INCREASING STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION – HOW TO DO SO AND IS IT WORTH THE EFFORT?

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ABSTRACT

Faculty members face increasing workload demands. While saving some time, technology tends to add to a faculty member's responsibilities. Online courses, emailing and advisement are only a few ways technology imposes on our time (Glater 2/21/2006). As we attempt to stay ahead of the game, time constraints can often outweigh the benefits of technology. However, as many researchers note, one of the most vital aspect of a faculty member's job is their interaction with students. Research supports the idea that student-faculty interaction plays an integral role in the intellectual development of students. For instance, Astin (1991, 1993), Bowen (1977), Kerr (1994), Boyer (1987), Pascarella and Terenzini (1978, 1991), Tinto (1988) and others stress the importance of student-faculty interaction as a positive predictor for academic and social outcomes of college. Knowing how crunched for time many of us are, how can faculty members be expected to increase or enhance interactions with students?

In this session we discuss a variety of methods and means by which faculty interact with students, with particular regard to the increasing expectations students have of their faculty members. Interactions can vary from informal situations, such as a conversation in the hall, to more formal scenarios, such as during office hours, in team meetings or in class. The co-chairs of this table topic, Kristen Walker and Deborah Cours (California State University Northridge) have collected data about a "forced" interaction with faculty. This interaction with faculty members was assigned as part of the course requirements and then students were surveyed after about their experiences. Marketing majors and other business majors were included in this study. The results discussed include how "forced" interactions with faculty are viewed by students and whether "forced" interactions lead to increased future interaction. These research findings launch a discussion among experienced and novice faculty members and an opportunity to share success stories of efficient faculty-student interactions, the use of technology, and lessons learned.

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