

2023-24 Evaluation Report: Transportation Scholars Program at Pennsylvania College of Technology

Introduction

This evaluation report provides a formative and summative assessment of the Transportation Scholars Program, covering the period from Fall 2023 to Spring 2024. The evaluation measures the program's implementation, effectiveness, and progress toward its objectives based on participant feedback, program activities, and academic outcomes.

Formative Evaluation

Program Implementation

- **Outreach and Marketing:** The program implemented a targeted social media marketing campaign (\$4,000 from January to March 2024), an enhanced website, and direct email campaigns in February 2024. The emails were a key source of awareness for students, as many participants cited them as their initial introduction to the program.
- **Student Participation in Support Services:** Student participation in support services was moderate. In Fall 2023, only one student attended a tutoring session, while three students attended a total of 17 tutoring sessions in Spring 2024. This suggests an increase in engagement with academic support services over time.
- **Student Feedback:** Participants expressed positive opinions about the program, citing its role in helping them build industry connections and providing financial assistance. Students also appreciated the opportunity to participate in industry tours and career-related activities. One noted benefit was how the program enabled students to focus more on their academic and career goals.

Recruitment and Diversity Initiatives

- **Cohort Demographics:**
 - Fall 2023: 14 total applicants, with 5 qualified scholars (3 students of color and 3 females).
 - Fall 2024: 31 applicants, with 9 qualified scholars (5 students of color and 5 females). This data shows progress in recruiting a more diverse cohort, particularly with an increase in female applicants and students of color.
- **Scholarship Awards:** In Fall 2023, five students received scholarships of \$10,000 each, distributed in two installments of \$5,000 across the Fall and Spring semesters. This financial support was frequently mentioned by students as a significant factor in reducing barriers to academic success.

Effectiveness of Program Components

- **First-Year Experience (FYE):** All scholars (5 of 5) completed the FYE course, with each earning an 'A'. Additionally, participation in other cohort activities, such as career seminars and mentoring, was consistent throughout the academic year.
- **Math Contextualization:** The program emphasized the importance of math in transportation-related fields. Students shared examples of math used in their majors, and the data collected is expected to inform future curriculum development. However, no formal curricular changes have been made yet.

Faculty and Student Engagement

Faculty involvement was consistent, with regular meetings and feedback provided to students. Faculty assessments indicated that students were performing well academically, with no major issues reported. The average GPA of the cohort was 3.53 for the academic year.

Summative Evaluation of Project Objectives

Objective 1: 50% of Scholars Complete Required Math Courses with a Grade of B or Better

- **Achievement:** 67% (4 of 6) of scholars achieved a grade of B or better in their math courses for 2023-24. One student completed two math courses, including a developmental course to remediate a deficiency.

Objective 2: 90% of Transportation Scholars Entering as Freshmen will be Retained until their Second Year

- **Achievement:** 100% (5 of 5) of the first cohort were retained from their first to second year, exceeding the goal of 90% retention.

Objective 3: 75% of Transportation Scholars will Complete an AAS Degree within Three Years

- **Progress:** The target of 75% of scholars completing an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree within three years is too early to measure as the program is still in its early stages.

Objective 4: 95% of Scholars will be Employed Full-Time in their Field or Continue their Education within Six Months of Graduation

- **Progress:** This objective is also too early to assess. Post-graduation surveys will be conducted six months after the first cohort graduates.

Objective 5: 33% of Scholarship Applications are from Females and/or Students of Color

- **Progress:** The program aimed to have 33% of applicants be female and/or students of color. In Fall 2023, 42% of applicants were from these demographics, showing success in meeting and surpassing this objective.
-

Conclusion

The Transportation Scholars Program is successfully achieving its formative goals, including outreach, diversity recruitment, and student support. Initial academic outcomes are positive, with high retention rates and satisfactory completion of key coursework. Progress toward long-term goals, such as degree completion and post-graduation employment, is on track, but further evaluation is required as cohorts advance through the program. The program is well-positioned to continue supporting scholars in achieving their academic and career aspirations in the transportation industry.

Dr. Brian L. Cygan, Evaluator

Executive Director | Assessment, Research and Planning

Pennsylvania College of Technology

One College Avenue, Williamsport, PA 17701

570.320.2400 x7567