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## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI) & STUDENT SUCCESS

Student behaviors and decisions -- influenced by their emotional intelligence (EI) – such as amount of study time, alcohol consumption, and involvement in social activities, often better predict ultimate graduation and success than traditional academic predictors such as HSGPA or SAT. And, since emotional intelligence can be taught, you can accomplish two important goals on your campus: 1) enhance retention and graduation, and 2) achieve your mission to help students grow and improve in all phases of their development.

### Student Grades

- Mann and Kanoy (2010) found that first-year college GPA could be predicted by the following EI scales: optimism, independence (negative predictor), self-regard, impulse control and problem solving. They divided students into three groups based on GPA and found
  - The highest-performing students (>3.34) scored higher on the EI skills of assertiveness, stress tolerance and problem solving and lower on independence than middle-performing students (GPA of 2.50-3.34) and higher on assertiveness, stress tolerance, impulse control and problem solving than the lowest-performing students (<2.50).
  - Mid-performing students scored higher on social responsibility and impulse control than the low-performing students
- Sparkman and colleagues (2012) in a five-year longitudinal study found the EI skills of self-actualization, social responsibility, and happiness were positive predictors of cumulative GPA and that independence and interpersonal relationship were negative predictors of cumulative GPA.
- Parker and colleagues (2005) found the EI skills of adaptability, stress management, and interpersonal abilities were strongly correlated with academic success in over 1400 first year students (Parker et al., 2005).
- Scores on a test of optimism in 500 UPENN freshmen were a better predictor of grades during the first year than SAT scores or high school grades (Schulman, 1995).
- Significant positive correlations ranging from 0.29 to 0.39 between EI and GPA were found in 304 first-year students from various cohort groups (honors, athletes, transitions, first-year college) at one NC institution (Jaeger, 2004).

- Song and colleagues (2010) found that both general mental abilities and emotional intelligence contribute in unique ways to the predicting academic performance. Emotional intelligence, but not general mental abilities, also predicted the quality of students' social interaction.
- Evenson (2008) found that students on the Dean's List had higher emotional intelligence scores than students on academic probation.
- Berenson, Boyles, and Weaver (2008) found that the most significant predictor of grades in online courses was emotional intelligence.

### Retention and Graduation

- Keefer, Parker and Wood (2012) found that the failure to graduate six years after enrollment for an initial sample of 1015 students could be predicted by lower emotional intelligence scores on interpersonal and stress management domains, even after controlling for high school grades and gender.
- Parker and his colleagues (2005) examined differences between matched samples (based on gender and ethnicity) of students who withdrew before the second year of study (n=213) and those who enrolled for their second year (n=213). Those who were retained were higher on a significant number of EI characteristics compared with those who withdrew.
- Kanoy (2011) in a longitudinal study of entering students and graduation four years later found that first-year students who were not retained were lower in impulse control and optimism than first-year students who were retained. Seniors who graduated four years after enrollment were higher than non-graduates on 7 EI skill areas as first-year students including: self-regard, self-actualization, independence, social responsibility, reality testing, impulse control and happiness. There were no differences related to entering academic ability as measured by grades and HS GPA.
- Sparkman (2012) in a longitudinal project involving 783 college students studied over a 5-year period found social responsibility, followed by impulse control, and empathy were the three **strongest positive predictors of graduation**. Flexibility was a negative predictor of graduation.
- Pritchard and Wilson (2003) reported a positive relationship between stress, alcohol use, and attrition. Students with lower stress were more likely to be retained and to use less alcohol.
- Qualtier and colleagues (2009) found in two different studies that 1) emotional intelligence successfully predicted which students would be retained to year 2 of study and 2) students who show an increase in EI as a result of an intervention program are more likely to persist with their studies.

### Teaching and Learning EI in College

- Incorporating emotional skills content in a College Transition Course enhanced student retention and led to increases in EI functioning for students in the treatment group related to understanding, regulating and harnessing emotions (Schutte & Malouff, 2002).

- Leedy and Smith (2012) found that teaching EI skills to first-year students resulted in significant improvement in female students' EI over the course of the first semester.
- Chang (2006) found that students in the treatment group who were taught about emotional intelligence and required to create an improvement plan (e.g., increase assertiveness) showed a significant increase in emotional intelligence skills compared with the control group of students.
- In two different years, students (all male) who participated in a 24-hour emotional intelligence training program reported better psychosocial adjustment than students who did not participate in the program, with positive results persisting for at least 6 months (Ruiz and colleagues, 2012).
- Martinez and her colleagues (2014) found that students on probation who participated in an EI skills training workshop compared with probationary students who did not participate had a retention rate over 20% higher for the following semester.
- Carrick (2010) found that a half-day workshop on emotional intelligence combined with an individual coaching session improved students' emotional intelligence.

### Student Leadership, Behaviors & Decisions

- Stang (2009) found a strong positive correlation between more well-developed leadership practices as measured by the Student LPI and higher emotional intelligence. Inspiring a shared vision, modeling the way, challenging the process and encouraging the heart all were related to higher emotional intelligence skills.
- Cavins (2005) measured emotional intelligence, leadership practices, and performance of students enrolled in a four-year leadership development program. Moderate and strong positive relationships were found among the EI skills of self-actualization, social responsibility, empathy, stress tolerance, problem solving, and optimism and subscales of the Student Leadership Practices Inventory. In particular, the top performers scored higher on 11 of the 21 areas of the emotional intelligence assessment compared with middle and bottom performers. Top and middle performers scored higher than bottom performers on modeling the way, challenging the process, and inspiring a shared vision.
- Radnitzer (2010) found that self-directed learning readiness was positively correlated with 8 of the 16 emotional intelligence skills measured among a group of students participating in a leadership development program.
- Wu and Stemler (2008) found that resident assistants with the highest EI scores were rated the more effective in their roles as resident advisors than those with lower EI, as rated by students they served.
- Schuesner (2002) found that leaders were higher in emotional intelligence than members of campus organizations but that there were no differences in the EI skills of leaders across different types of campus organizations such as student government or service clubs.

- Deniz and colleagues (2009) found that students with higher emotional intelligence were less likely to procrastinate their academic work if they scored higher on adaptability and coping with stress.
- College students were more likely to engage in more frequent heavy episodic drinking and have more alcohol-related problems if they had lower emotional intelligence (Schutte, Malouff, & Hine, 2011).
- EI scores were significant predictors of alcohol and marijuana use among college students (Claros & Sharma, 2012).
- Emotional intelligence (EI) but not general intelligence was a predictor of students' reactivity to stress, with higher EI associated with less stress (Singh & Sharma, 2012)

### EI and Preparation for Career Success

The **National Association of Colleges and Employers** conducts a study every year with employers to query them about **skills they most desire in college graduates**. Those skills have been virtually unchanged for 10 years with the 2010 top five including:

- communication skills (assertiveness, emotional expression)
  - analytical abilities (problem solving)
  - teamwork (social responsibility, interpersonal relationship)
  - technical skills (not EI related)
  - strong work ethic (self-actualization, self-regard, impulse control)
  - The remainder of the top 10 usually includes interpersonal skills, flexibility and adaptability, honesty and integrity, motivation, and organization (NACE 2010).
- Boyatzis and Saatoioglu (2008), in their 20-year longitudinal study, found that MBA students' emotional intelligence could be improved and sustained over at least 7 years time by including EI instruction in the graduate program.
  - Students' service-learning experiences tapped and fostered the personal and social emotional intelligence competencies associated with professional effectiveness (Manring, 2012).
  - Samples and Regent (2010) found that emotional intelligence was related to academic success of students planning to go into the ministry while their level of spiritual maturity did not predict academic success.

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