Abstract

In July 1984, Student Support Services (SSS) was established at the University of Northern Iowa. As mandated by the Higher Education Act of 1965, the program is designed to increase the retention and graduation rates of eligible participants and foster an institutional climate supportive of their success.

The Student Support Services Program is 100% federally funded and serves 200 University of Northern Iowa (UNI) students. A UNI student is eligible to participate in the SSS project if the student meets the following eligibility requirements:

- a citizen or national of the United States or meet the residency requirements for Federal student financial assistance.
- enrolled at the University of Northern Iowa or accepted for enrollment in the next academic term.
- has a need for academic support in order to successfully pursue a postsecondary educational program.
- meets the federal income guidelines; is a first generation college student (neither parent has a bachelor’s degree); or an individual with a disability.

A uniform rating system is in place to select participants based on the SSS eligibility criteria and academic need.

The grant lists seven objectives to achieve the overall mission of the Project as stated in 34 CFR 646.1, inclusive of objectives for good academic standing, persistence, and graduation.

The Project coordinates services with other UNI programs, particularly programs serving disadvantaged students, to offer the following services: academic, personal, career, and financial aid advising, tutorial services, academic instruction, cultural and educational activities, mentoring, and assistance enrolling in a graduate or professional school. The staff consists of a full-time Project Director, Coordinator of Instructional Services, Academic Support Specialist, and Secretary. Part-time staff are hired as needed.

To comply with the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), the Project ensures “equitable access and participation” through outreach efforts and advertising in areas heavily frequented by non-traditional students, underrepresented minority students, and students with disabilities.

An annual performance report and a project evaluation are planned to evaluate the effectiveness of the UNI SSS Project, as well as identify ways to enhance service delivery and improve Project outcomes.