EXCEL! – an Academic Success Program

Before anything else, preparation is the key to success - Alexander Graham Bell

EXCEL! – an Academic Success Program

EXCEL!, a School of Natural Sciences program at the University of California, Merced, recognizes there are challenges students face in adjusting to the rigors of a math and science curriculum. Its mission is to assist students in overcoming these challenges. EXCEL! works with School of Natural Sciences faculty, advisors, and the Student Advising and Learning Center to help students successfully complete lower division math and science courses.

EXCEL! benefits students

- enrolled in the School of Natural Sciences at UC Merced
- majored in math or science
- interested in becoming academically successful in math and science
- interested in receiving additional academic assistance
- interested in learning about post undergraduate education

Interested students are welcome to complete and submit a student survey form to EXCEL! in AOB 182 or email it to Phung Colvin at pcolvin@ucmerced.edu. A student survey form is available by clicking here.

What is EXCEL!? Student Survey Form EXCEL! Student Information Campus Resources Parent Information

Learning Outcomes, Assessment, and Program Improvement for Excel!

Excel! Program Description:

Excel! is a School of Natural Sciences student retention program. It is a program established to help students handle the rigors and challenges associated with pursuing a major in math and life and physical sciences. Excel! works with faculty, lecturers, the Student Advising Learning Center, and School of Natural Sciences advisors to help students successfully complete their math and science classes. Excel! serves School of Natural Sciences students who do not meet the minimum University of California grade point average requirement - students who are on academic probation (AP) and or subject to academic dismissal (SAD). These students are required to be in Excel! Students in the program sign a contract agreeing to utilize campus services once a week to help them achieve their academic goal.

Program Goals:

- To help students understand UC Merced's academic protocol, policies, and processes.
- To help students comply with UC rules and regulations outlined in the university catalog.
- To help students understand what "academic probation" and "subject to academic dismissal mean".
- To help students understand how GPA is calculated and calculate grades they need to earn to remain on track toward a degree in Natural Sciences.
- To help students identify possible causes that may have led to their weak academic performance and propose viable resolutions.
- To help students become familiar with the various academic options and campus resources.
- To encourage students to utilize academic resources and services available on campus.
- To help students feel more confident in their ability to communicate with UC faculty and staff
- To help students establish a weekly study schedule and routine to increase their academic performance.
- To help students become familiar with study skills needed for their course work, via a one unit Natural Science Education 98, "Success in Natural Sciences" class and via workshops organized by the Student Advising and Learning Center.
- To help students acquire the characteristics of a successful student
- To provide an environment (a point of contact) in which students feel comfortable in seeking help.

Learning Outcome:

Students in the program are expected to have learn the following to promote their own learning –

- They will know how to calculate their grade point averages and determine what grades are needed to return to good academic standing.
- They will be able to plan and manage their calendar in ways that enhance their academic performance.
- They will be able to take notes in ways that promote their own learning.
- They will be able to develop course-specific strategies for learning.
- They will be able to seek out resources on campus to help them to improve academically.
- They will be able to look up information about academic requirements that will lead to a degree in the School of Natural Sciences or other areas of interests at UC Merced.
- They will be able to assess if a math or science major fits their interests and career goals.
- They will know how to use the UC Merced websites and catalog to learn about university academic protocol, processes, and deadlines.
- They will be able to contact appropriate campus offices for assistance if personal, academic, or financial difficulty arises.

Learning Outcomes, Assessment, and Program Improvement for Excel!

Assessment:

The following information will be used to evaluate the success and effectiveness of Excel! program.

- Frequency of utilization of campus resources such as counseling, tutoring, workshops, and office hours via sign-in sheets and reporting from students and the Student Advising Learning Center each semester.
- Course evaluations for students who are enrolled in NSED 98 at end of each semester.
- Changes in student grade point averages at the end of the semester as reported by the Registrar Office.
- Student completion of lower division math and science courses at the end of the semester.
- Individual overall academic standing as reported by Registrar Office at the end of the semester.
- Completion of a weekly planner at the beginning of each semester.
- Student completion of course requirements for eventual graduation from UC Merced in the math and sciences and or other areas of interests.

Program Improvement Mechanisms:

The assessment data will be used to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the individual elements of Excel! The following are changes that may be consider each semester to improve the program:

- Revision of required elements within individual student contract.
- Revision of content or pedagogy of NSED 98.
- Change in instructors for NSED 98 class, staff, and or student academic workshop leaders.
- Change in frequency of meeting with students each semester.
- Change in frequency in which students are required to utilize campus resources.
- Revision of Outline Questionnaire completed by students and used to assess their needs.