

Results and Analysis of the Career Advantage Survey of Teachers, Counselors and Principals

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Introduction

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness at Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) was engaged by the DMACC Career Advantage Office to summarize and analyze the results of a survey conducted during fall 2013 for teachers, counselors and Principals involved with Career Advantage (dual or concurrent enrollment). The intent of this report is to provide summary information, highlight important findings and compare and contrast results based on job at the participating high schools. If there are questions or comments regarding this information, please feel free to contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness according to the title page of this report.

Demographics

The respondents to this survey represent a good cross-section of the education professionals involved with Career Advantage programming with DMACC. As shown in Table 1, the majority of respondents were high school teachers responsible for teaching the dual or concurrent courses in the high school. In addition, high school counselors and Principals also provided survey information.

Table 1- Number of Career Advantage Survey Respondents by Position

Position	Number of Respondents
Teachers	186
Counselors	57
Principals	28
TOTAL	271

DMACC is a large community college district covering 11 counties in Central Iowa. Our service area includes urban, suburban and rural school districts. Table 2 below shows that survey respondents were included from each of the three types of school districts representing a similar make-up to our service area. Tables 2 also shows that there is representation from the three position types from in all three schools types in the DMACC service area.

Table 2- Number of Schools Participating in Career Advantage Survey by Position

	Teachers	Counselors	Principals
Urban	63	30	14
Suburban	58	11	6
Rural	22	14	6
TOTAL	143	55	26

Table 3 below shows that respondents have had significant experience with Career Advantage programming and are not first-time career advantage teachers, counselors and Principals. Their responses are primarily based on multiple years of experience which makes the results of the survey more representative of the program over time. All three position types had a majority of respondents that have been involved with the program for 3 or more school years.

Table 3- Percent of Survey Respondents with 3 or More Years Career Advantage Experience by Position

Position	Percent
Teachers	79%
Counselors	80%
Principals	81%

The teachers surveyed teach a variety of courses that DMACC offers as career advantage as evidenced in Table 4 below. The largest subject areas were English and Foreign Language, and Math followed by Business and Natural Sciences.

Table 4- Subjects Taught by Teachers Responding to Career Advantage Survey

Subject	Number of Teachers
English and Foreign Language	40
Math	27
Business	20
Sciences (Physics, Biology, Chemistry)	13
Art	11
CAD/ Technology	10
Education	9
Building Trades	7
Psychology	6
Agriculture	5
History/Government	5

Note: Number of teachers are duplicated due to one instructor teaching multiple subjects

The majority of the survey beyond demographic data was split into four areas each asking the effect of career advantage programming on students, counseling, teachers, and the school in general. Not all of these areas were asked of each group. Some of the following tables have missing information which is due to that question not being asked of that position type.

Though all groups responded favorably towards career advantage programming, Principals generally responded more favorably than counselors and teachers. Counselors often responded more favorably than teachers, but not always. This may be because of their role in the educational process, or could be in part due to these groups also have the greatest experience with the program.

Career Advantage Effects on Students

Tables 5 below shows the effects of career advantage on students using a Likert scale with categories of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), neutral, disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD). Almost all teachers and counselors either strongly agreed or agreed that students benefited from rigorous learning, developed realistic expectations of post-secondary education, and developed a better understanding of their academic skills. As a result, majority of the respondents thought that that increased the student’s likelihood of pursuing a postsecondary education. Table 6 is a summary of the open-ended responses with findings similar to the strengths identified above.

Table 5- Career Advantage and Students

As a result of taking a DMACC Career Advantage concurrent enrollment course, students...	Teachers			Counselors		
	SA/A	Neutral	SD/D	SA/A	Neutral	SD/D
Participate in rigorous learning	96.7%	2.7%	0.5%	98.2%	1.8%	0.0%
Develop realistic expectations of postsecondary coursework	97.8%	1.1%	1.1%	92.7%	7.3%	0.0%
Increase their likelihood of pursuing postsecondary education	89.1%	8.7%	2.2%	94.5%	5.5%	0.0%
Develop a better understanding of their academic skills	96.2%	2.7%	1.1%	92.7%	7.3%	0.0%
Raise their postsecondary educational aspirations	91.3%	6.5%	2.2%	85.5%	14.5%	0.0%

Table 6- What is the Single Greatest Impact Career Advantage Has Had on Your Students?

	Teachers	Counselors
Preparation for college (college ready)	65%	71%
Earning college credit in high school	35%	29%

Career Advantage Effects on Counseling

Table 7 below shows a summary of responses from counselors regarding their own counseling methods. While the rating is self-reported hence subjective, still it is worth looking at the responses as it can give some insights into the minds of the counselors. On average, two out of three counselors believe Career Advantage programming impacted their presentation to students and improved their understanding of postsecondary education and more than half of the counselors perceived more students as capable of higher education.

Table 7- Career Advantage and Guidance Counseling

As a result of the presence of Career Advantage in my school, guidance counselors have...	Counselors		
	SA/A	Neutral	SD/D
Changed the way they present college options to students	64.8%	25.9%	9.3%
Have a better understanding of the skills and knowledge students need to succeed in postsecondary education	64.8%	27.8%	7.4%
Perceive more students as capable of higher levels of postsecondary educational achievement	59.3%	27.8%	13.0%

Career Advantage Effects on Teachers

Table 8 below shows the impact Career Advantage program has on teachers. There was strong agreement that teachers learned new ideas and developments in their disciplines, found teaching to be more satisfying, have become more energized, and have established higher standards for student work. Very few agreed that they were primarily hired to teach a college course on campus or online. There was also less agreement that teachers benefitted from support from other schools or their Career Advantage liaison. The results in Table 9 are consistent with the aggregated results from the open-ended questions shown in Table 10.

Table 8- Career Advantage and Teachers

As a result of the presence of Career Advantage course, teachers have...	Teachers		
	SA/A	Neutral	SD/D
Established higher standards for student work	81.5%	13.6%	4.9%
Been energized as a teacher	80.5%	15.7%	3.8%
Learned about new ideas and developments in my academic discipline(s)	80.0%	14.0%	6.0%
Have a better understanding of the knowledge and skills that college faculty in my discipline expect of students	71.3%	20.5%	8.1%
Felt supported by DMACC's advisors/directors/faculty collaborators	70.1%	16.8%	13.0%
Incorporated the content and/or pedagogy of the Career Advantage course in other classes	67.4%	21.2%	11.4%
Taken leadership positions within my department, school, district or professional association	60.9%	27.2%	12.0%

Benefited from the support of and contact with Career Advantage colleagues in other high school or career centers	54.6%	28.6%	16.8%
Been hired to teach a college course on a college campus and/or online	17.8%	28.3%	53.9%

Table 9- What is the single greatest impact Career Advantage has had on you as a teacher?

	Teachers
Improve teaching skills	49%
Understand my academic discipline better	27%
Inspire students to perform better	24%

Career Advantage Effects on the School

According to the data shown below in Table 10, teachers, counselors and Principals most strongly agree that Career Advantage demonstrate to parents that students are doing challenging work in their Junior and Senior years, has enhanced the school’s prestige and academic reputation and has helped their school meet its goal of offering rigorous classes for students. From the open-ended questions shown in Table 11, Career Advantage offerings were a selling point for the school, not only to parents, but to students looking to open enroll into their districts. The open-ended questions reinforced the information gained in the Likert scale questions. Overall, there is strong agreement that Career Advantage courses benefit the school, students and enhance the perception of parents.

Table 10- Career Advantage and the school

As a result of the presence of Career Advantage courses, my school..	Teachers			Counselors			Principals		
	SA/A	Neutral	SD/D	SA/A	Neutral	SD/D	SA/A	Neutral	SD/D
Demonstrates to parents that students are doing challenging work	91.8%	6.5%	1.6%	87.0%	13.0%	0.0%	92.3%	7.7%	0.0%
Enhances its prestige and academic reputation	89.1%	8.7%	2.2%	85.2%	13.0%	1.8%	92.3%	7.7%	0.0%
Offers a greater number of rigorous classes	85.9%	11.4%	2.7%	72.2%	16.7%	11.1%	92.3%	3.9%	3.8%
Offers prerequisite courses that prepare students	85.3%	10.3%	4.3%	64.8%	24.1%	11.1%	92.3%	7.7%	0.0%

for college courses in upper grades									
Has more students succeed in postsecondary education	83.0%	15.4%	1.6%	59.3%	40.7%	0.0%	69.2%	26.9%	3.8%
Has more students continuing on to postsecondary education	80.4%	17.4%	2.2%	61.1%	35.2%	3.7%	76.9%	19.2%	3.9%

Table 11- What is the single greatest impact Career Advantage has had on your school?

	Teachers	Counselors
Providing students with college credit and college preparation with in high school	43%	34%
Enhance offerings/ selling point for the district	28%	49%
Encouraging students to achieve at a high level	22%	15%
Additional Funds	7%	2%

Conclusion

It is clear from the data collected in this survey that teachers, counselors and Principals agree strongly of the benefits of Career Advantage programming for their students, teachers and the school as a whole. All three groups agree very strongly that students benefit by earning college credit while in high school, becoming prepared for their college careers, and becoming motivated to achieve at higher levels. The most pronounced benefits for teachers included becoming more knowledgeable in their disciplines and gaining knowledge regarding what their students will need as they enter college. Counselor benefits included being able to adapt the way they present options regarding college to students and gaining knowledge about current college academic requirements. The most prominent benefits for schools included providing more rigorous classes for students, demonstrating the value of Junior and Senior years to parents, and enhancing the school’s prestige and academic reputation. Schools may still be developing ways to leverage career advantage programming to motivate and prepare students to achieve at high levels in earlier grades to make them eligible for Career Advantage programming.