

College Student Success: An Interview with Mr. Sam Sink

By Daphne Grayum

This is a follow-up for the article printed in the last edition of the Cougar Cry, concerning the ACA College Student Success class. This reporter would like to publicly apologize to Mr. Sam Sink and all the instructors involved with the ACA College Student Success class. In the last issue, I related how many students, whom I had spoken with, along with myself, felt that the class was really not necessary and should be offered as an elective. Mr. Sink was kind enough to allow me to interview him about the class and I quickly realized that I had formed my opinion much too soon! Following are excerpts from the interview:

History of the ACA class

College Student Success is a nationwide program, not just a program for WCC. The North Carolina Legislature required that all community colleges and universities develop a common, course catalog system. Within this system, each school would offer classes from a uniform course catalog that assured that the same course had the same credit hours regardless of the college being attended. This would eliminate the problem of credits being disputed when a student graduated and/or transferred to another community college or to a four year college. This was when the College Student Success class originated. WCC chose to offer three classes: ACA 111 (a one hour class), ACA 115 (used in Student Support Services), and ACA 118 which is a college study skills class. ACA classes were developed to help familiarize students with the campus as well as teach useful study skills. One of these three classes must be taken to graduate if you are a full-time student seeking a degree. The ACA class is a requirement because, if given the choice, many students that could greatly benefit from the class would opt not to take it. This class isn't required of every student though... if a student is working toward a certificate program, continuing education program, or if the class has been taken at another college before the student has transferred here, the student would not be required to take it. It is also possible to be "tested out" of this class but I'm not going to divulge how. The answer can be found in the college course catalog if a student is observant enough! ACA 118 covers valuable memory and critical thinking skills as well as an orientation of various areas of the campus. Tests show that students who have taken ACA classes go on to take more class hours, have a higher GPA and continue on to graduate. The data comprised have shown that the class has been extremely beneficial for students and overall very successful.

As I talked with Mr. Sink I realized that I had not given the course a fair shake. I had to admit to myself that although I thought the class was basically a waste of my time, I did learn some valuable information. The study skills and the test taking skills were the two most important things and I'm thankful for having the opportunity to learn them. For all of those who felt like I did, please stop and think of all the students who are benefiting from this program and take the class with an open mind! You might just surprise yourself and learn something to make your college stay a lot easier!