Introduction

In the spring of 2013, 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 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, 2013 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 2012-2013 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 18% (62) of the respondents; teachers with 3 – 5 years (96), 28%; those with 6 – 10 years (65), 19% and veterans of more than 10 years (122), 35%. 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; 71% (244) for more than 10 years, 17% (59) for 6–10 years, 9% (31) for 3–5 years, and 2% (8) for 1–2 years. Forty-six percent of the teachers (103) teach in schools with enrollments of 500–1199 students; 30%, (103) with 1200 or more students; 17% (59), 250–499 students; and 8% (27), 249 students or less. Respondents predominantly serve suburban schools (62% or 216 teachers), but 25% (87) serve urban or inner suburban and 13% (46 teacher respondents) work in rural schools. Teacher respondents teach predominantly (184, 53%) in private schools, with 47% (165) 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 355 responses from the possible 85 active partner high schools in the study, for a response rate of 84.7%.

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. The strongly agreed (167) or agreed (131) that students continued rigorous learning throughout their senior year; developed realistic expectations of college (146/156); developed a good understanding of their academic skills (86/206); gained in-depth knowledge in the subject area (190/132); developed effective time management skills (96/176); and developed effective study skills (74/202).

One item worth addressing separately is the item “considered for the first time going to college.” Only 17 teachers agreed strongly, and only 30 teachers agreed at all, while 95 disagreed and 64 disagreed strongly with this item. Another 78 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 (135) or agreed (152) that the presence of 1818 ACC on their campus encouraged their students to enroll in more challenging courses. Most agreed (95) or agreed strongly (86) that 1818 ACC was keeping their students from attending college courses off campus. However, several were neutral (49) or disagreed (31) on that point.

Teachers largely agreed that the presence of 1818 ACC in their high schools impacted their guidance counselors in several ways. Thirty-five strongly agree and eighty-two agreed that counselors have changed the way they present college options to students. On the other hand, 73 disagreed and 6 disagreed strongly with that item; 73 expressed a neutral response. To the statement that counselors increased their knowledge of current college academic requirements, 45 strongly agreed and 100 agreed. Twenty-nine disagreed and seven disagreed strongly; 64
were neutral. Forty-three strongly agreed and one hundred five agreed that counselors developed a better understanding of the skills and knowledge students need to succeed in college; 22 disagreed and 8 disagreed strongly. Seventy-four 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, 34 strongly agreed and 103 agreed, while 24 disagreed and 11 disagreed strongly. Seventy-three 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 (69/165); learned new instructional strategies 52/137); found their jobs more satisfying (76/129); had taken leadership positions in departments, schools, districts or professional organizations 54/113); had been energized as teachers (74/151); benefited from the support of and contact with colleagues in other high schools and with the SLU departmental liaison 12/58) 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 80/128); felt more connected with their academic disciplines (9/13); found content or pedagogy of the concurrent enrollment program courses useful in non-concurrent enrollment program courses (91/163); established higher standards for

Worthy of note are two items addressing teacher work load 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’ responses to the question “What is the single greatest impact the 1818 Advanced College Credit Program has had on your students?” their responses were 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 “raised teaching standard,” “challenge me to challenge them (my students),” “made teaching more enjoyable.” One particularly articulate teacher stated it all in saying, “It challenges me to keep pushing the students and provide the experience they need to help them succeed in the sciences. I really want them to choose science and this is a great stepping stone for helping some of them realize their potential and feel more confident in choosing a science major.”
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, following with
principals next year (2014), guidance counselors in two years (2015), and teachers again in three years (2016) to complete the cycle.