

Job Description

Job Title:	Senior Academic Development Specialist
Department:	Student Success Office
Reports To:	Associate Director, Student Transition and Learning Services
Jobs Reporting:	Academic Development Specialists Coordinator, Academic Support Programs
Salary Grade:	USG 11
Effective Date:	August 2015

Primary Purpose

The Senior Specialist will be responsible for providing overall leadership to the Academic Development Specialists and the Coordinator, Academic Support Programs to support the development, coordination and delivery of strategies and programs designed to promote and enhance student's success both at the Institutional and at the Faculty levels. Using best practice teaching and learning strategies, current literature in student retention, student engagement and student development, and research strategies he/she will provide leadership and guidance to the Student Success Office (SSO) in developing research informed strategies to fulfill the mandate of the SSO in providing strategic student support.

The Senior Specialist must be knowledgeable of the SSO, Faculty and institutional priorities to ensure development and implementation of strategies and programming that model and promote a coordinated, collaborative, and intentional approach to academic support strategies and programming on our campus. He/she will work closely with staff, faculty, instructors, advisors, student groups, etc. and is a key resource for the Leadership Team and Specialists. He/she must therefore have an intimate knowledge of all Faculties and a strong understanding of the student experience as it relates to factors that contribute to engagement, student development overall student success and retention. He/she is responsible for collecting, analyzing and managing data and data processes to help inform decision making primarily related to the best use of academic support resources.

Key Accountabilities

- Leads a team of Specialists in the development of research informed content, programs and initiatives that are in response to the needs and priorities of our Faculty partners and are in line with the strategic priorities of the SSO. This includes but is not limited to developing online support materials, designing course specific interventions, determining how academic and life skill development can be integrated into the classroom and designing content for Faculty day programs
- He/she leads the collection and analysis of information and research on academic development and overall student success to ensure decisions surrounding the planning, prioritizing, and management of the academic support strategies and projects being developed and implemented are research informed
- He/she works closely with the SSO Leadership team to ensure appropriate dissemination and interpretation of this information and research on student success
- Oversees the coordination and delivery of: University 101, academic skills workshops, Supported Learning Groups, course specific interventions and the peer coaching program
- Knowledgeable of our priority populations including international, first year graduate, transfer and others as determined through research initiatives. He/she is up to date on best practice teaching

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<p>and learning strategies, current literature in student retention, student engagement and student development that may assist in supporting the development of all students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish performance indicators and assessment methods to measure achievement in all areas of responsibility including learning outcomes, program goals and objectives and individual program success• Oversee the day-to-day operations of the Academic Development team• Member of the SSO leadership team• Provides leadership and guidance to the Academic Development Specialists and the leadership team in understanding data trends and patterns with respect to various issues of strategic importance, such as factors that contribute to and enhance student success, student engagement, student development and teaching and learning strategies at post-secondary institutions
<p>Relationships Building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participates in and contributes to regular staff, department and Faculty wide meetings as appropriate• Represents SSO at relevant Faculty and department wide meetings as appropriate• Develops and maintains excellent working relationships with instructors and all campus and Faculty partners – particularly in designing and delivering course specific interventions
<p>Strategic Direction and Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supports and participates in the development of a Faculty student success strategy in the SSO• Uses research and best practices to inform strategy development• Acquires a solid understanding of Faculty and institution's goals and priorities as it relates to enhancing student success. An intimate knowledge of Faculty partners and used in the planning and evaluation of academic support strategies and projects• Provides strong leadership to Specialists and Coordinator, Academic Support Programs. This includes setting clear and reasonable expectations, providing ongoing feedback and establishing a strong foundation for performance• Informed by best practices and current research, leads the design, delivery and evaluation of Faculty specific and SSO specific strategies and projects related to Academic Development and overall Student Success
<p>Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Timely creation and delivery of information, analyses, reports and projections related to student success and opportunities for academic support strategies and projects. This includes data and information related to course specific attrition rates and predictive indicators• Knowledgeable and up to date on current literature and research related to student success strategies, retention, student engagement, student development and teaching and learning strategies. He/she uses this knowledge to inform the development of strategies to enhance student success at the Faculty and Institutional level• Strong understanding of the needs of Waterloo students, including identified priority populations (e.g, first year student, international, graduate, transfer and exchange students)• Proficient in reading and interpreting statistical information and data relevant to academic support, retention, student engagement and development

**All employees of the University are expected to follow University and departmental health and safety policy, procedures and work practices at all times. Employees are also responsible for the completion of all health and safety training, as assigned. Employees with staff supervision and/or management responsibilities will ensure that assigned staff abide by the above, and actively identify, assess and correct health and safety hazards, as required.*

Required Qualifications

Education

- University degree required; Master's or equivalent education and experience in a related field (e.g., Education, Student Services,) required. Teaching credentials considered an asset.

Experience

- Experience in an academic setting working with students, Faculty members/instructors and staff preferred.
- Experience designing and delivering academic support strategies required.
- Experience teaching in a university setting strongly preferred.
- Program/project management experience is an asset.
- Experience using University of Waterloo systems for data collection purposes (Quest, OAT, IAP, data cube, etc).

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Exceptional communication and relationship-building skills.
- Proven influencing and teamwork skills, and the ability to lead co-workers in projects and teams.
- Proven ability to take initiative and be both creative and flexible.
- Strong organizational and time management skills, and sound judgment.
- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively, build consensus and be sensitive to the needs and interests of various stakeholders, and contribute to the functioning of a diverse team both within the department and across the institution.
- Demonstrated ability to contribute to and thrive in a collaborative environment and to apply a positive team approach to working with colleagues.
- Confident in analyzing, interpreting and disseminating data.
- Proficient in creating reports summarizing large amounts of data and information.
- Advanced skills in PowerPoint required.
- Intermediate skills in SPSS required.
- Intermediate MS Word and Excel skills required.

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** Able to build collaborative working relationships while at the same time balancing the interests of Faculty partners with the interests of the SSO. Teamwork skills are crucial as is consensus building. Ability to build and maintain new relationships is essential.
- **Level of Responsibility:** He/she is responsible for managing the day to day operations of the Academic Development team including setting priorities and managing internal and external expectation of this area. The Senior Specialist is responsible for ongoing performance management and yearly performance appraisals. As well, Staff in the SSO will look to the Senior Specialist to inform evidence-based decisions on strategies and program development.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** The Senior Specialist will make decisions in collaboration with others about the strategic priorities relating to the SSO and initiatives relating to enhancing student success. He/she determines the optimum course of action to solve problems and to exert a positive influence on other stakeholders on behalf of the SSO.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** Minimal demands typical of a position operating within a fast-paced service-oriented office environment; extensive periods of sitting and concentrated use of visual senses. Requires close attention to detail, thoroughness, and accuracy.
- **Working Environment:** Located in a comfortable indoor area, although location can change. Minimal exposure to disagreeable conditions.