

Academic Support Resources: Academic Support and Retention

Transcript

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Good Afternoon and welcome to our Hawkeye Parents & Families Webinar Series. My name is Danielle Martinez and I work in Academic Support & Retention and will be the moderator for today's webinar. If you are new to our series, we hope that we provide you with up to date information about what is going on here at the University of Iowa. I'm really excited for today's webinar because it is from two of my favorite people in the entire world, two of our colleagues here in Academic Support and Retention, Mirra Anson, who serves as our Director, and Stephanie Preschel, who serves as one of our other Assistant Directors.

As a reminder, each webinar is recorded and then posted on the Academic Support & Retention website so it can be accessed at a later date or viewed by individuals who were not able to attend the live webinar. Therefore, during the presentations, your mic functions will be muted. Later we will have a Question & Answer portion, where you can use the raise hand function or type in your question into the question box on the side. So without further ado, we will get to our presentation on **Academic Support Resources** with Stephanie and Mirra.

Program

Academic Support Resources

Stephanie: Hi everyone, this is Stephanie Preschel, I'm just going to kick it off for us today. The first thing that we want to share is what our objectives are for the session. So the first thing that we are going to be talking about is how to foster positive academic behaviors, so things that you can think about when you are talking to your student about being successful in the classroom, as well as just a student here at Iowa. The second thing is we are going to provide an overview of Academic Support options on campus, and share the different types and how to find what would be best for your student depending on what class they are in. And then lastly, how should your student utilize those services. We will give you some best practices and strategies and things for you and your student to talk about.

So one thing we want to mention is that we know that Academic Support is one of the many pieces of your student's experience and one of the many things that goes into being a successful student. So we are really focusing on all of the academic support options we have on campus, but just know that we do understand that this is just one part of the larger picture for your student.

Some of the messaging for things to think about when you are talking with your student, are the following. The first one is just being proactive with utilizing the different resources. We really want to encourage your student to take advantage of things earlier in the semester and not to wait until they feel lost in a class or waiting until the night before an exam, really staying on top of the work and the material so that as soon as a question comes up, to start taking advantage of those resources. The second thing is establishing and using a network of support. So these are people that are part of the campus community and people that are outside of the campus community as well. On campus, every student has an academic advisor, they have their faculty, and if they live on campus they have their RA, as well as their family members and friends. These are all people that we want

them to be talking to, regularly being kept in the loop, as questions come up, to definitely ask and talk with others about that. The third thing is practicing academic behaviors. It's really important for your student to know what works for them and what doesn't. So sometimes we know that we all learn a little bit differently, we are going to have different academic goals, and so it's really important that, what may work for your student's friend, may not be what works best for them, so they should really be focusing on finding things that work best for them. We also encourage them to seek out help when needed, there is a lot of support on campus for Academic Support options, but there are also a lot of other resources on campus as well, so as soon as something comes up, we will definitely seek help. There are a lot of other people on campus that want to help your student, so definitely take advantage of those resources. The last thing is bouncing back. So if your student encounters any obstacles, any challenges, try not to let that deter them or really negatively impact their experience with moving forward. If they get a grade that they are not as satisfied with, try to learn from that experience, not too much on the grade they didn't want to get, but really focusing on the behaviors they did to get there so they can make adjustments and be more successful and meet their goals moving forward.

Mirra: Thank you Stephanie. This is Mirra Anson from Academic Support and Retention as well, and what we have found to be really helpful when we work with students particularly in the context of getting them connected with academic support resources, is certainly messaging to the students, but also how can we best message to the student? So we've developed for ways in which we have found that has been successful with our campus partners has been successful when working with students to get them more readily connected to academic support resources. The first is really tapping into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. So really what gets your student motivated to make those connections, to reach out for assistance, to ask for help when they need it. And often times it is intrinsic in terms of what are the student's individual goals, what do they help to accomplish, what would really help establish self-efficacy and some confidence. Also too, what would be some of the more extrinsic factors, such as getting good grades, progressing to degree, getting into a competitive degree program, there is a variety of different motivational factors. So we often times take some time to sit down with the student and talk about what their goals are and how can we get you connected to those goals and what are the incentive pieces that will work within that. And then speaking of goals, developing realistic goals. So as many of you may know, when a student comes to college, a lot of transition both in and out of the classroom, and often times we work with many students who will be enrolled in a course or in a degree program and find that maybe they are interested in something else and might want to change their major or pursue a different career path or a different academic path. And often times a lot of it comes down to a student thinking, "Well I did really well in this particular course in high school and I get to college and maybe that's not what a want to study here for the next four years." So thinking about what are realistic goals for that student, particularly given how their strengths may change and evolve as they grow and experience college, especially during that first year. Also next, foster a sense of belief in self and this is that self-advocacy piece or self-efficacy piece. So how can we continue to tell a student that every single college student encounters an obstacle? Really what matters is how they respond to the obstacle. And a piece of that really is resiliency, really knowing that they can do it, they have a particular goal set in mind and as long as that goal set is realistic and that is where they want to be, then yes, continue to encourage that student that you can do this. And finally determining the gap. So often times, an exercise that we will work through a discussion with a group of students or individual students is actually based upon, what are your goals, what are your behaviors, and how is there a gap between the two.

So to elaborate a little bit more on the gap, some positive questions that we present to a lot of students that really help determine how can we better connect behaviors and goals would be asking a set of questions to get students to think about what that gap might be so they are more likely to reach their goals. First, how do you want to spend your time, what matters to you, what values does a student have, what is important in their day, what goals do they have and are their behaviors consistent with what their values might be. How do you currently spend your time, in particular with incoming students, time management can often times be a concern, particularly coming from an environment where their days tend to be very structured and full, and then coming to the college environment and finding gaps of time where they don't have anything assigned for them to do. And so thinking about, what are they doing in that time- are they studying, are they working, are they socializing with friends, and how best can they better utilize that time by creating constructive academic behaviors. What is the same, and what is different? So often times when we use this question, we talk about what has helped them previously and what will help them now? Given the fact that they are in a very different environment than they were before. So strategies that they used to be academically successful in high school or at a previous institution might carry over here at the University of Iowa. There may be variation as they adjust to a new academic setting. Who has been your support people in the past? What we hear from our first year students is that family is a top support for them. So continuing to reach out to parents, to other family members, if there are questions or concerns, we definitely encourage students to maintain their support structure but also too, to be open to thinking about who else can they go to to seek help, who are their support structures at the University of Iowa, and often times that almost always includes an academic advisor. If a student lives in the residence halls, that could be their RA or a hall coordinator, or even a faculty member, or perhaps they connect with someone in our office. There is really a variety of resources that a student can use to help them construct that positive support structure. And then too, how can those people help you close the gap? So having a student come into the office or plan to meet with their advisor or with one of us or with a faculty member and being more specific about their concerns, so for example, if it's a course thinking, well I might be struggling in this particular course, but in what ways? Is it the tests, is it the homework? So really thinking about is it related to content or specific areas that they can bring up so individuals can help them address those concerns. And then too, readjusting to what behaviors to use in order to close that gap. So again, thinking about what their academic goals may be, and what behaviors they can put into place, can better help them reach those goals, and perhaps that is more time studying, perhaps that is connecting with faculty and instructors more or their advisor more, it really varies by student and situation, and the course.

We wanted to elaborate a little more on building resiliency, because what we have found as we work with more students, and I think that this is something that applies to all college students is the importance of resiliency and what we know is that students who demonstrate that behavior are more consistent with resiliency. So students who bounce back, they do tend to be more successful in terms of grades, in terms of getting that degree in a timely manner. And we always want to make sure that we are being very clear by what we mean by resiliency and behaviors that contribute to resiliency. So if we look at the graphic, we see adversity, belief and consequence. And really what is important here is the belief, because again, every college student will face an adversity. And it's not that that happens, it's the belief about the situation that leads to the consequence. For example, a student may get a bad grade on a test. And so what is a consequence for getting a D or an F on that test? Is the consequence that they withdraw from the course or pursue a different pathway in terms of the degree program? It really depends on what they believe about that situation, and that comes back to self-efficacy and what their goals are. So we really focus on students to stop and think about, what are really your

goals, how do you believe in yourself, if there is something that you want to do and you believe that you can realistically achieve it, then by all means keep going and don't give up.

Stephanie: Thanks, Mirra. So now we're going to focus on how to find the different resources that we have available on campus. So the first thing that we want everyone to know about is Tutor Iowa. It is a website, tutor.uiowa.edu, and this is a great place to go if you are just wondering what options are available to my student? And it works like Google. There is a search bar where you can just type in the class a student is enrolled in and then all the resources that we have that are available will come up. We list all of our free resources first, so if there is free tutoring, supplemental instruction, all of those options are listed at the top, and then after that we list if there is a private tutor or multiple private tutors available for that class. So this is the campus' central place for information on all of our academic resources for undergraduate students. It's really a good place to start to figure out what is available.

We have a lot of different types of support on campus, so we just want to cover the different places that you can refer your student. So first and foremost, you can always refer them to their faculty member, their TA, their instructor, and encourage them to go to office hours. This is a great opportunity to ask specific questions about the course but also a really great opportunity to go in and ask the professor for their opinion, what do you need to do to be successful in this class. And they will give advice, they will give suggestions and tips. They will also help clarify course content and give them good encouragement on how they can be successful. We always encourage every student to take advantage of their faculty during office hours. With that being said, we do know that scheduling can be challenging and a professor's office hours may be during another class. In that situation, we encourage the student to contact the professor via email to set up an appointment or try and catch them before or after class about setting up an appointment so they can talk to them more in depth one on one. The second option that we have is tutoring in general. We have a lot of different types of tutoring available on campus. Most of our centers that we have are drop-in, so things like Tippie Tutoring, the Math Tutorial Lab, Physics and Astronomy Tutoring Center, the Chemistry Resource Center, and Residence Education tutoring. These are all drop in centers that your student can take advantage of. In those settings, when a student shows up, they may be working one on one with a tutor or they may be working in a group. If there are several students that have similar questions, they are going to work together with the tutor, so they can help as many students as possible, but also help the students connect with other folks in those classes. We do have a few centers that are appointment based. These are centers like the writing center, the speaking center, the Tippie College of Business also has their own communications center, as does the College of Engineering. Those places are opportunities for students to sign up for an appointment in advance, and they can bring their questions, they can bring their assignment and things like that, and talk through how to be successful. You can find information on Tutor Iowa about all of those centers as well as what students need to know before they go. So they will find out if it's drop-in, they will find out if it is appointment based and any information they need to know before going. Our third thing that we have is Supplemental Instruction or SI. SI is offered in two different places on campus. We have the ARC or the Academic Resource Center, which is located in the IMU, or Iowa Memorial Union, and then also the College of Nursing offers it for some of their courses for nursing interest and College of Nursing students. SI is a little bit different than tutoring. These are more structured sessions. So students that attend these, really all they have to do is bring their notes and be ready to talk about what material is happening in class at that point. The SI leader is another student who already took the class and did really well, and they facilitate different activities to help the students better understand the content, but also help them learn different study skills that will help them be successful in the class. SI is a great strategy to help

stay on top of the material, stay current with the content, to get your questions answered, and it is a great time saver as well. Research shows that for SI specifically, one 50 minute session is equivalent to studying on your own for about two hours. We know our students are busy, and it is a really great time saver. And then we also have private tutors. Tutor Iowa is the campus' central resource for finding private tutors on campus. When you do a search on the website, you can find out what is available for private tutor options. If your student is interested in private tutoring, they can work one on one with someone, and some of our private tutors will also do group tutoring as well, so if your student is interested in hiring a private tutor with a couple of friends, they often will tutor at kind of a discounted rate for multiple people, so that is also an option.

And then how to refer your student. So when your student is going to these different tutoring centers, talking with their faculty, attending SI, working with a private tutor, we encourage them to always do the following things. First and foremost, bring their notes, and bring their course materials. It's going to help them be more prepared, often times it is a great opportunity to fill in notes, clarify their notes that they took in class, but really when they leave, they will be a more descriptive and well-rounded set of notes to help them prepare moving forward. The next thing is coming prepared with questions or areas of discussion. It's always important to prepare before going to utilize these services because that is going to help the student get the most out of their time when they are there. So if they do have specific questions, that is always great, the other thing is that if they don't have specific questions, that's fine as well, but they should have specific topics that they would like to discuss. It's okay if they don't know exactly what it is that they aren't understanding because the tutor will help them figure that out, but any information that they can communicate with the tutor will help the tutor better support them and help them. The third thing is just expecting to learn. We love getting information as quickly as possible to move forward, but really all of our centers on campus are faculty or tutors or SI leaders, they all want the students to learn or understand how they got to that point. So a lot of times students will have specific homework questions and things like that. The centers are not going to do the homework for them or give them the answer. They are going to help them learn how to get there and how to get to the answer. What they typically will do instead of doing the actual homework problem, they will take whatever concept it is that is being featured in the homework and then create another problem and pull out that concept and focus on solving and understanding that in order to then do their homework. It's a learning process that will help them the most in the long run, and it will take a little bit of time as well. And then we also encourage them to ask questions as they come up throughout the semester. In almost every course, the material is going to build upon each other, so it is important that they understand things as they are going. We find that students who don't ask the questions as they come up really start to struggle when it comes to midterm time or during finals or in large assignments, since material is so built upon each other. So definitely encourage them to ask questions as they come up, and again, it can be as simple as stopping by office hours or stopping by tutoring, attending as SI session, but there are a lot of ways for helping them get clarity for content as things come up throughout the semester.

Q and A

Danielle: Thank you so much Mirra and Stephanie for all of your great information on academic resources here at the University of Iowa. We will now move the question and answer session of our webinar. Please remember that we have lots of folks attending today's webinar so we may be unable to answer very specific questions about your student's experience but can provide information that might be helpful in guiding your student. If you have a question, please feel free to type it into the question box on the side. We will then read the question

out loud so all participants can hear and then our presenters can answer. So we will go ahead and see if anybody has any questions.

Danielle: How much does a private tutor usually cost?

Stephanie: That is a great question. Our private tutors do get to set their own wages, and mainly this is because our range is first and second year students, all the way up to PhD students. They do tend to charge different amounts depending on their level of experience and content knowledge. It's also an opportunity for them to charge what they think makes the most sense for them. A lot of our tutors will negotiate price, and as I mentioned earlier, will charge a discounted rate typically if they are working with a group of students. If a tutor charges \$15 an hour or \$10 an hour, they might do that and then charge \$5 for each additional person, so then if it is a group, they can have a discounted rate.

Danielle: One of the questions is centered around students in larger classes, so any general advice for students who are in a large lecture class?

Stephanie: One of the pieces of advice that I have for that is if they are in a large class, is if they study with other people. One of the things we tell student is to not do college by yourself and so that is everything from utilizing the faculty, utilizing tutoring and things like that, but it is also about studying with other people who are in the course, I think that can really help make that large course seem smaller. One strategy that is really helpful for a lot of students as they learn material, is to sit down and talk it through with someone. Whether that is once a week, a couple of times a week, whatever that looks like for them, because when they talk it through, that helps them understand what they are learning as well. It's also really good to reach out to the faculty member in a large class and make that connection because that will also help make the class smaller. And then we also mention that we offer supplemental instruction for typically very high enrollment courses, and that is great way to make that class feel smaller by having a structured study group with other folks and the SI leader.

Danielle: So you all provided great information on how to structure the conversation with your student, and we have a question about how do we recommend to best deliver that communication?

Mirra: I think that is a really great question and is something that so much of it does depend on the particular situation, but in general, often times we will talk with a student about what are your outcomes and how do you link that with expectations and goals. For example, we'll say, "What do you hope to learn from this class?" "What do you hope to learn from this semester and how can we make you get there?" And often times that does relate to using academic support resources. The first step would be coming back to that concept of the gap between behaviors and goals like we talked about earlier. I think maybe going back to some of those questions and really talking with the student about that, and I think part of that is the process of creating a plan on how to meet those goals. Looking at Tutor Iowa is really helpful. I think it is one of the best websites that I have seen at college campuses where students and parents can type in a course and then they will receive a list of resources that exist for that particular course. So those are really some building blocks on how to make a student as academically successful as possible here.

Stephanie: Another thing that I would add on here is on Tutor Iowa that we didn't talk about, is that we have these academic tips worksheets. So if you are talking with your student and they are saying something that they are struggling with is maybe notetaking or reading or something like that, or they are really struggling because

all of their exams are multiple choice, we have different worksheets and there are sections of academic tips worksheets. Those just have a lot of different tips and strategies and that can also give you some ideas of support when you are talking with your student on different things that they can do to be successful.

Danielle: Who can the student contact if they can't find additional resources for a class?

Stephanie: We want you to contact us! If you are on the Tutor Iowa website and you can't find something or maybe there is some confusion, please contact us, you can call our office number and the Tutor Iowa email comes to us and we can help you. Or your student can contact their academic advisor. They are very knowledgeable about all of their resources, so we want to make sure to get them connected to whatever will best help them.

Danielle: What is our contact information? Our phone number here is (319) 335-1497 and the Tutor Iowa email is tutoriowa@uiowa.edu and we read all of those emails everyday so we will get back to you. So that is all of the time that we have for today, thank you so much for joining us, especially to Mirra and Stephanie, our presenters. Just a note that all webinars will be posted online at uc.uiowa.edu/family-resources. If you were unable to get your question answered here today, we'll follow up with you via email to answer your question. Additional questions can be sent to uc-retention@uiowa.edu for a response from a University of Iowa staff member. Please join us next time for our next month's webinar in April, Summer Fun! Jobs and Internships. This will be April Fool's Day, it is not a joke, we will be here from noon to 1:00 p.m. on April 1st. Feel free to log on, thanks so much and we will see you then. On Iowa, Go Hawks!