Academic Development Specialist

Date: April 2016
Reports to (Job Title): Senior Academic Development Specialist
Jobs Reporting (Job Titles): N/A
Department: Student Success Office
Location: Main Campus
Grade: USG 8-10
35 hr/wk

Primary Purpose

The Specialists will be responsible for developing, coordinating and delivering strategies and programs designed to promote and enhance student’s success both at the Institutional and at the Faculty levels. Using teaching and learning strategies and best practice research in student retention, engagement and development practices, he/she will work closely with the Faculty Relations Manager, Manager, Student Experience and Senior Academic Development Specialist to respond to the needs of each Faculty and work to fulfill the mandate of the Student Success Office (SSO) in providing strategic student support to students. He/she may also be required to meet with groups of students or individual students who are struggling to meet their academic requirements. This will be determined through consultation with Faculty and campus partners as appropriate and will be part of an intentional intervention strategy.

The Specialists must be knowledgeable of Faculty, SSO and institutional priorities that would inform the strategies and programs they design and deliver. He/she will work closely with staff, Faculty, instructors, advisors, student groups, etc. to design, deliver and provide overall coordination for student success strategies. He/she is a key resource for Faculty Relations Managers and therefore must have an intimate knowledge of the Faculties he/she is working with. Each specialist will work with specific Faculties and/or specific populations as per his/her subject matter expertise and/or as assigned.

Key Accountabilities:

1. Develops new content, programs and initiatives that are in response to the needs and priorities of our Faculty partners, are in line with the strategic priorities of the SSO and aim to promote and enhance student success. This includes but is not limited to developing online support materials, designing course specific interventions, determining how academic and like skill
development can be integrated into the classroom, designing content for Faculty day programs and designing/delivering targeted interventions for at risk and priority populations of students

- Instructs University 101 as determined by the Senior Academic Development Specialist
- Collaborates with Senior Academic Development Specialist and other Academic Development Specialists to design interventions for priority populations including first year students, graduate, and transfer and exchange students. This also includes designing proactive interventions for students in terms of retention, engagement and student success
- Works with faculty and staff in identifying key factors that contribute to student success – both at the institutional level and at the Faculty level
- Ensures that programs and initiatives designed and delivered are meetings the unique needs of each Faculty and are in line with faculty and universities strategic plans this includes new student transition and pre-arrival programming
- Knowledgeable and up to date on the needs of undergraduate students (particularly first-year students) including best practices at other institutions, current trends, and forecasting future development in strategies to enhance student learning and development, retention and student engagement
- Establishes performance indicators and assessment methods to measure achievement in all areas of responsibility including learning outcomes, program goals and objectives and individual program success

2. Relationship Building

- 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

3. Strategic Direction and Leadership

- 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 goals and priorities as it relates to enhancing student success. An intimate knowledge of faculty specific strategic plans and the University’s strategic plan is essential

4. Program Development

- Informed by best practices and current research, leads the design, delivery and evaluation of faculty specific and SSO specific programs that are part of the student success strategy
• Responsible for developing new content, programs and initiatives that are in response to the needs and priorities of our Faculty partners are in line with the strategic priorities of the SSO and aim to promote and enhance student success

5. Research

• Knowledgeable and up to date on current literature 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 priority populations including first year students, international, graduate, and transfer and exchange students

Position Requirements

Education:

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

Experience:

- Experience in an academic setting working with student, Faculty members/instructors and staff preferred
- Experience teaching in a university setting strongly preferred
- Exceptional communication and relationship-building skills
- Proven influencing and teamwork skills, and the ability to lead co-workers in projects and teams
- Programs/project management experience is an asset
- 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

Technical:

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Nature and Scope

Interpersonal Skills:

Able to build collaborative working relationships while at the same time balancing the interests of campus and Faculty partners with the interests of the SSO. Team work skills are crucial as is consensus building. Ability to build and maintain new relationships is essential.

Level of Responsibility:

The Specialist does not have any direct reports. He/she is responsible for building collaboration and consensus with internal and external partners and may on occasion represent the SSO to external partners including Faculty and campus partners.

Decision-Making Authority:

The Specialist will make decisions in collaboration with others about the strategic priorities relating to SSO and Faculty 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. Required close attention to detail, thoroughness, and accuracy.

Working Environment:

Located in a comfortable indoor area, although location can change. Minimal exposure to disagreeable conditions. When instructing University 101 he/she may be standing for long periods of time.