Introduction

In the spring of 2012, the 1818 Advanced College Credit Program conducted a study of the impact of the 1818 Advanced College Credit Program on partner high schools’ students, faculties and the schools themselves from the perspective of the partner schools’ principals, faculty members/high school adjunct instructors and guidance counselors. Principals, teachers and counselors were queried in similar, but separate surveys regarding the ways in which their participation in the 1818 Advanced College Credit Program has impacted them personally, their students and their high school. Teacher respondents indicated an overall positive experience with the 1818 ACC Program, a positive impact on their students’, schools’ and personal experiences, and high recommendations to future 1818 ACC students.

Methodology of the Study

The Program Director of the 1818 Advanced College Credit Program and the Assistant Director developed the research instrument heavily dependent on the NACEP “Teacher Impact Survey” template. They converted the questions to a questionnaire, utilizing the Qualtrics on-line survey tool. The survey contained 18 questions, addressing school demographics, and the impact of the 1818 ACC Program’s presence in the school from academic, personnel, and marketing perspectives. Each surveyed group, principals, teachers and counselors, received a similar survey. However, each survey focused questions from the perspective of the subject group.

The researchers conducted the entire study electronically. Teachers received an email invitation on May 4 and May 14, 2012 to participate in the survey. The survey results were confidential, but not anonymous, as the researchers held email addresses and could identify respondents and non-respondents.

Subjects

The study included the 419 high school adjunct instructors of the 85 active partner high schools in the 1818 Advanced College Credit Program during the 2011-2012 academic year.

Respondents to the survey varied fairly equally in their years of experience with the 1818 Advanced College Credit Program. Novice teachers with 1 -2 years of experience accounted 21% (40) of the respondents; teachers with 3 – 5 years (45), 24%; those with 6 – 10 years (37), 19% and veterans of more than 10 years (69), 36%. The length of time of the respondents’ schools’ partnership with 1818 ACC varied as well, but the majority of respondents work in schools that have been long term partners; 74% (139) for more than 10 years, 12% (23) for 6 – 10 years, 11% (21) for 3 – 5 years, and 2% (4) for 1 – 2 years. Forty-two percent of the teachers (81) teach in schools with enrollments of 500 – 1199 students; 29%, (55), with 1200 or more students; 20% (39), 250-499 students; and 9% (17), 249 students.
Respondents predominantly serve suburban schools (58% or 112 teachers), but 28% (53) serve urban or inner suburban and 14% (27 teacher respondents) work in rural schools. Teacher respondents teach predominantly (117, 61%) in private schools, with 39% (76) in public schools. Only one principal indicate that he or she never interacts with 1818 ACC students. The high school adjunct instructors who responded to the survey predominantly teach English, history, Spanish and French, followed by the natural sciences (chemistry, biology and physics) and calculus.

**Rate of Responses**

Researchers received 174 responses from the possible 85 active partner high schools in the study, for a response rate of 41.5%.

**Summary of Responses**

The first “impact” question with its seven sub-questions dealt with 1818 ACC’s impact on students in the partner high school. Teachers responding overwhelmingly agreed that the program has a positive impact on their students. They strongly agreed (100) or agreed (71) that students continued rigorous learning throughout their senior year; developed realistic expectations of college (85/86); developed a good understanding of their academic skills (70/95); gained in-depth knowledge in the subject area (106/73); developed effective time management skills (54/90); and developed effective study skills (57/98). One item worth addressing separately is the item “considered for the first time going to college.” Only 6 teachers agreed strongly, and only 16 teachers agreed at all, while 53 disagreed and 41 disagreed strongly with this item. Another 37 responses were neutral. A possible explanation for this may be that all of the respondents are teachers in either college preparatory high schools, or in classes that are open only to high achieving students.

Teachers either strongly agreed (73) or agreed (81) that the presence of 1818 ACC on their campus encouraged their students to enroll in more challenging courses. Most agreed (54) or agreed strongly (46) that 1818 ACC was keeping their students from attending college courses off campus. However, several were neutral (25) or disagreed (16) on that point.

Teachers largely agreed that the presence of 1818 ACC in their high schools impacted their guidance counselors in several ways. Sixteen strongly agreed and fifty-four agreed that counselors have changed the way they present college options to students. On the other hand, 8 disagreed and 2 disagreed strongly with that item; 45 expressed a neutral response. To the statement that counselors increased their knowledge of current college academic requirements, 25 strongly agreed and 63 agreed. Eight disagreed and two disagreed strongly; 35 were neutral. Twenty-six strongly agreed and sixty-three agreed that counselors developed a better understanding of the skills and knowledge students need to succeed in college; seven disagreed and four disagreed strongly. Thirty-five remained neutral. And finally, when asked whether they believed that the presence of 1818 ACC had impacted counselors’ perceptions of more students as capable of higher levels of academic achievement, 23 strongly agreed and 46 agreed, while 16 disagreed and 4 disagreed strongly. Thirty-nine remained neutral.

Teachers generally agreed that the presence of the 1818 ACC Program in their schools created a positive impact on themselves as teachers. They strongly agreed or agreed that they learned about new ideas and developments in their academic disciplines (35/90); learned new instructional strategies (27/72); found their jobs more satisfying (40/63); had taken leadership positions in departments, schools, districts or professional organizations (25/57); had been energized as teachers (41/74); benefited from the support of and contact with colleagues in other high schools and with the SLU departmental liaison (40/78); developed a good understanding of what colleges expect students to know and be able to do in the academic discipline of their Concurrent Enrollment class (39/96); felt more connected with their academic disciplines (47/81); found content or pedagogy of the concurrent enrollment program courses useful in non-concurrent enrollment program courses (25/90); established higher standards for student work (56/78); and felt supported by the concurrent enrollment liaison/mentor (46/76).
Three items on the survey generated less than universal support from teachers responding. The item noting, “Learned new instructional strategies,” garnered 99 positive responses, but 15 respondents disagreed and 3 disagreed strongly. Forty-one respondents were neutral on this item. Regarding leadership positions, 16 disagreed, 4 strongly disagreed and 48 remained neutral. On the topic of support from contact with other 1818 ACC colleagues from other schools and the university, 12 disagreed, 4 disagreed strongly and 30 remained neutral. In all other areas, teachers’ negative responses remained in the single digits.

Worthy of note are two items addressing teacher workload due to the presence of 1818 ACC in the partner schools. Teachers agreed strongly (8) and agreed (30) that they found it more difficult to fulfill their school responsibilities along with 1818 ACC. However, 65 teachers disagreed and 14 strongly disagreed. The researchers received 38 neutral responses to that item. The second related item, that teachers “had been released from other school duties, enabling them to give courses and students more time” generated 10 positive responses (2/8), while 69 disagreed and 61 strongly disagreed. This question generated the lowest neutral response of all the items, 19.

Teachers expressed high positive impact on their schools as a result of offering 1818 ACC courses. Teacher respondents strongly agreed or agreed that his or her school had progressed toward meeting its goal of providing more rigorous courses for advanced students (62/89); offered prerequisite courses for the CEP courses that are appropriately rigorous (38/78); raised the expectations for student performance in courses preceding the CEP courses (41/67); demonstrated to parents that their students are doing challenging work as juniors and seniors (56/95); and enhanced its prestige and academic reputation (64/80).

Teachers’ responses to the question “What is the single greatest impact the 1818 Advanced College Credit Program has had on your students?” split between the opportunity to experience challenging college course work in high school, and the opportunity to earn college credit for that experience – and at a reduced cost.

Teachers’ answers to the question “What is the single greatest impact the 1818 ACC Program has had on your teachers?” varied. Responses included “professional development,” “a sense of appreciation of their efforts,” “students who really want to be in their classes.” One particularly articulate teacher stated it all in saying, “I feel fortunate to have been able to work with the most academically motivated students in my school because of the 1818 ACC program. Their motivation and curiosity encourages me to strive to be a better teacher. I would not be teaching them if we were not part of 1818 ACC; the only reason I am teaching them now is because I am the only teacher in my department with the qualifications . . .”

The teachers’ responses to the question of the single greatest impact on their school varied among three common themes, improved and/or challenging options for high achieving students, a stronger focus on academics, and enhanced or improved school reputation.

Analysis of the Responses

Teachers’ responses to the “Impact Study” questions came as no real surprise. The Program Director of the 1818 Advanced College Credit Program remains in close contact with school officials through electronic and personal communications, professional development days, summer pre-service training, and the 1818 ACC Advisory Board. She regularly solicits feedback on particular topics, and frequently receives unsolicited feedback on issues she may not have known to be issues. The generally positive tenor and tone of the survey responses comes as no surprise.

The scarcity of actual responses also comes as no surprise. The Program Director realized at the time of distribution of the survey that many of the high school adjunct instructors would set it aside, to get to it at a “less busy time.” However, everyone who has ever been a high school teacher knows that time rarely comes. The Program Director interprets the lack of response as more of a comment on her poor timing of the survey in the last month of the school year, than a commentary on the impact of the 1818 Advanced College Credit Program in its partner high schools.
However, the responses to one pair of questions on the survey require immediate consideration. The principals clearly do not adjust their expectations in any way for the time they require of their teachers as high school teachers, and the extra time the teachers need to serve as high school adjunct instructors for Saint Louis University. While the 1818 ACC Program does not require full time duty from the high school adjuncts, the program does exert some additional demands on their time and energy. The topic of “expectation of efforts” clearly needs to be an on-going conversation between the 1818 ACC office and officials in 1818 ACC partner high schools.

Conclusions

The 1818 Advanced College Credit Program has not conducted a formal impact study from among its partner school high school adjunct instructors prior to this inaugural study. The program does, however, note and document unsolicited feedback, whether through phone calls, emails or personal contacts. The use of impact studies such as the “Teachers’ Impact Study” provides quantifiable feedback that can only serve to aid the leadership of the 1818 Advanced College Credit Program in providing sustainable and continuous quality improvement. Because of the need to comply fully with NACEP standards as part of the accreditation application, the 1818 ACC Program staff surveyed not only teachers, but principals and guidance counselors as well. In the future, these groups will be surveyed on a three-year rotation, repeating teachers next year (2013), following with principals again in two years (2014), and completing the cycle with guidance counselors in three years (2015).

Respectfully submitted,

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Program Director
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