences or factors such as academic monitoring.

Additionally, a number of students in this study are identified as having a disability. The disability itself may affect a student's ability to perform academically and also necessitates frequent contact with an academic advisor for test accommodations, priority registration, and advocacy. Consequently, the number of meetings with an advisor can be high, while academic success may still be difficult to attain. These situations could affect the results of the study in comparing the two groups.

This study implies that the number of times a student meets with an academic advisor has little relationship to how well they will do academically, however, the only criteria for measurement is grade point average and credits completed for the semester immediately following dismissal. This study did not look at the academic monitoring implications on the graduation rate of students who had been academically dismissed. Also, the amount of academic improvement was not measured and compared for each group.

Academic monitoring provides some services to students that are not measurable by grade point average. An academic advisor assists students in retaking previously failed courses in a manageable time frame. They can facilitate students in accessing other resources on or off campus and will make necessary referrals. Also, students receive assistance with scheduling problems and other issues related to their academics including researching other, more viable post-secondary options.

Although this study did not demonstrate any significant difference between the two groups in terms of the following semester grade point average, there are other variables that should be considered when determining the need for students to meet with an academic advisor on a regular basis following dismissal and readmittance to the university.

Recommendations

This study raises more questions regarding who should receive academic advising and rationale for those services. It raises additional questions as to how the success of an academic monitoring program should be measured.

A recommendation would be to conduct more research in the form of a longitudinal study to compare graduation rates for students who attend meetings with an academic advisor following dismissal. It may be that the relationships they develop and the services they receive have long-term effects on college students in terms of success and retention.

Prior to their academic dismissal, many of the students in this study had one or two semesters of probationary status. A recommendation would be to implement the academic monitoring condition during the probationary term as a proactive intervention rather than waiting until the student is dismissed. When students are dismissed, it usually means repeating courses and attempting to climb out of a deep hole in terms of their grade point average. Some students may feel the task of achieving satisfactory academic standing is insurmountable. By intervening during the probationary term, students may receive assistance that can assist them in turning their situation around prior to creating a huge academic deficit.

A final recommendation is to consider ongoing academic advising training for all staff involved in the process. There may be a lack of consistency between individual staff in terms of what they view as necessary components of the advisement process. There may be a wide range of approaches and students may benefit more from some than others.

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Undergraduate Probation, Dismissal and Withdrawal

Definitions

Grade Point A "Grade Point" for a class is equal to the number of semester credits multiplied by the number of points assigned each letter grade. For example: three semester credits of "A" equal 12 grade points. Cumulative grade points are all of the individual class grade points earned added together.

Good Academic Standing A cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or better.

Acceptable Academic Standard Any cumulative grade point average below a 2.0 which does not result in probation or dismissal.

Academic Probation This term is used to indicate that the minimum grade point average standards set by the university have not been met. By being placed in this status, you are officially notified that improvement is necessary to continue attending.

Academic Dismissal When the given period of academic probation has been allowed and satisfactory progress has not been made in meeting the required academic standards of the university, you may not continue to attend. You are declared academically ineligible to continue and may not be readmitted:

1. Before the lapse of at least one semester, unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated your dismissal was due to factors beyond the your control and that the cause(s) has (*have*) been removed. Satisfactory performance during summer session, followed by a written appeal to the Admissions and Credits Committee may result in immediate readmission.
2. Similarly, if you have been academically dismissed, readmitted, and again fail to earn the required grade point average, you will not be eligible for readmission until a period of two years has elapsed, unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that your academic dismissal

was due to factors beyond your control and that the cause(s) has (*have*) been removed.

If you are academically dismissed by a university or college you may or may not be able to enroll at another university or college. The decision rests with the receiving campus. Admission or readmission is not automatic for academically dismissed students.

Semester A semester is defined as an academic year term in which you are officially enrolled for seven or more semester credits. If you carry fewer than seven credits, two such terms shall be considered equivalent to one semester. A Summer Session is not regarded as a semester.

Definition of classification for probation/dismissal purposes is based on semester credits attempted rather than earned.

Classification	Credits
First-semester Freshman	0 -- 14.5
Second-semester Freshman	15 -- 29.5
First-semester Sophomore	30 -- 44.5
Second-semester Sophomore	45 -- 59.5
Junior	60 -- 89.5
Senior	90 or more

Academic Policies

A student is ineligible to continue at UW-Stout if the student's current grade point average falls below 1.0.

A student will be removed from probation at the end of any semester in which the student attains the required cumulative grade point average.

Transfer Students A transfer student will be required to meet the retention standards. The number of credits transferred from other colleges and universities attended will be used to determine the student's classification.

Credits transferred from accredited institutions may count toward

graduation, but such grades and credits will not be used in the computation of the cumulative grade point average.

Students on Dismissal Students on dismissal may attend any Summer Session. A re-evaluation of the student's scholastic status may be made at the conclusion of the Summer Session and may result in readmission, or the student may have to appeal to the Admissions and Credits Committee. The contact person for the committee will be the dean of students.

Students Entering on Probation New freshmen or transfer students who enter on probation need to attain the following standard to get off probation: first semester freshmen -- 1.800; second semester freshmen --1.900; all others -- 2.000.

A student who has been declared academically ineligible to continue at the university may submit a written appeal for readmission to the Admissions and Credits Committee. The contact person is the dean of students.

Retention Standards

To remain in good academic standing, the student's cumulative grade point average must be 2.0 or above. Selected majors require better than a 2.0 for graduation.

Students are placed on academic probation if their academic record does not meet the standard set by UW-Stout. Notice of probationary status indicates that improvement is necessary. Standards are defined as follows:

1. A first semester freshman (*0 to 14.5 attempted credits*) will be placed on probation if the student achieves a cumulative grade point average less than 1.8 at the end of the semester; the student will be dismissed if the current semester grade point average is less than 1.0 at the end of the semester.
2. A second semester freshman (*15 to 29.5 attempted credits*) will be placed on academic probation if the student's cumulative grade point average at the end of the semester is less than 1.9; the student will be dismissed if the current grade point average is less than 1.0 for the semester.
3. A first or second semester sophomore (*30 to 59.5 attempted credits*), or an upper division student, will be placed on academic probation at the end of any semester in which the student's cumulative grade point average is less than 2.0: the

- student will be dismissed at the end of any semester in which the current semester grade point average is less than 1.0.
4. Students on probation will be dismissed if they have two consecutive terms of probationary level cumulative grade point averages unless they receive a 2.500 or better current semester grade point average.

Students should realize that having been out one semester or more does not guarantee re-entry. Each case is individually considered regarding the individual student's potential, problems and other variables.

Withdrawal from UW-Stout

Withdrawal should be undertaken only after serious consideration. To ensure careful consideration of the intention to withdraw, to protect the students from the dangers which may result from failure to use the approved withdrawal procedures and to assist university officials who are concerned with withdrawals, the following procedure has been established:

1. The person intending to withdraw from the university reports to the Advisement Assistance Center, lower level Bowman Hall. If the withdrawal is to occur, a withdrawal form, provided by the center, is to be signed by the designated university personnel. The completion of this process ensures that the proper refund will be awarded.
2. This form, containing the signatures of the designated persons, is then returned to the Advisement Assistance Center.
3. On completion of the withdrawal procedure, a mark of "W" will be recorded for all courses in which a student is enrolled, if the student withdraws from the university prior to the midterm date. After the midterm date (*as indicated in the university calendar*), any withdrawal from a course is recorded as an "F." If extenuating circumstances warrant other consideration, an appeal may be made to the instructor of the course.

Withdrawal Fee

If you withdraw from the university, you will be charged a fee of \$50 for a first-week withdrawal, and \$100 for any withdrawal during the second week.

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