Evaluation Project Proposal for the Marshall University Summer Bridge Program

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Summer Bridge Program Description

The Marshall University Summer Bridge Program was implemented in the summer of 2012. The Bridge Program included intensive math and English workshops purposefully designed to help students learn or refresh the skills needed to pass a placement exam for entry into 100-level gateway courses in their first semester. The target participants were admitted freshmen scheduled to enroll in Fall 2012 who needed developmental math and/or English. A secondary group of participants included conditionally admitted students in danger of dismissal from the University if placement in 100-level math was not achieved by the end of the fall 2012 semester.

The first session was held in June and the second in July. Lunch was provided by the University and, for those students who did not live locally, housing was also provided in a University residence hall. The math and English programs ran concurrently. If a student needed both math and English remediation, he or she could participate in both the June and July programs. If a student only needed help in one subject area, he or she could choose June or July.

Each session consisted of 8-day workshops with intensive instruction in the morning, a break for lunch and individual lab-type work in the afternoons. Instructors administered placement exams on the first and last day of the sessions to measure improvement and determine the placement level for fall enrollment.

The Bridge program was implemented and managed by the Office of Academic Affairs. Dr. Rudy Pauley, Associate Vice President for Outreach and Continuing Studies, coordinated the effort. The Math Department provided developmental education instructors to teach the math

workshops and the English Department likewise provided English instructors. Amber Bentley, an Academic Counselor in University College, coordinated the placement exams.

Stakeholders included the Office of Academic Affairs who is ultimately responsible for the persistence and retention of students. The Math and English Departments are stakeholders because quicker entry into the gateway courses affects their teaching assignments and the student level of success in those courses. Parents are stakeholders in that quicker entry into gateway courses could save time and money dedicated toward their student's graduation. Additional stakeholders include the colleges and programs in which these students plan to major as quicker entry into gateway courses leads toward a greater rate of persistence and retention. The ultimate stakeholder is the student.

Purpose of the Evaluation

The political environment is somewhat tense in regard to developmental education. The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission has mandated that state colleges and universities reconsider their developmental education practices and preliminary documents indicate that a significant increase in the success rate will be desired in a short period of time. The setting should not affect the evaluation of the program but provide the necessary support needed to conduct the evaluation.

The goals of evaluating the entire bridge program are to determine the level of success in summer 2012 and determine areas for improvement or change while there is time to make such changes for Summer 2013. It would seem that the improvement would indicate a higher percentage of students entering 100-level gateway courses in the subsequent fall semester, but

evaluators should also consider the success of students in those courses. If the students are not successful, the program may have lost ground by misplacing them in the courses.

The long-term goals of persistence and graduation cannot be immediately assessed. This plan will include a strategy for measuring mid-term and long-term goals over a period of time. Persistence will be measured one-year from matriculation and graduation will be measured after four, five, and six years.

University staff would be provided to conduct the evaluation. The cost would require staff time and printing and copying costs.

Summer Bridge Program Model and Theory of Change

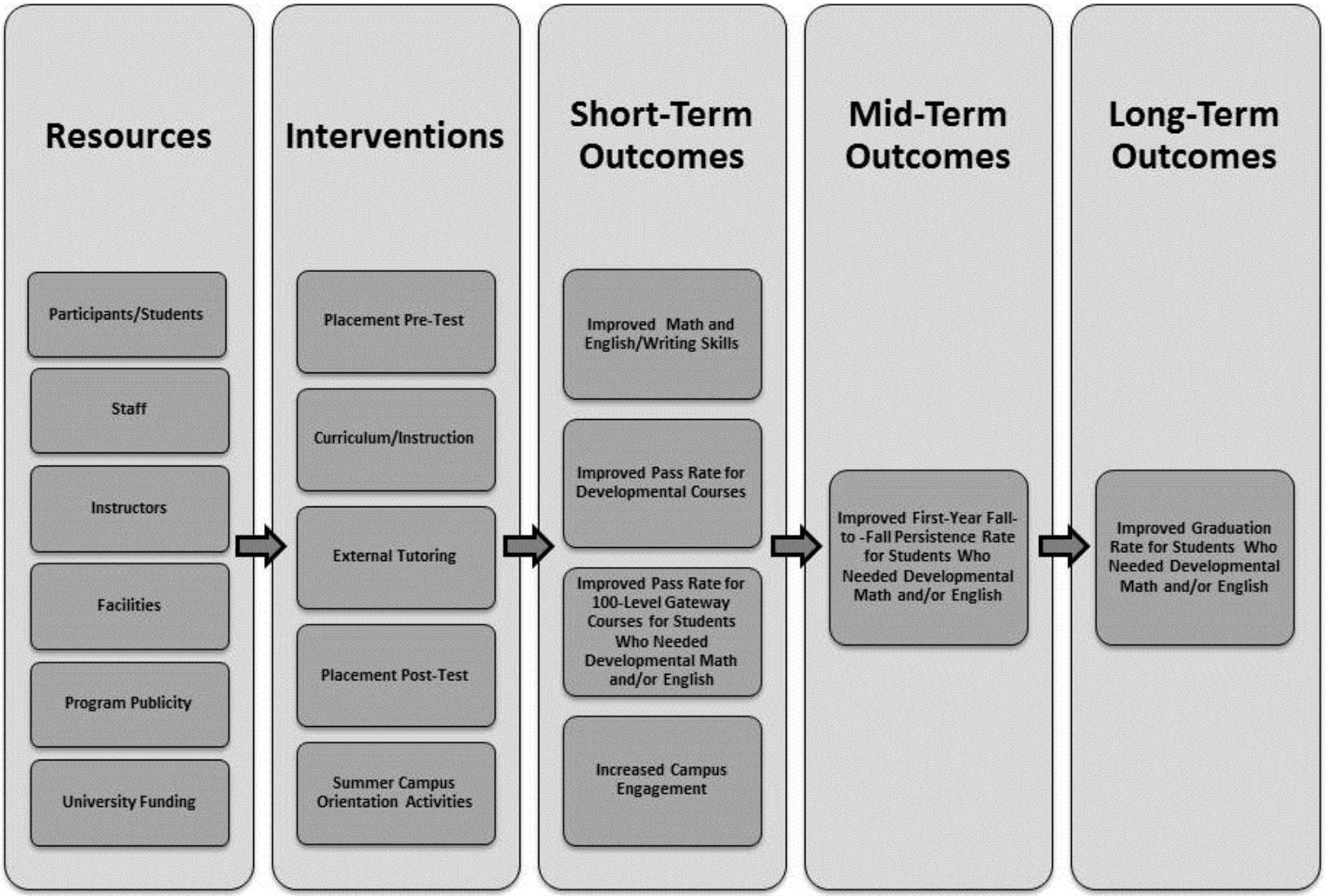
The logic model provided below has been reviewed and approved by the Office of Academic Affairs. The administrators agree to the resources, interventions and intended outcomes of the program.

Bridge Program resources include the participating students, their parents, the implementation staff, the faculty instructors, the physical facilities, program publicity, and university funding. A description of the targeted participants includes incoming freshmen students needing developmental coursework. The implementation staff included Academic Affairs, the Office of Recruitment, and University College. Instructors with developmental education experience were recruited from the mathematics and English departments. Staff secured classrooms and computer labs through the Office of the Registrar and the Office of Facilities Scheduling. Lunch arrangements were made with Sodexo, the university's exclusive caterer, and housing for students was arranged through the Office of Housing and Residence Life.

Interventions included a pre-test Accuplacer placement exam for mathematics and an in-house English writing exam on the first day of the program. Students received instruction each morning and additional activities after lunch. Additional tutoring was available in the University Tutoring Center in the afternoons. On the last day of the program, students completed a post-test placement exam. Information about campus, housing and other services were intertwined with the instructional activities.

The short-term program goals included improved skills, improved pass rates for developmental courses, improved pass rates for 100-level gateway courses and increased campus engagement. Mid-term expectations included persistence to second year of enrollment and long-term goals included graduation.

MU Summer Bridge Program Model and Theory of Change



Framing the Evaluation Questions and the Data Collection

The first column in the table below provides the questions that will be answered during the program evaluation. The second column provides a description of the data that will need to be collected to answer the evaluation questions. Column three provides a brief description of the data collection methodologies that will be incorporated in the study while column four estimates the time schedule for collecting the data. The final column notes the reporting requirements.

Survey data to be collected will be developed into one comprehensive survey for each category of stakeholders. Surveys will be distributed at the conclusion of the program and results prepared after a designated response time. Available data regarding expenses, completion of program, and other relative program statistics will be collected analyzed at the conclusion of the program. Additional longitudinal studies will be conducted for student persistence one year after matriculation and graduation rates will be evaluated at four, five, and six years after matriculation.

Framework for Evaluation Questions				
Evaluation Questions	**Data to be Collected**	**Data Collection Process/Strategy**	**Data Collection Schedule**	**Reporting Requirements**
A. Need for Program				
What is the nature and extent of the need for this program?	Number of MU students needing developmental coursework Comparison to National, State and Peer School Data Success rate of students in current developmental courses	Student Data Base Research (Complete College America) Student Data Base	Available upon request Available upon completion of a literature review Available upon request	Program outcomes annually at the conclusion of the program
How does this program relate to other initiatives, new or old?	Description of other alternatives for students needing developmental coursework	Description of Current Courses, Placement Exams, Upcoming Pilot Programs, etc. (MU Catalog)	Available upon request	
What are the characteristics of the population of students for whom this program is designed?	First Generation HS GPA Standardized Test Scores Socio-Economic Status Sex/Gender	Student Data Base Student Data Base Student Data Base Student Data Base Student Data Base	Available upon request	
What are the "local conditions" in relation to the program?	Program Support by Math Dept. Program Support by English Dept. Program Support by Academic Affairs Program Support from Students Program Support from Parents Program Support from Coordinators	Survey of Math Dept. Instructors Survey of English Dept. Instructors Survey of Acad. Affairs Administrators Survey of Students Survey of Parents Survey of Program Coordinator	Surveys to be completed at the conclusion of the program	

B. Program Design / Conceptualization				
Is the model designed to meet the needs of population? Is it plausible?	Participant Selection Process	Program Procedures and Student Data Base	Available upon request	Program outcomes annually at the conclusion of the program
Is the model consistent with University and state (WVHEPC) policies?	Marshall University Placement Policy WVHEPC Policy	Comparison of Bridge Program and Applicable Policies	Available upon completion of a literature review	
Are the interventions consistent with mission of the University?	Program Mission Statement and Marshall University Mission Statement	Program Guidelines, Marshall University Catalog	Available upon completion of a literature review	
Are resources sufficient to meet the needs of the model?	Funding Data	Program Budget and Expenses	Available at the conclusion of the program	
C. Program Operation / Implementation				
Do all stakeholders know what is expected of them?	Expectations of Math Dept. Expectations of English Dept. Expectations of Academic Affairs Expectations of Students Expectations of Parents Expectations of Coordinators	Survey of Math Dept. Instructors Survey of English Dept. Instructors Survey of Acad. Affairs Administrators Survey of Students Survey of Parents Survey of Program Coordinators	Surveys to be completed at the conclusion of the program	Program outcomes annually at the conclusion of the program
Is the rationale for the program clear to all stakeholders?	Understanding of Math Dept. Understanding of English Dept. Understanding of Academic Affairs Understanding of Students Understanding of Parents Understanding of Coordinators	Survey of Math Dept. Instructors Survey of English Dept. Instructors Survey of Acad. Affairs Administrators Survey of Students Survey of Parents Survey of Program Coordinators	Surveys to be completed at the conclusion of the program	
Do the instructors follow the implementation instructions?	Instructor Implementation Methods Actual Implementation	Review of Implementation Instructions Comparison with Actual Methods Implementation as described via an Instructor Survey and Observation	Evaluator observations during program Surveys to be completed at the conclusion of the program	

Did the facilities allow for a comfortable and effective teaching and learning environment?	Description of Facilities Instructor and Student Opinions Regarding Facilities	Room Descriptions from Facilities Planning Survey of Students Survey of Math & English Instructors	Available upon review of University publications Surveys to be completed at the conclusion of the program	
How did the students find out about the program?	Description of Publicity Sources	Survey of Students Survey of Parents	Surveys to be completed at the conclusion of the program	
D. Program Outcome / Impact				
How many students complete the program? (Short-term)	Attendance/Completion Data	Attendance/Completion Records	Available upon request at the conclusion of the program	Program outcomes annually at the conclusion of the program and longitudinal data at 1, 4, 5, and 6 years after implementation
Does the program delivery meet the stakeholders' expectations and desired level of satisfaction? (Short-term)	Expectations of Math Dept. Expectations of English Dept. Expectations of Academic Affairs Expectations of Students Expectations of Parents Expectations of Coordinators	Survey of Math Dept. Instructors Survey of English Dept. Instructors Survey of Acad. Affairs Administrators Survey of Students Survey of Parents Survey of Program Coordinators	Surveys to be completed at the conclusion of the program	
Does the program delivery meet the participant/student needs? (Short-term)	Success rate of students entering 100-level gateway courses in math and/or English, respective to program completed. Success rate of students improving skills even if not advancing to next course level.	Placement Pre- and Post-Exam Data Placement Pre- and Post-Exam Data	Available upon request at the conclusion of the program Available upon request at the conclusion of the program	

Do the participants obtain passing grades in 100-level gateway courses? (Long-term)	Grades Received in 100-Level Gateway Course	Student Data Base	Longitudinal data available after student has had the opportunity to enroll in gateway course (one year)	
Do the participants persist to second year? (Long-term)	First to Second Year Retention	Tracking / Institutional Research	Longitudinal data available in September of year following program participation	
Do the participants persist to graduation? (Long-term)	Graduation	Tracking / Institutional Research	Longitudinal data available in 4, 5 and 6 year intervals after student matriculation	
Are the participants engaged in student organizations and campus activities?	Number of Memberships in Student Organizations and Number of Campus Events Attended	Survey of Students	Surveys to be completed at the conclusion of the program	
E. Program Cost / Efficiency				
Are resources used efficiently?	Cost Per Student	Analysis of Program Budget Per All Participants, Per Student who Achieves 100-Level Placement, Per Student who Improves Skills Based on Placement Data in Comparison with Retention Costs in Relation to Recruitment Cost (Note: It costs less to retain students than recruit new students.) Institutional Research.	Data available at the conclusion of the program and via additional longitudinal data	Financial reports annually at the conclusion of the program.
Could additional students be served in a cost effective manner?	Cost Per Student	Same as Above with Consideration of Additional Funding Availability (Academic Affairs).	Data available at the conclusion of the program and via additional longitudinal data	

Are there alternatives with equivalent benefits and less cost?	Description of other alternatives for students needing developmental coursework.	Description of Current Courses, Placement Exams, Upcoming Pilot Programs, etc. In Consideration of Cost Per Student Data for all programs. Institutional Research and Academic Affairs.	Literature review of available programs in comparison with longitudinal data	

Final Report Plan

A Summer Bridge Program Evaluation Report Outline is included in Appendix A of this report. The comprehensive report will address the program design and implementation, review the results with the perspective of each stakeholder in mind, and provide a recommendation for the continuation, discontinuation or transformation of the program.

The research methodologies will be thoroughly described. Available data will be reported in a timely manner, but longitudinal data will be reviewed on a specific periodic schedule up to six years after completion of the program. Amended reports will be prepared as longitudinal data becomes available.

The initial evaluation of available data and survey results will be distributed to Academic Affairs, Department of English, Department of Mathematics, and University College staff upon completion. The longitudinal data will be presented after evaluation is completed one year, four years, five years, and six years after matriculation of the participant cohort. Academic Affairs will have the responsibility of determining program continuation after the initial reporting period.

The Meta-Evaluation: The Plan for Evaluating the Evaluation Plan

After the completion of the evaluation, the lead evaluator will conduct a meta-evaluation to determine if the proper procedures were utilized in the execution of the Summer Bridge Program evaluation. A meta-evaluation checklist with grading instructions is provided in Appendix B of this report. The meta-evaluation will establish the validity, utility, conduct, credibility, and costs of the evaluation project. The completed meta-evaluation will be presented to the program stakeholders and the evaluation team. If the results are unsatisfactory to the

stakeholders, a third-party reviewer will be contracted to conduct an additional meta-evaluation to resolve any disagreements.

References

Davidson, J. E. (2005). *Evaluation methodologies: The nuts and bolts of sound evaluation.*

Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Appendix A

MU Summer Bridge Program Evaluation Report Outline

I. Executive Summary of the Summer Bridge Program Evaluation
   a. Questions addressed
   b. Brief description of the Summer Bridge Program
   c. Main findings
      i. Concise summary of findings
      ii. Implications
      iii. Recommendations for the Summer Bridge Program stakeholders

II. Evaluation Problem
   a. Size, scope, seriousness, trends over time
   b. Prior efforts to deal with it

III. Summer Bridge Program Model and Theory of Change
   a. Resources
      i. Participants/Students
      ii. Staff
      iii. Instructors
      iv. Facilities
      v. Program publicity
      vi. University Funding
   b. Interventions
      i. Placement Pre-Test
      ii. Curriculum/Instruction
      iii. External Tutoring
      iv. Placement Post-Test
      v. Summer Campus Orientation Activities
   c. Short-Term Outcomes
      i. Improved Math and English/Writing Skills
      ii. Improved Pass Rate for Developmental Courses
      iii. Improved Pass Rate for 100-Level Gateway Courses for Students Who Needed Developmental Math and/or English
      iv. Increased Campus Engagement
   d. Mid-Term Outcome
      i. Improved First-Year Fall-to-Fall Persistence Rate for Students Who Needed Developmental Math and/or English

- e. Long-Term Outcomes
    - i. Improved Graduation Rate for Students Who Needed Developmental Math and/or English

IV. Evaluation Methodologies
- a. Central questions
- b. Conduct of the study
    - i. Study design
    - ii. Time period covered
    - iii. Methods of data collection (brief, detail in appendix)
    - iv. Methods of analysis (brief, detail in appendix)
- c. Results
    - i. Findings
    - ii. Limitations to the findings
    - iii. Conclusions
    - iv. Interpretation
- d. Recommendations for enhancement, revision, or discontinuation of program

V. Comparison with Evaluations of Similar Programs

VI. Suggestions for Further Evaluation

VII. Acknowledgements

VIII. Appendices
- a. Methodology
- b. Tables of Data
- c. Transcripts of selected narrative material

Appendix B

MU Summer Bridge Program Meta-Evaluation Checklist

	Please rate each area and provide a justification for each.		
Validity	**Checkpoint**	**Rating (A-F)***	**Justification for Rating**
	Comprehensiveness		
	Relevant Questions		
	Methodology		
	Clear Interpretation		
	Clear Conclusions		
	Valid Recommendations		
Utility	Questions Relevant to Audience		
	Timeliness		
	Clarity of Communication		
	Utilization of Findings		
	Participatory Evaluations		
Conduct	Legal Standards		
	Ethical Standards		
	Professional Standards		
	Cultural Appropriateness		
	Unobtrusiveness		
Credibility	Familiarity with Context		
	Impartiality		
	Expertise in Subject Matter		

Cost	Reasonable for Evaluation		
	Best Use of Resources		

Please respond to each question below.

Given how you have rated this evaluation on the checkpoints above, what rating would you give the evaluation overall? (Circle just one letter grade)

A+ A A- B+ B B- C+ C C- D F

Excellent Good Adequate Poor

Briefly explain how you came to this conclusion. (What logic did you use? Did you decide that some aspects were more important? If so, how?)

***Grading Instructions**

A = Hits all of the main aspects of this checkpoint (to the extent possible in a short report) and expresses them clearly and concisely.

B = Hits most of the aspects covered under this checkpoint but misses one or two fairly important (but not absolutely crucial) points or has all of the right ingredients but is really not 100% clear.

C = Goes some of the way toward addressing this checkpoint but misses something crucial, misses or misstates several important points, or is pretty unclear or disorganized.

D = Has one or two elements that seem to implicitly speak to this checkpoint but really does a poor job on this checkpoint.

F = Totally misses the checkpoint.

Table and instructions adapted from:

Davidson, J. E. (2005). *Evaluation methodologies: The nuts and bolts of sound evaluation.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.