

# Annual Report



## ACADEMIC SUPPORT CENTER

WVNCC  
2015-2016  
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## Executive Summary

This report for the 2015-2016 academic year details the productivity, progress and challenges faced by the Academic Support Center, including tutoring, accessibility, developmental advising, FastTrack and retention programs / services.

ASC departmental goals were revised to focus on the efficacy of programs and exceptional service.

- I. Establish personalized, quality connections and provide individualized attention to students, faculty and staff through consistent, deliberate and organized follow-up.
- II. Target and support General Education Core Outcomes through programs and services.
- III. Emphasize personal and departmental accountability through data /feedback analysis and application, to be detailed in annual report.



Appointment totals for the fall semester were 1522 and were slightly lower, a typical trend, at 1072 in the spring.

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## Tutoring Program

The tutoring program continued to strengthen the quality of tutoring services provided and seek faculty buy-in.

The budget for the Tutoring Program was reallocated from Perkins funding to WVNCC general operating expenses and saw a \$5,000 decrease, from \$65,000 to \$60,000.

The ASC employed a total of 27 paraprofessionals as tutors, TAs and Supplemental Instruction (SI) leaders.

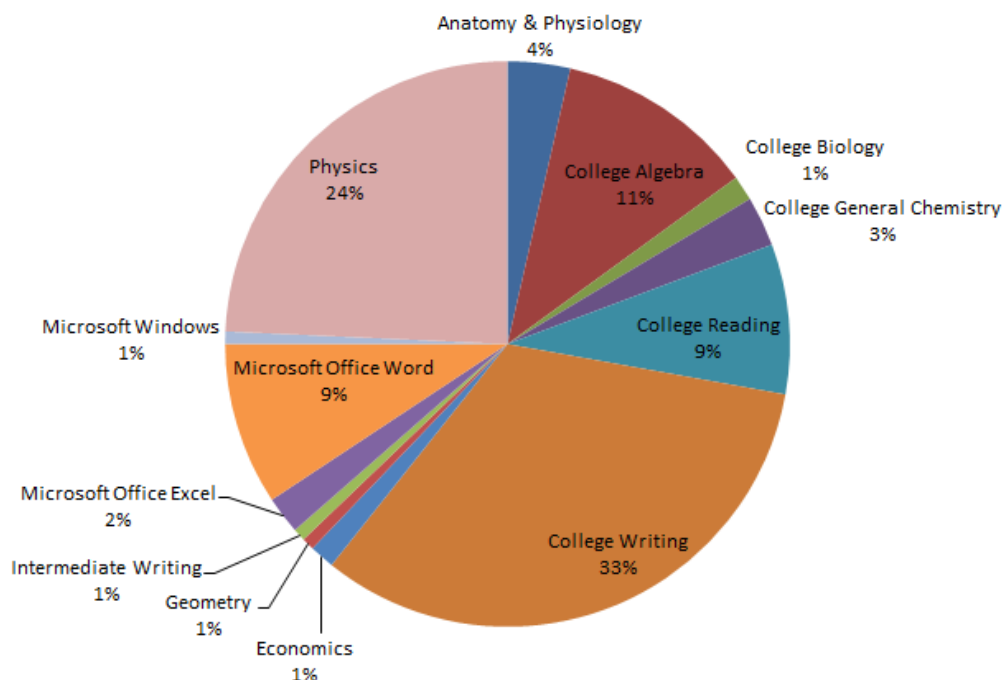


Bridging the Gap grant funds allowed SI to focus on Technical Math courses and other classes specific to BTG programs. TAs focused on Developmental Math courses and tutors continued to be available for most entry-level coursework.

Tutors logged a total of 3,207 hours, tutoring 312 students for 1,670 sessions, in 62 different courses. This is a 36% decrease in total tutoring hours, a 31% decrease in number of individual students tutored and a 27% decrease in sessions. However, specific courses tutored saw a 226% increase.

BRAINFuse, though, was utilized actively throughout the fall and spring semesters. During the fall semester 144 “instant access sessions” occurred, initiated by 29 distinct students. These include all subjects, though students using the writing lab feature are calculated separately-tallying 76 total sessions initiated by 42 distinct students. In the spring, activity

**BRAINFuse "Instant Access" Requests by Subject Fall 2015-Spring 2016**



decreased to 37 “instant access sessions,” initiated by 18 students, in addition to 50 writing sessions initiated by 26 students.

Though face-to-face tutoring sessions decreased, continuing emphasis on student feedback and evaluation have yielded increased results that reflect improved quality. A total of 63 evaluations were completed (34 fall/29 spring) with Wheeling having the highest response rate, averaging 65.82%. Figure 1 illustrates “Always” (highest measure) response rates to the listed tutor attribute indicators and figure 2 identifies the reported frequency with which specific “best practice” skills were employed by tutors during sessions.

Figure 1 "Always" Attribute Response Rates

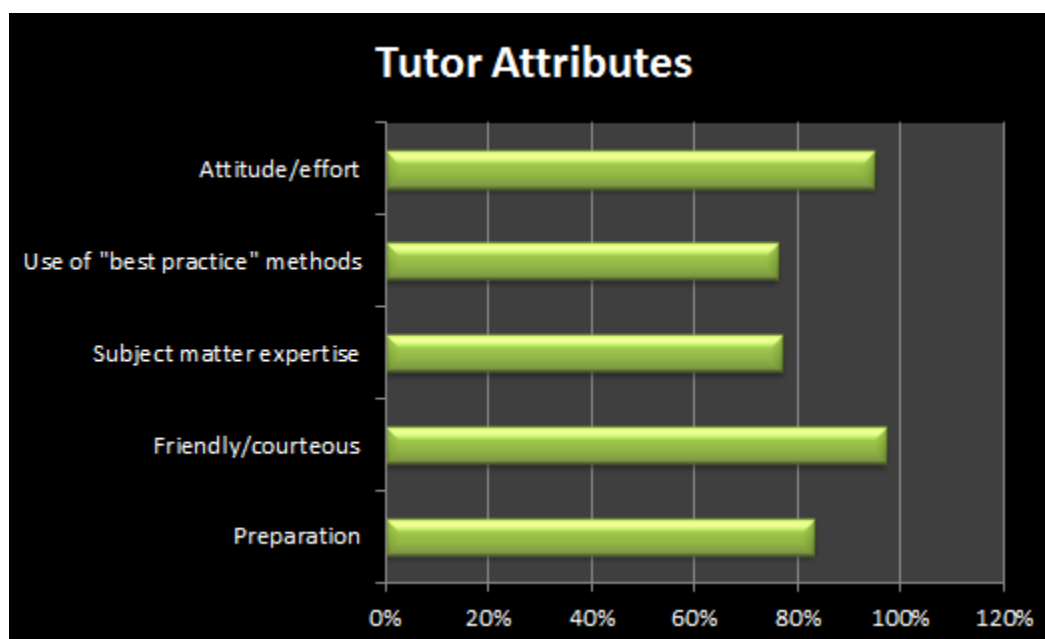


Figure 2 Reported Use of "Best Practice" Tutoring Strategies



*Nothing at all needs to be changed. X is an excellent ...tutor and with her help I received a 'B' on the last exam, improving my overall grade. I will be returning every Monday to work with her.*

Figure 3 Student response: "What can we do to improve the tutoring program?"

Tutor training initiatives, including completion of the "Master Tutor Guidebook," continued. As well, all tutors have received training and are prepared to help students review/prepare for the ACCUPLACER tests. A "Review & Retest" option has been added to the selection of choices for students not making placement test cut-off requirements. Following two "boot-camp" style review sessions and the tutor recommendation, students may retest. Tutors are currently working through training to assist with the TEAS test as well. Wheeling tutors were also required to complete 3 webinars: <sup>1</sup>*Swimming Against the Current into Calmer Waters*: how emotion and attitude affect learning; <sup>2</sup>*Diversity Discussions*: how

diversity factors impact the student experience and the importance of developing a tutoring environment that is aware of and sensitive to diversities; and <sup>3</sup>*Making the First Stone Spears*: essential tutoring strategies for working with students along the autism spectrum.

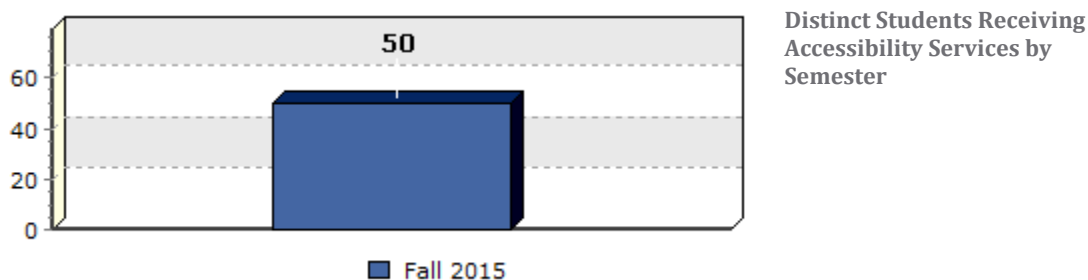
Tutor Appreciation Week was celebrated October 19-22 with luncheons and other events. On April 26, a formal Recognition Ceremony was held to honor the commitment and dedication of paraprofessional staff.

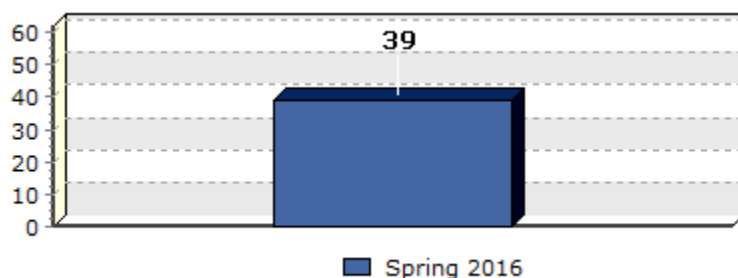
Weekly reports to faculty continue, along with requirements that tutors contact and meet with faculty members, who teach courses for which they tutor, at the beginning of each semester.

One student completed a CIT internship by tutoring in the Wheeling ASC during the spring semester.

## Accessibility Services

A total of 57 students were registered with and received services through the Accessibility Office during the 2015-2016 academic year; disabilities identified included: emotionally disturbed (42%), specific learning disability (31.5%), other health impaired (16%), visually impaired (5.2%), seizures (3.5%) and hearing impaired (1.75%).

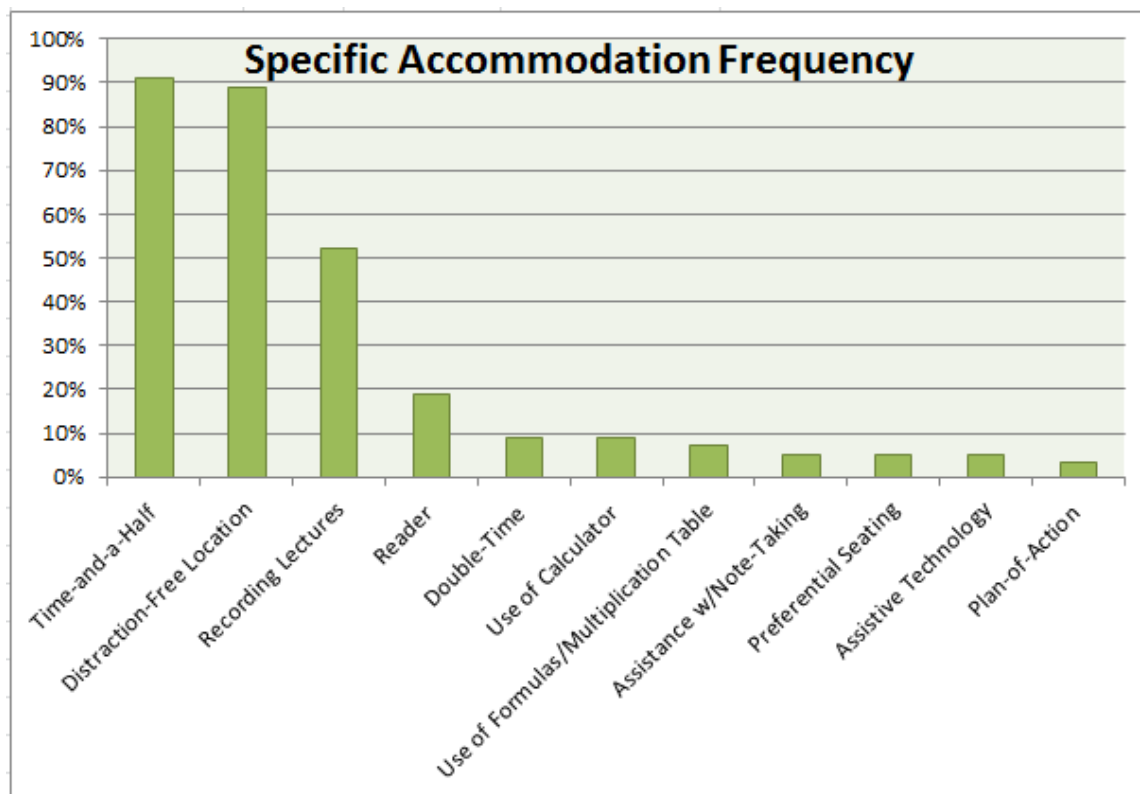




The Accessibility Office oversaw a total of 292 testing accommodation appointments (181 in the fall and 111 in the spring). This represents a 92% increase in scheduled test sessions from the previous

year. More accurate data keeping may be somewhat responsible for the dramatic increase.

Accommodations included:



The Accessibility Counselor organized programming in October to foster understanding and awareness during National Disability Employment Awareness Month hosting a dual performance of “Valuing Diversity and Celebrating Abilities” by Geri Jewell on Wednesday, October 14. These performances were partially funded by a Diversity Grant shared with Student Activities. A total of 114 people attended one or both performances. As well, presentations on mental health were offered on Monday, October 12 by Dr. Michael Marshall (Current Trends in College Mental Health) and Thursday, October 15 by Dr. Robin Muir (Stress Management Using Hypnosis); a total of 19 people attended these workshops.

The Accessibility Counselor also lead an engaging series of Stress Management Workshops on September 10, October 8 and November 12 that were shared via IP video with the WRT and NM campuses, though the technology proved a barrier rather than a boon. Thirty-three people attended one or more of these workshops.

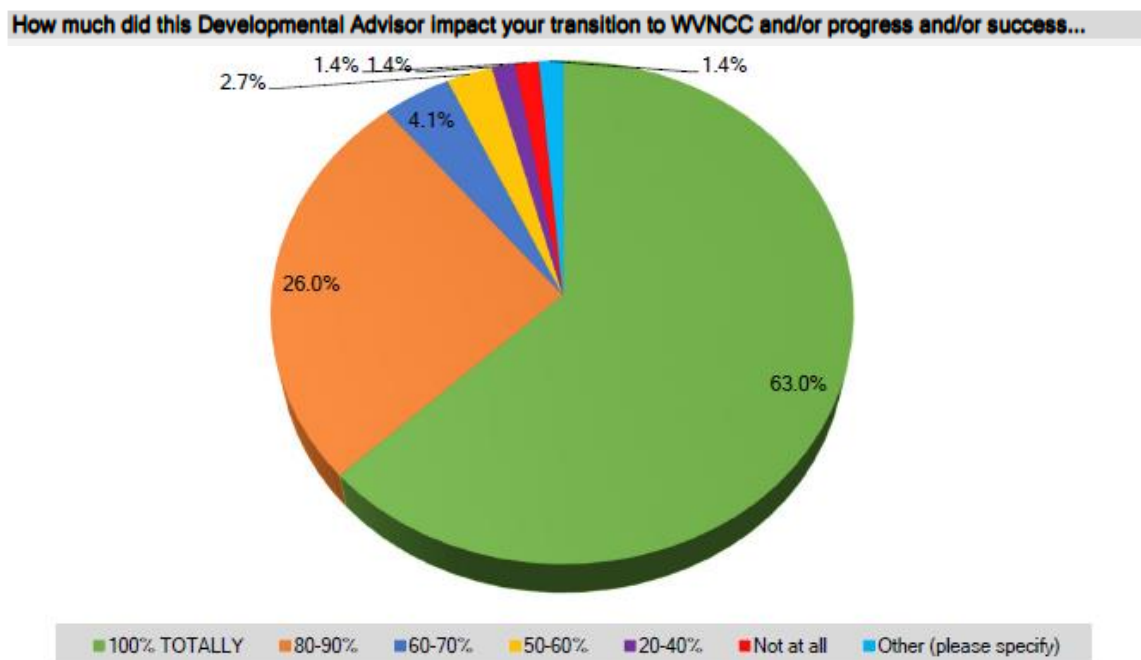
The Accessibility Counselor also wrote and received a \$3,000 Foundation Grant, “Improving Student Mental Health Improves Retention,” allowing WVNCC students in need to access mental health services, when needed, without prohibitive costs. Through a partnership with Northwood Health Systems (NHS), WVNCC students in need of mental health services can be referred by the Accessibility Counselor to receive treatment and obtain additional referrals, through Northwood, as needed. As well, additional Foundation funds were received to begin a laptop loan program to assist students for whom access to technology creates an academic barrier. The “Laptop Loan Program” began with the acquisition of 10 laptops in the spring semester and immediately saw 4 on loan.

A method of more accurately capturing the specific needs of students working with Accessibility Services was developed during the spring semester. Future data should reveal a more explicit portrait of the specific needs and challenges facing students regarding the accessibility, physical/mental health concerns and general wellness that impact success and retention.

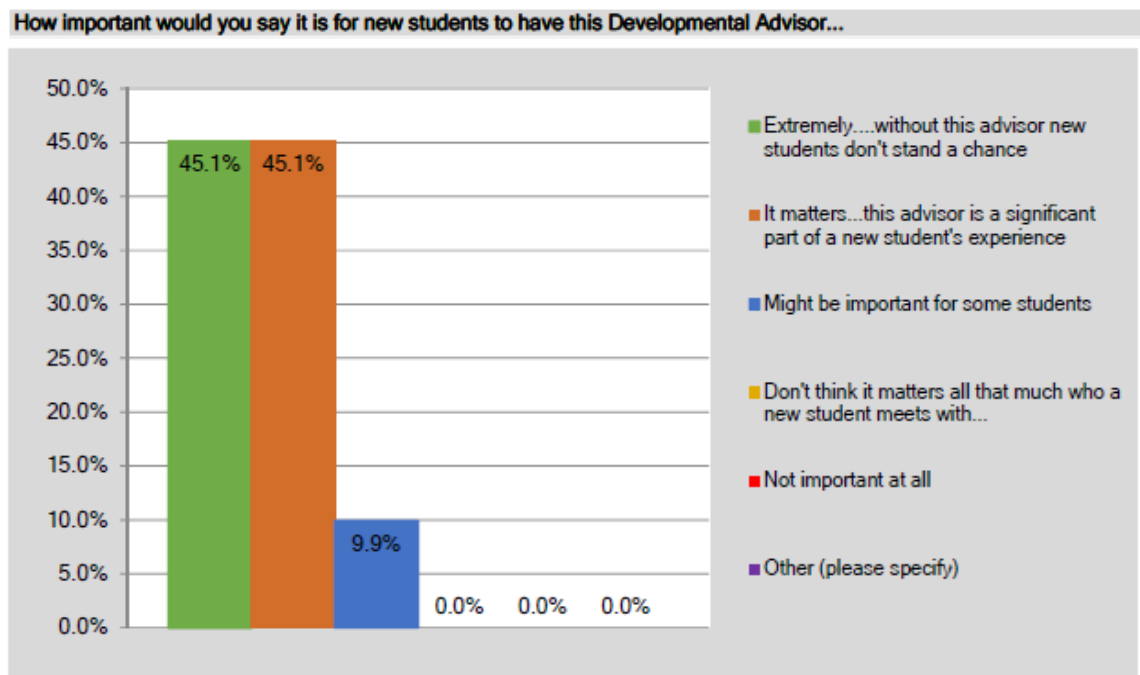
### Developmental Advising

This year marked a significant gain in developmental advising with the addition of a new Developmental Advisor, Kristi Aulick, who began in the position (part-time) September 2015, after a two-and-a-half month vacancy.

A survey of all developmental education students, having worked with one or more Developmental Advisors since the beginning of the Title III grant funded position, yielded positive and provocative results; 74 students responded to the survey. The impact of the Developmental Advisor position is evident in the following survey responses.







The Developmental Advisor (DA) had 624 advising appointments (387-fall/237-spring), meeting with 172 students in the fall and 113 in the spring. During both semesters, the DA met with 230 unique students; approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  of these students met with DA for multiple appointments during the fall/spring semesters.

The following charts show retention rates of developmental education students working with the DA. The data suggests a 34% decrease in the retention rate compare to the previous year. However, when considering this data, it is important to note the following:

Semester-to-semester retention rates are based upon enrolled students who met with the developmental advisor during the previous semester and were enrolled the following semester

Though the retention rate has decreased, it is important to consider that the referral of developmental education students to the DA continues to become more effective, as evidenced by the significant increase year-to-year of developmental education students referred to the DA.

The lack of consistency in referral of Dev. Ed. students to the DA and the lack of access to information for those students placing into developmental coursework still has some impact on the utility of this data. Also impacting the utility of this data is the turnover in DAs. Despite this, the semester-to-semester retention rate of developmental education students is good (Nat'l averages are somewhere around 31%).

SEMESTER	APPOINTMENTS	STUDENTS
FALL 2015	387	172
SPRING 2016	237	113

FALL 2015 DEV ED ENROLLMENT	SPRING 2016 RETURNING DEV ED STUDENTS	RATE
355	156	44%

## Miscellaneous Use of ASC/Resources

The ASC promotes a comfortable, student-centered, learning-focused environment where students of all races, religions, ethnicities, sexual orientations, genders, ages, ancestries, marital statuses, parental statuses and abilities are welcome. Being a campus location where commuting students can touch-base and feel a sense of “Northern” community is a priority. The following chart demonstrates use of the ASC as a campus resource for independent study, coursework, computer use etc.

FALL 2015	75 check-ins	19 unique students
SPRING 2016	47 check-ins	18 unique students

Every one (100%) of the 33 distinct students that routinely use the ASC as a campus resource have graduated or are currently enrolled. The ASC hopes to increase the number of students who regularly use our resources - and find a sense of community - that positively impacts retention and success.

## Faculty Support

As well, the ASC seeks to support not only students, but faculty as well, by offering a variety of topical in-class workshops.

### Academic Support Center Workshops

*Please schedule workshops at least one week in advance. Workshops are available between the hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday – Friday, unless special arrangements are made with the workshop leader. Instructor’s presence is preferred.*

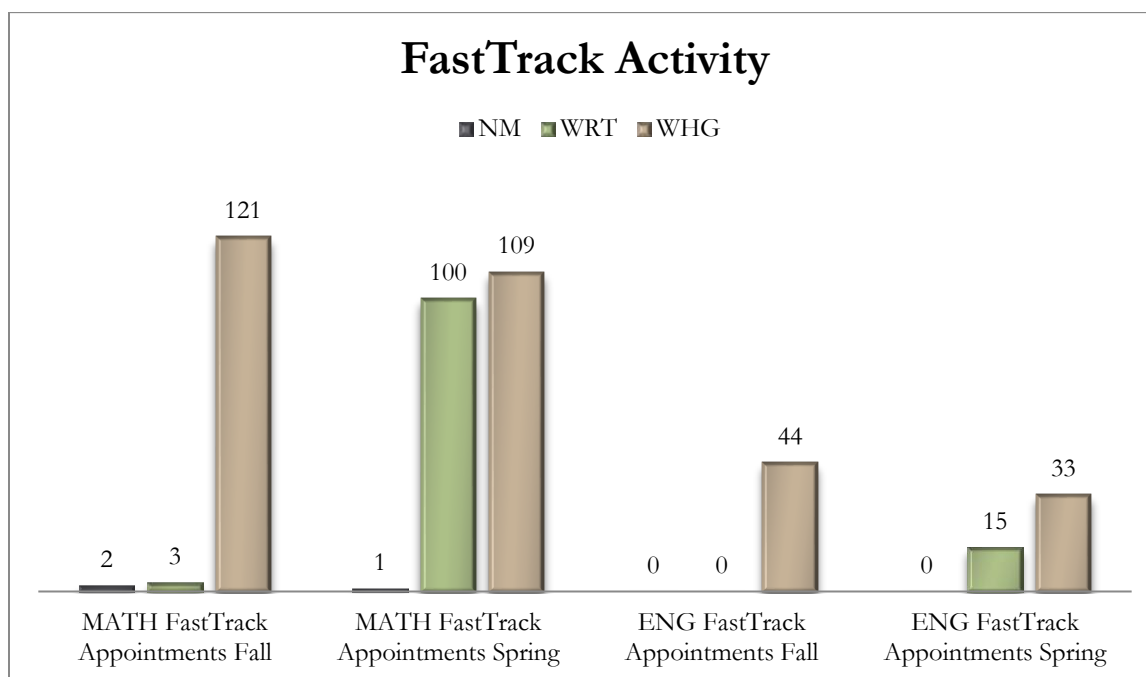
<b><u>EQ Is the New IQ</u></b>	Working effectively with different and difficult types of people isn’t easy. Academic, professional and personal success today hinges on the ability to manage emotions and the emotions of others...understand what EI is, why it is important and how to develop it.	<b>Contact:</b> CJ Farnsworth <a href="mailto:cfarnsworth@wvncc.edu">cfarnsworth@wvncc.edu</a> or ext. 8853
<b><u>5 Ws and an H</u></b>	...This workshop will share strategies that tap the power of questions to develop independence and life-long learning.	<b>Contact:</b> CJ Farnsworth <a href="mailto:cfarnsworth@wvncc.edu">cfarnsworth@wvncc.edu</a> or ext. 8853
<b><u>Individual Success</u></b>	Students may schedule individual appointments to take	<b>Contact:</b> CJ Farnsworth

<b><u>Session</u></b>	<i><b>The Learning and Study Strategies Inventory</b></i> in the ASC. The LASSI is designed to gather information about learning/study practices and attitudes. The LASSI inventory and subsequent advising session will help students understand their learning/study practices and attitudes toward college; it includes five scales: Attitude, Information Processing, Motivation, Time Management and Test Strategies.	<a href="mailto:cfarnsworth@wvncc.edu">cfarnsworth@wvncc.edu</a> or ext. 8853
<b><u>Stress Identification &amp; Management</u></b>	In this workshop, students will take the Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory, learn to identify stress, and acquire the means to manage stress through deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, visualization meditation (guided imagery), Yoga and Tai Chi.	<b>Contact:</b> Kevin Serig <a href="mailto:kserig@wvncc.edu">kserig@wvncc.edu</a> or ext. 8938
<b><u>Mental Health</u></b>	In this workshop, students will learn about symptoms of psychological disorders and take part in a discussion regarding the most diagnosed mental health issues including Depression/Anxiety and BiPolar Disorder. Students will learn how they can meet with an ASC staff member to develop an intervention strategy tailored to their needs.	<b>Contact:</b> Kevin Serig <a href="mailto:kserig@wvncc.edu">kserig@wvncc.edu</a> or ext. 8938
<b><u>Academic Support Center Tutorial Services</u></b>	This workshop will provide information on the Academic Support Center tutorial services. Students will learn what they can expect from a tutoring session, what they should bring to a session, when they should see a tutor and how to make the most of their tutoring experience. The student will also be given a lesson on how to access and use our online tutoring services through Brainfuse.	<b>Contact:</b> Stephanie Smith <a href="mailto:ssmith@wvncc.edu">ssmith@wvncc.edu</a> or ext. 8922
<b><u>Advising Workshop</u></b>	Academic Advising is integral to success. Knowing who your advisor is and what they can help you achieve is important to being a successful student at WVNCC. In this workshop students will learn how to: locate advisors, schedule appointments, prepare for an advising session and make the most of the advisor-student relationship.	<b>Contact:</b> Kristi Aulick <a href="mailto:kaulick@wvncc.edu">kaulick@wvncc.edu</a> or ext. 8921
<b><u>Technology and Professionalism Workshop</u></b>	Not sure what to say in that email to your professor? Interested in communicating for success? In this workshop students will learn basic computer literacy...discuss ideas for being proactive communicators.	<b>Contact:</b> Kristi Aulick <a href="mailto:kaulick@wvncc.edu">kaulick@wvncc.edu</a> or ext. 8921
<b><u>Critical Thinking</u></b>	This workshop focuses on teaching students and teachers the art and science of identifying and distinguishing the two most fundamental skills of critical thinking...Besides the goal of improving critical thinking overall, the workshop would be valuable in any courses that require students to organize information, write papers, or present speeches.	<b>Contact:</b> Dennis Bills <a href="mailto:dbills@wvncc.edu">dbills@wvncc.edu</a> or 510.8773
<b><u>Informal Fallacies</u></b>	This eye-opening workshop surveys poor rhetorical techniques students encounter in everyday life, fall prey to, and are tempted to use in their own arguments, papers, and speeches. It explains why informal fallacies work and why they should be avoided. Students receive a worksheet they can complete and take with them for use in other classes.	<b>Contact:</b> Dennis Bills <a href="mailto:dbills@wvncc.edu">dbills@wvncc.edu</a> or 510.8773

ASC Staff led 10 classroom workshops in the fall semester and 1 in the spring. Staff assist faculty by providing in-class proctoring as well, proctoring 22 classes in the fall (NM-1, WHG-3, WRT-18) and 26 classes in the spring (NM-0, WHG-2, WRT-24).

## FastTrack Program

Tutoring Coordinators continue to facilitate the FastTrack program still funded by Title III. FastTrack program has had some success, but is not without challenges.



FastTrack appointments include module work and module testing. Currently, the Director of the ASC does not have access to success rates and number of students enrolled each semester.

## Retention Initiatives

I. **Academic Alert Program** successfully transitioned to Northern on the Web. Alerts are issued in the same manner as mid-term grades/first-week attendance. This allows an alert(s) to be issued anytime by faculty; in this way, faculty have the freedom to identify at-risk students at critical period(s) within the unique structure of their courses.

Academic Alert participation has hovered around 25% since fall 2011.

FALL 2015	Submitted	Total
Instructors	25	26%
Alerts	161	●
Courses	36	7%
Students	131	8.5%

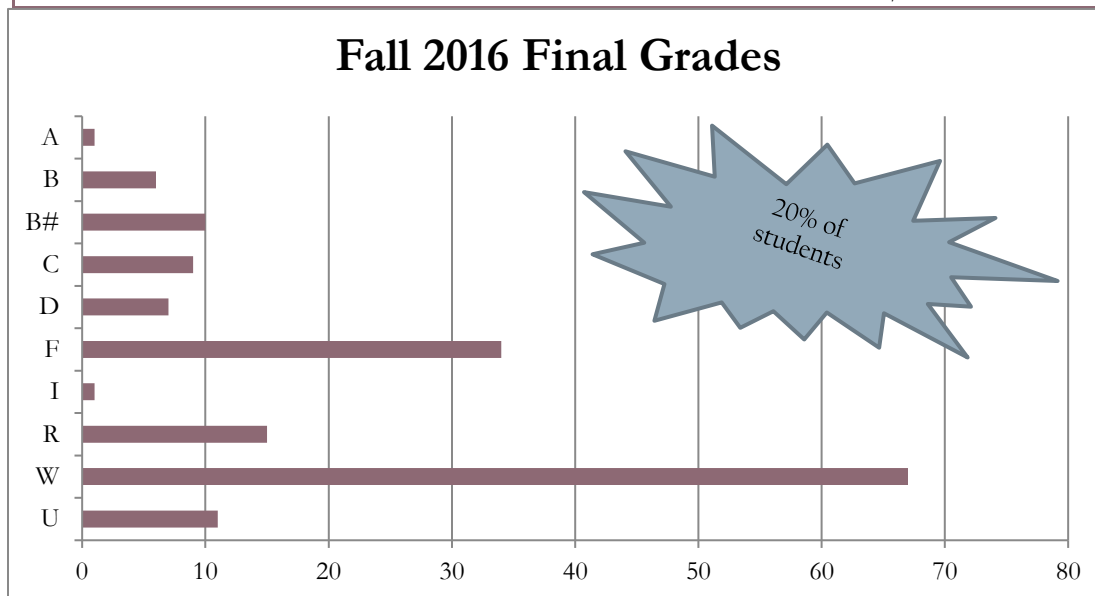


Figure 4 Final Grades for Those Receiving Alert(s)

SPRING 2016	Submitted	Total
Instructors	27	26%
Alerts	193	●
Courses	33	6.5%
Students	144	10.4%

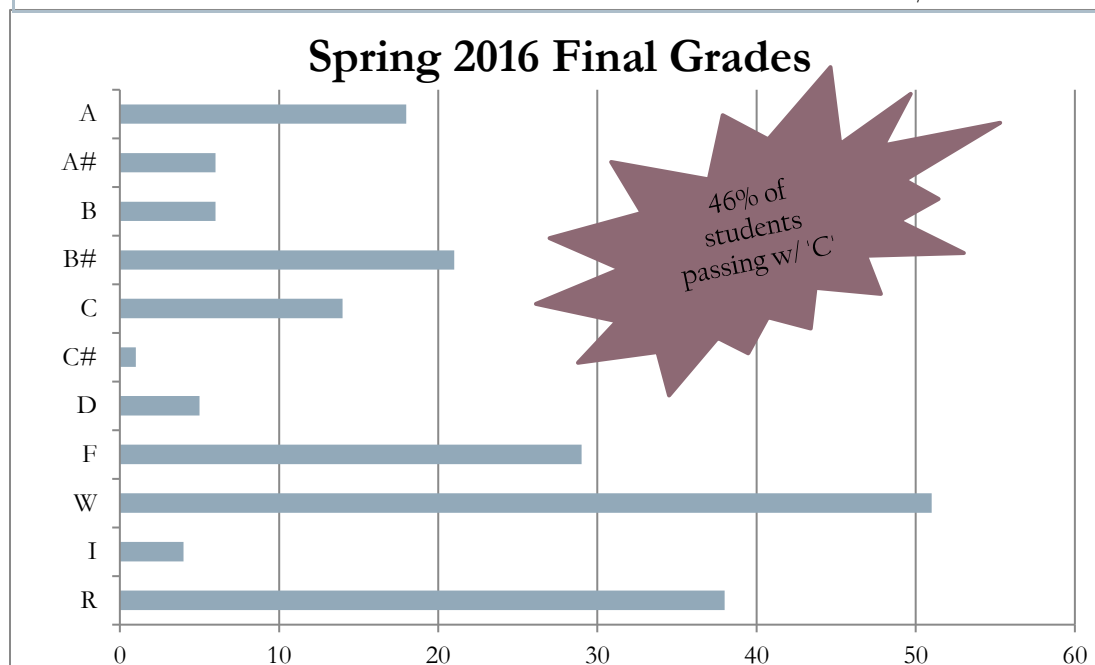
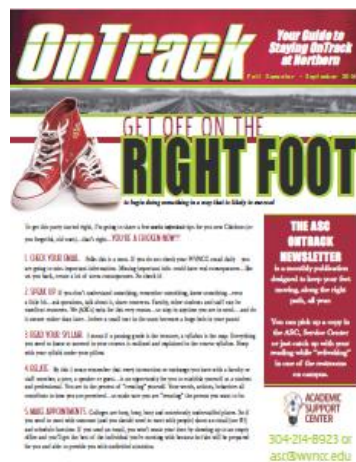


Figure 5 Final Grades for Those Receiving Alert(s)

II. **Project Graduation** continues although results are indeterminate as there is no structured tracking and follow-up system in place for these students.

III. The **OnTrack** Newsletter is a monthly publication aimed at providing students with on- time information, reminders and advice regarding success and completion. The newsletter is published 8 times annually (Sept-Dec [fall] and Feb-May [spring]) and is posted/distributed to all three campuses. The ASC also maintains a blog (<https://wvncasc.com/>) during the academic year to share insights and information regarding college, personal and professional growth.



IV. The **First-Year Seminar** program enrolled 212 first-time, full-time students during the fall semester and 80 in the spring. In Wheeling, 178 students for the year, 46 in Weirton and 68 in New Martinsville.

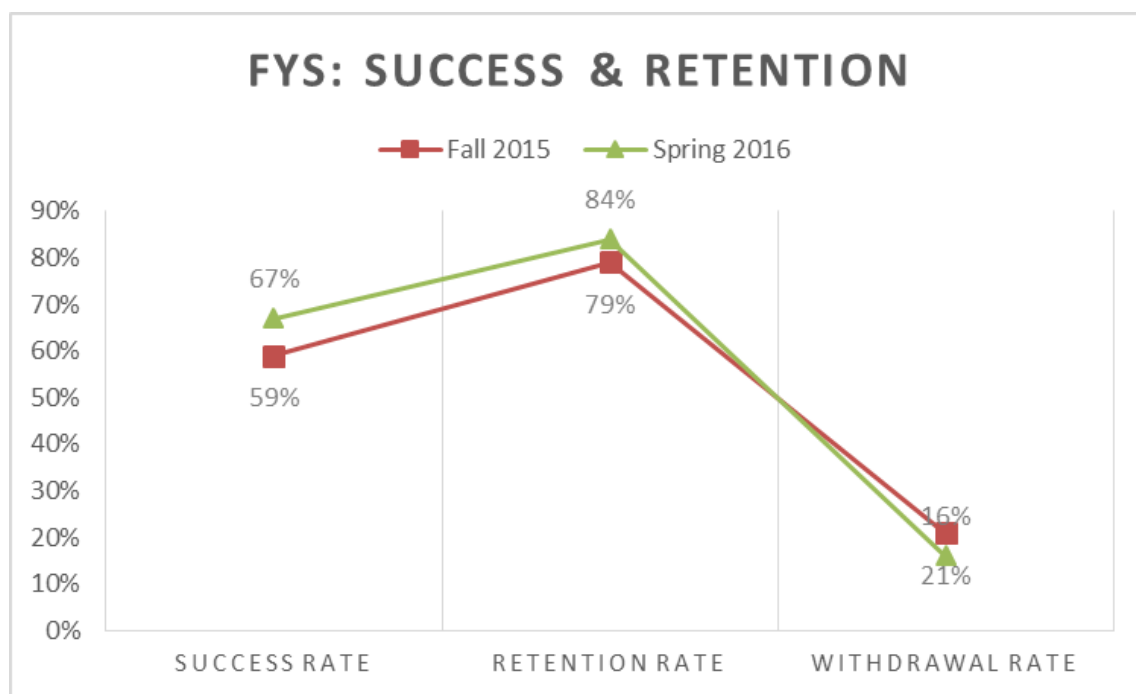


Figure 6 IR Dashboard

V. **Support Coaches**, funded through the BTG grant, were a major addition to the ASC during the spring 2016 semester. ASC Support Coaches work with all campus constituents and are involved in all stages of the application, enrollment and registration processes. Academic Support Coaches assist first time students as they adjust to the rigors of being in college. The primary focus of the ASCs' work with

first time students involves: transitioning students to the college; providing students with assistance in understanding WVNCC policies, procedures, expectations, responsibilities and making use of the resources and services available to them. Additionally, a critical part of coaching is connecting first time students with college departments and resources including: faculty/instructors, advisors, tutors, academic support, study locations, administrative offices, libraries, etc. Two Support Coaches connected, directly, with 1396 applicants during the spring semester. The Support Coaches also do special outreach to students in BTG programs and, combined, had direct contact with 422 returning BTG students. Support Coach positions are expected to be funded through March 2017 and the ASC and other college departments continue to refine their role within the institution.

- VI. **Project Incomplete** was added to the list of retention initiatives at the end of the spring semester. The Office of the VPAA forwards incompletes, submitted by faculty, to the ASC for follow-up with students to encourage course completion. It is too soon to have any data on the outcome of this intervention.

## Challenges

*All* of the programs and services provided by the ASC are intended to contribute to student success and overall retention. There are a few challenges faced by the ASC in these efforts:

- Access to information, systems and data can be inefficient. A lack of consistency in policies regarding who has access to what data, who “owns” what data/access, who grants access to whom, what information is needed, and why, to have access to systems/data can create frustrating delays and time-consuming hoops for day-to-day tasks as well as when planning, organizing or implementing new ideas/initiatives.
- Current registration procedures make advising/registration very difficult indeed.
- ASC, as part of Academic Affairs, does often experience a gap in communication and understanding with Student Services that hinders production and performance.

Goals for the 2016-2017 academic year include looking for ways to close some of these gaps. With bridges spanning these gaps, some genuinely impactful initiatives may take root and lead to significant gain in student success and retention.

