2012

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Published 2012 by the
Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia, Inc
PO Box 27, MILPERRA NSW 2214, Australia
www.herdsa.org.au

ISSN 1441 001X
ISBN 0 908557 89 2

This research paper was reviewed using a double blind peer review process that meets DIISR requirements. Two reviewers were appointed on the basis of their independence and they reviewed the full paper devoid of the authors’ names and institutions in order to ensure objectivity and anonymity. Papers were reviewed according to specified criteria, including relevance to the conference theme and sub-themes, originality, quality and presentation. Following review and acceptance, this full paper was presented at the international conference.

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The NAME Four Factor Model for engaging students in academic support services

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This paper describes the first student experience survey of a newly established academic and support service, delivered by an “Academic Enabling and Support Centre” (AESC) at The University of Notre Dame Australia, Fremantle campus. The purpose of the study was to identify the key factors that would be likely to increase student access and participation rates, and accordingly enhance student outcomes. There was an overt institutional focus on the needs of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, driven, in part, by the national agenda to increase student diversity and participation in the tertiary sector. The survey demonstrated that several operational aspects related to the Centre’s programs needed to be reviewed, and that changes needed to occur to respond to the feedback provided. The results, and the staff dialogue that followed, have led to the articulation of a ‘Four Factor Model’ for increasing student engagement with support services. Known by the acronym NAME (Normalisation, Access, Marketing and Engagement) the model became a way to describe the salient features necessary to have students engage with academic support.

Keywords: Academic support, Marketing.

Introduction

The student body within the Australian university sector has become increasingly diverse, culturally and linguistically, and this is having a major impact on teaching within the sector (Lawrence, 2005). In 1960, Australia had a population of 10.3 million, and university enrolments of 53,000, validating informally used estimates that traditionally 5% of the Australian population attended university. The current Australian national agenda sets a benchmark that 40% of Australians aged between 25 and 34 will hold a university degree by 2020 (Koshy & Phillimore, 2010) and that 20% of those students will come from low socio-economic backgrounds. This social inclusion agenda heralds a significant change, over a relatively short period of time, for the provision of higher education in Australia. Universities have a moral and ethical obligation to support and assist students they have enrolled to persevere and achieve success (Murray, 2011), whilst maintaining rigorous standards of academic excellence.

In order to achieve the ambitious national agenda for increased participation, and for participation to include cohorts not previously engaged with university studies, mechanisms for support and retention are an essential part of a university’s services.
Academic support services have the potential to increase student retention and lift academic standards (Peach, 2005). The importance of adequately funding and supporting these services within a university is clear (Chanock, 2005); moreover it may be a cost-neutral benefit over time in purely pragmatic terms (Gale, Tranter, Bills, Hattam, & Comber, 2010) as funding is linked to retention. Future government funding will be, directly and indirectly, linked to achieving the goals of increased and diverse participation.

It is widely acknowledged, by university staff facilitating academic support programs, that one of the greatest challenges is to engage the students who most need the services (McNaught & McIntyre, 2011). Well designed and potentially valuable programs of academic support regularly fail to attract significant participant numbers. Frequently, the users of such services are able-students, seeking to maximise their grades and results, rather than those experiencing (or likely to experience) difficulty.

Students commencing university study may overestimate their skill set, or underestimate the demands within a university course (Levy & Murray, 2005) and success in the first year of university studies is pivotal to achievement and retention (Upcraft et al., 2005). A student’s academic achievement and approach to study have been found to be critical factors affecting both retention and attrition in first year students (Tumen, Shulruf, & Hattie, 2008). Students often cite their reason for withdrawing from tertiary studies as their lack of academic literacy skills, particularly in research and writing (Goldfinch & Hughes, 2007). Disadvantaged groups demonstrate significantly higher rates of attrition (Draca, Leeves, Green, & Bradley, 2007), and these students often need support programs to be successful in their transition to university studies. Academic support programs can increase aspiration, access and retention rates amongst students, particularly those from disadvantaged and lower socio-economic (LSES) backgrounds (Gale et al., 2010).

The University of Notre Dame Australia established an “Academic Enabling and Support Centre” (AESC) on both the Fremantle and Sydney campuses in 2010. The major roles articulated for these Centres has included (a) increasing access from disadvantaged groups, (b) coordinating high quality academic support services, and (c), to collate valid data on student needs and to measure the efficacy services may have on student outcomes. It would be presumptuous to ‘assume’ the services proposed and provided will meet the needs and interests of students, without regard to their feedback. Conducting surveys, and reflecting on user comments and rankings, is a way to potentially modify and enhance programs, and to honour the insights that these students bring.

**Method**

The project was descriptive research (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2001) designed to gain a better understanding of the needs of student users and the efficacy of AESC services. An online questionnaire survey utilising Survey Monkey, consisting of 20 questionnaire items was utilised (see Appendix 1). A series of open and closed questions along with a mixture of scaling techniques were used that ranged from ‘yes/no’, open comment boxes, and a series of weighted five point scales (similar to Likert scales) have been applied to measure perceptions of both satisfaction and importance of services (see Appendix 2).

The questionnaire items were pilot tested for item relevance and ease of comprehension. An email was sent out to all AESC support service users with the link to the survey. A follow up email was sent ten days later to remind and notify participants that the survey would close
within the week. The survey closed two weeks after the initial implementation.

The questionnaire responses were downloaded from Survey Monkey and loaded into Excel spreadsheets. Responses for the key question items examining the AESC support services were analysed by subgroup and average ratings calculated to identify differences between subgroups. A weighted five point scale used for experiential items, assigned a minimum of 1 indicating *strongly disagree* to a 4 being for *strongly agree* with NA assigned a value of 0.

**Participants**

A non-probability, convenience sample was selected by compiling a list of all students who accessed AESC support services between February and September, 2010. An initial email was sent to each of the 280 support service users, yielding a survey sample of 41 participants. The majority of respondents were mature age students; only 10 out of the 41 (24%) respondents were school leavers. The midpoint age group was 35-39 years with a majority of the respondents being over the age of 30 years. There were 33 female and 8 male respondents; 32 respondents to the student status item noted they were domestic students. Two out of the 41 respondents identified as having a disability.

**Key results and findings**

All student groups rated the AESC highly on the items for “the quality of teaching...” and “overall AESC enjoyable experience” (see Figure 1). Only one mature age student disagreed and eight students didn’t consider the statement about “the quality of teaching” to be applicable.

![Figure 1: Average ratings for AESC Experience for each student subgroup](image)

Students with disabilities rated their overall experience of the services somewhat lower than other groups; however a low response rate makes statistical inferences problematic and is a limitation in this study.
Overall results on learning experience indicate little difference between groups (see Figure 3) for all statements except one: “AESC staff made it clear from the start what they expect...” in which the students with disabilities rated services higher than the other two subgroups. Both mature age and students with disabilities rated their AESC experience slightly higher than school leavers (see Figure 3).
Figure 4 indicates that most workshops have been thinly attended by respondents with only one participant attending the Managing a Large Reading Load workshop and no participants attending the Goal Setting workshop. The survey data did not provide additional information, for example, as to whether this was a marketing issue, or whether the issue was linked to students’ perceptions of their needs. Nearly 16 out of the 41 (39%) respondents used the Academic Help Desk, which was a free one-to-one tutoring service. The next highest utilised services were workshops on: The Library Database, Academic Writing, and Essay Writing workshops.

![Use of services by student subgroup](image1)

**Figure 4: Use of services by student subgroup**

![Frequency of use of the academic help desk by student subgroup](image2)

**Figure 5: Frequency of use of the academic help desk by student subgroup**
Figure 5 (above) indicates there appears to be a difference between school leaver and mature age respondents with over half (6 out of 10) of the school leaver participants not utilising the Academic Help Desk, in comparison to a quarter (6 out of the 23) of mature age respondents. One student with a disability and two mature age students used the Academic Help Desk services on a weekly basis.

The comments section yielded 14 comments, of which those judged most useful appear in Table 1. The key comments have been bundled into related clusters and demonstrated a dire need to review the marketing message and positioning of the support services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AESC Awareness</td>
<td>I don’t know where it is, or what I can get help with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do not know what it is or where to find it or even know what it does.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Didn’t know it existed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The only helpdesk I was aware of was the IT and even they failed to respond to my query and being disabled I do not find it easy to get into the library due to being unable to find parking outside. I was not aware of the above services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Awareness</td>
<td>No real need as of yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t feel I need it most of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AESC Experience</td>
<td>It was difficult to book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Barriers</td>
<td>Just not enough free time during semester. I wish these courses were offered over the uni breaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I needed to update my skills in relation to power point presentations and due to my timetable I was unable to attend a class on the topic. I received a fantastic one to one session from a highly experienced tutor and I was amazed that such a wonderful service is offered to the students of Notre Dame</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mature age students consistently rated the support services slightly higher than school leaver students (see Figure 6) and accessed the services more frequently.
There were no students who deemed the Academic Help Desk as Not At All Important with only 3 school leavers and 2 mature age participants indicating it was Not So Important. Figure 7 demonstrates over half of the entire cohort who rate the academic help desk as very important are mature age students (57%). It is evident that this service yields the most support across each respondent subgroup.
Of note, the Goal Setting workshop yielded less support with twenty out of the 35 respondents (a little over half 53%) rating the workshop as *Not So Important* or lower. There was much more support for the Exam Preparation Strategies workshop with 27 out of the 37 of respondents rating the workshop as *Important* or higher, 18 of whom were mature age students. The item measuring the workshop on The Use of Library Databases did not yield entries into the *Not Applicable* category and there were no students who deemed the workshop was *Not At All Important*. Nine out of the 10 (90%) school leavers and 18 out of the 23 (72%) mature age respondents rated the Library Database workshop *important* or higher.

Mature age students used 13 of the 14 services, consistently rating the support services slightly higher than school leaver users, who used 10 of the 14 services (see Figure 8). This is consistent for all courses except Essay Writing and Endnote workshops.

![Figure 8: Average ratings for satisfaction by student subgroup](image)

There is not one service that yields a rating for *very dissatisfied* and only five students rate *dissatisfied* out of the entire section. One school leaver student rated *dissatisfied* for the e-Journal workshop and the Library database; and one mature age student for the IT course, UNDA website navigation, Blackboard workshop, respectively.

Participants indicated (see Figure 9) that they had heard about the Centre’s services through various conduits with email reaching the majority of students and hearing directly from their class lecturer as the next most effective means of promotion.
An open ended comments section yielding nine comments reveals students regard their timetables as the major dictator of attendance (see Table 2).

Table 2: Suggestions for future times

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Future services (Needs)</td>
<td>During uni break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It would be better to have more courses available prior to semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Barriers</td>
<td>It changes each semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5pm is hard to make on time, coming from work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Varies based on my time table</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Just over half of the participants provided suggestions for encouraging students to use the AESC services yielding some valuable feedback for the Centre. Access continues to be an issue for uptake. Given that most university students work in paid employment outside university hours, and that many students have additional commitments (e.g. mature age students with families) access is a pragmatic issue.
Table 3: Open comments about the AESC courses and services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AESC Awareness</td>
<td>These services are critical however under advertised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Awareness</td>
<td>I have only been to two workshops for essay writing - I have been to see Patrick every week for the last 5 weeks - and will catch up with him after the holidays for exam preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They need to be available and tailored for and with disabled students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AESC Experience</td>
<td>Thank you for your assistance and I will be utilising your services in the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am very glad we have such a great support and have used it quite a bit over the last two years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keith and Jane are bloody legends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I wish to thank you all for your unending help and wish I had got to all the workshops you have provided. You provide a really helpful service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Barriers</td>
<td>To late in semester. One Wednesday a semester for a topic does NOT make it easily accessible.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

The current study finds it difficult to measure for statistical variance between subgroups; mature age, school leavers, International and students with disabilities, due to the low response rate particularly from the fourth category, with only two respondents. Further investigation is required to examine possible differences between these subgroups, and, in particular for school leavers who appear to have rated consistently lower in the experiential courses.

Future studies will benefit by including forum group interview discussions that aim to:

- Identify and triangulate the key issues facing the AESC users;
- Articulate the best practices for the AESC to adopt;
- Generate ideas; and,
- Increase awareness about the AESC amongst the key stakeholders.

Such forum groups could be used to encapsulate a rich and wide variety of ideas and opinions from specific student groups including LSES students and with disabilities. Whilst this type of data collection can become unwieldy, analysis should identify the complementary and contradictory ideas that may exist (Cavana et al., 2001).

This inaugural survey did not capture demographic data specific to LSES student backgrounds and the collation of data (such as items to measure parent/guardian educational background) could be useful. It can be argued however that the NAME model offered by the study is ideally placed to increase access, participation and retention for all students including those from specific equity group backgrounds.

Development of the NAME model

A dichotomy was evident in the survey data, between the positive user experiences, and the AESC’s low profile and inability to engage with the wider student population. Whilst users
provided resoundingly positive feedback about services, there was a lack of service uptake; this incongruence led to valuable staff discussion on the mismatch. This lack of uptake was underpinned by a lack of awareness about the services on offer and a perception that the services were not personally relevant to their needs (Table 1).

The survey also provided feedback that students were finding the services difficult to access. Feedback heralded that sessions were run at times that were inconvenient, were not easy to physically locate and that mechanisms for booking into sessions were arduous.

Further to this, the survey results revealed that students were made aware of services primarily through their emails, and secondly, through their lecturers. A review was undertaken of both how and where programs were marketed. The need to use participant testimonials as part of the marketing approach was identified; short video testimonials from users were made available on the Centre’s webpage, and a spike in enrolments followed. A more personal approach was applied and mechanisms were introduced for lecturers and tutors to promote the programs on offer directly to students. Strategies were introduced to co-opt the participation of academic staff to promote the AESC programs and increase student aspirations for success.

The open-comment sections also indicated that students perceived the courses as stigmatising, particularly the names of courses, and the names of services. The terms Academic Help Desk and Academic Support Program were depicted in the survey data to be perceived negatively as being remedial in nature, rather than aspirational (Table 1). The ongoing discussions surrounding the data analysis led to a growing awareness that the language used to promote the services needed to include aspiration as a dimension. A new marketing approach was needed to reposition the value proposition which was meaningful to the wider student body, particularly those students who needed the programs most (Porter, 1980). The Academic Help Desk and Academic Support Program, needed to be renamed, to normalise their perceived services and reduce the stigmatisation of remediation.

Survey results further indicated a discrepancy existed between staff and student perceptions of the skill sets required to undertake the rigour of academic studies at university. Students appeared not able to connect to the need for these services, based on their prior experiences. Given the competitive nature of university entrance, students who have attained entrance may rightfully assume their readiness and feel well prepared for this next stage of their academic progress. The benchmarks set by their pre-university studies, for example, subjects leading a nominated ATAR score, should, in the student’s perception, have prepared them for readiness for university. However, upon entry, students are being encouraged to pursue additional and supplementary courses which imply a lack of readiness. This survey finding led to valuable staff discussion about the discord between a student’s self perception and the feelings academic staff may carry towards the general student population’s readiness for the academic demands of university study.

The need to shift to a student centred value proposition and for staff to reconsider the deficit model approach to operations, and moving to one driven by aspiration, not remediation, led to the Academic Help Desk being renamed ‘one2one’ and the Academic Support Program being renamed ‘Success Now!’.

**The NAME model**

The data generated by this project, resulted in the development of a four factor model which attempts to describe the way an academic support unit (such as AESC at the University of
Notre Dame’s Fremantle campus) can operationally harness four interdependent forces which are essential for engaging students in support services for academic success. The four factor model examines the interaction Normalisation, Access, Marketing, and Engagement, has on student engagement with support services, and was therefore known by the acronym NAME (Normalisation, Engagement, Marketing, Access).

Figure 10 Four Factor Model for engaging student in academic support services

**Normalisation**

Normalisation is considered particularly important within the NAME model, as it can be argued that the opposite of normalisation is stigmatisation (Crabtree & Rutland, 2001). Normalisation implies that the use of any service is socially neutral and becomes part of normal behaviour (Wolfensberger & Thomas, 1994). Normalisation is part of an enculturation process in which students see that being at university is more than just attending lectures or tutorials, but rather a holistic experience of life within a campus setting. Just as it is ‘normal’ for a university student to join a social club, or sporting team, it should be ‘normal’ to attend an academic support offering. With stigmatisation, the use of a service is perceived as being for a particular target group who are identified by a deficit model (Wolfensberger, 1994).

A deficit perspective reinforces stereotypes, which reinforces both stigmatisation and marginalisation (Abraham, Gregory, Wolf, & Pemberton, 2002). For example, stereotypes such as, “only International students would attend an English support course”; reinforce inaccurate images of International students and negate the reality that domestic students often have high language needs, regardless of their first language. If a student perceives that a support program is for a targeted group, with whom they might not identify, it will be viewed, consciously or unconsciously, as stigmatising (i.e. ‘not normal’) to attend. Stigmatising images are often used in advertising for courses and programs, such as images of students in non-Western dress, not uncommon when looking at university websites promoting support courses. When academic
support services are seen as marginalised to particular groups, there will be a reluctance to engage.

Normalisation requires that support services are as open and routine to engagement as possible (Wolfensberger & Thomas, 1994). For example, in the old model of the ‘Academic Help Desk’, students worked with a tutor on the second floor of the library in a closed office; however, in reality it increased stigmatisation. Normalisation efforts for the AESC services include reviewing how and where the services are being placed amongst the student community. For example, some services have been relocated to the front of the library in an all-glass office area directly next to the front door; attendance is perceived as normal and valued (Wolfensberger, 1977). The provision of additional chairs outside this room further popularises the service by creating a space where students, without specific appointments, are able to wait to gain service access in-between scheduled appointments.

**Access**

Access refers to the ability of students to enrol, attend and engage without difficulty. The comments surrounding difficulty in booking into the courses, drove significant changes to the operational processes for the AESC courses and services. The ability to listen to the needs of students and innovate internal processes is paramount in the successful engagement and retention of student users (Leonard & Rayport, 1997). An online sign up process has been implemented for all Success Now! workshops. Several benefits have been identified from the shift into online enrolments. The online process:

- makes it easier for students to enrol;
- awards the autonomy and responsibility to students to sign-up and receive their booking confirmations via e-mail;
- tracks statistically the relationship between enrolment and actual attendance; and, provides the necessary data for follow-up to occur.

The online sign up process has enabled better follow-up between the student, AESC staff and relevant academic staff, particularly when the three work together using the support services to increase student engagement via an academic intervention plan. For example, one student sought, through their course coordinator, extensions on three assignments, on the basis they wanted to attend an eight-hour essay writing course through the AESC, prior to completing the work. The approval was given, and the student engaged positively, and submitted the work as planned. The student was very aware that their course coordinator had been in communiqué with the AESC staff. They were more likely to access the program because of this special arrangement, and more likely to apply the skills and knowledge to their assignments.

Online sign up processes imply that students are savvy with the use of such tools, whereas at least some students commence university with limited information technology skills, and therefore need to be trained in using such systems. This may apply particularly to some mature age entrants, who can tend to be less familiar with online tools.

**Marketing**

The role of marketing the services has been powerfully encapsulated in one of the mature age open ended comments: “Critical but under-advertised”. Marketing has been depicted in this
study to be of pivotal importance in motivating students to engage with academic support. In the case of the AESC, the identified gap between the deemed high importance of the support services (Figure 6) and the low level of awareness for the services (Table 1), provides an explanation for the low uptake of services (Figure 4) and underpins the need to rebrand and reposition the services around the needs and aspirations of the users themselves (Porter, 1980; Prahalad & Hamel, 1991).

A staff member’s insightful reflections on the data, resulted in awareness that the Centre needed to create the need for the services and ‘sell the dream’. Services had been functionally marketed by the formal title of the course content rather than positioned by their potential benefits (Aaker, 2010). As a result, all program titles were reviewed. As pointed out, the Academic Help Desk was repositioned as ‘one2one’ and the Academic Support Program as ‘Success Now!’ both changes were well received. The marketing re-positioned the programs around ‘saving time’, ‘getting higher grades on your assignments’ and ‘invest six hours and save hundreds’, and resulted in a five-fold increase in enrolments and attendance. Similarly, the Learn to use Library Databases workshop attracted only small numbers of students each semester. Renaming this workshop “I don’t even know what a Library Database is!” and listing the potential benefits (not the content), such as ‘Save hours of time’, ‘Never travel to the library again’, and, ‘It’s free’, resulted in attendance changing from 1 - 2 students attending per semester in 2010, to repeat sessions, with 30 students at every session, in semester one, 2011. It can be said adopting a more student centred approach to marketing and rebranding the services has been met with significant success.

Engagement

In the NAME model, engagement has two dimensions: the first relates to organisational engagement where university staff, both academic and administrative, increase their understanding and embrace the value of the services that are offered through an academic support unit. Consequently, staff are more likely to become involved and promote the aspiration for academic success as well as championing the AESC’s services to students (Chesbrough & Schwartz, 2007). A noted tipping point in this engagement process during 2011 has been administrative staff attending the AESC courses themselves. Familiarity with the services on offer increases the authenticity and ability of staff to refer students directly to the AESC and into the appropriate program areas.

Increasing staff communication around promoting the academic support services has been vitally important. The 2011 Success Now! program provided more than 55 semester one (2011) workshops, nearly all presented by staff volunteers. For example, the Vice-Chancellor presents a workshop for mature age students, sharing her own experience of juggling multiple commitments as a professional with a young family. The depth of organisational engagement has been a fascinating outcome of the study and a significant agent in the subsequent repositioning of the academic support services.

Student engagement

It is widely acknowledged within support services that students who most need services are frequently the least likely to engage (Harris & Ashton, 2011). The significant difference between the mature age and school leaver engagement with the AESC’s services (see Figure 4), supports
the notion that school leaver students are at a developmental stage depicted by the need for autonomy in their approach to learning participation (Wilson & Deane, 2002).

The school leaver comments in Table 1 indicate that this subgroup is not aware of the existence of AESC, and may lack the self awareness of their own skill-set (O'Donnell et al., 2009), and the importance and benefits of academic skills training (Briguglio & Howe, 2006). Many school leavers are, age appropriately, in an adolescent phase of psychological development, characterised by a desire for autonomy and for a resistance to the control of parents and teachers. Further research is needed to determine whether the quest for autonomy limits these students willingness to engage. Such students may need information to show that rather than reducing autonomy, attending support programs may increase autonomy by enhancing their skill set.

In contrast, mature age students often embrace engagement more readily because their physiological phase of development has moved to interconnectivity and interdependence (Burton & Dowling, 2005). Mature age students are generally more aware of their own skill sets and subsequently more open to seeking assistance (Smith, Smith, & Smith, 2010).

The marked distinction between mature age and school leaver engagement provided the impetus to understand the contrasting needs amongst student segments and affirmed the resolution to position the programs on a platform of aspiration and skills benefits to engage with a wider student population.

**Interrelationship between the Four Factors**

The four dimensions of the NAME model have been found to be intrinsically interrelated. For example, the study found that:

- marketing by course content stigmatised the services and resulted in a dichotomy between importance ratings and user uptake;
- students are unlikely to engage with support services if their lecturers and tutors are not supportive of engagement;
- a complex process for enrolling (access) will disengage student interest quickly; and,
- the ‘hidden’ placement of the services inhibits the normalisation process and stigmatises support services even more.

Since the implementation of the rebranding and repositioning of the services, the four dimensions have worked together to increase student engagement with support services. Rebranding and marketing the aspiration and purpose of the courses has increased engagement on a much more inclusive and wider scale including staff and students. The implementation of an online enrolment process has not only increased user access but also enhanced staff/student collaboration to work together to improve academic success. Lastly, the repositioning of the support services to be in public view has increased the normalisation that developing new skills for academic success is simply part of university life. Moreover, students need to appreciate that developing skills is vital for life-long learning and that even the most able and capable student can benefit from skill development programs.
Conclusion

The survey results, and ensuing staff discussions, led to the articulation of the NAME model and significant changes to the operation of the AESC on the Fremantle campus. The dimensions of the NAME model have been found to be interrelated and continue to serve as a frame of reference for everyday discussions between various stakeholders, for AESC staff, and for feedback within the University’s designated line management.

There are various values of engagement with support programs not covered in this paper. There are pragmatic outcomes for participants such as familiarity with the campus (in particular with pre-semester courses), building friendships and camaraderie, and developing skills highly valued by future employers.

The AESC staff found that branding academic support services around ‘aspiration and benefits’, rather than the course content, profoundly affects the level of engagement students will have towards academic support, particularly those students who may most need support. Some students commence university study with deficit skills, and need support to manage; others begin with significantly higher skill levels, but can, nonetheless, benefit from support programs. Significantly, the changes undertaken during the rebranding process have been made without additional financial expenditure, an important consideration for most academic support centres operating within the sector. Simple changes made significant differences.

To conclude, application of the NAME model may assist in developing support centres and programs that are structured to appeal to a wider diversity of students including those from LSES backgrounds, first in the family to attend university, and most of all, those with limited self awareness who have been the most complex to engage and yet need such services the most.

References


## APPENDIX 1: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

### ADMISSIONS INFORMATION

Please tick the box that best describes your status when you accessed university:

- School leaver
- Mature age student
- Student with a disability
- Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander

What were your main reasons for choosing Notre Dame?

- Program not offered elsewhere
- Pastoral care
- Student support
- Good Teaching reputation
- Small class sizes
- It has the best reputation in my chosen field of study
- Catholic values
- The Bridging course
- Reputation for teaching support
- Fremantle environment
- Graduate employment rates

### BACKGROUND

What were you doing in the 12 months prior to starting your programme at Notre Dame?

- Studying at high school
- Studying at TAFE/Other college
- Studying at another university
- Full-time paid employment
- Part-time paid employment
- Casual paid employment (no more than 5 hours a week)
- Looking for a job
- Not in paid employment and not looking for a job
- Other (please specify)

Do you have access to a computer at home?
If Yes how much of your computing work for university is done on this computer?

### YOUR AESC EXPERIENCE

The following statements relate to your experience studying with the AESC.
Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements.

- I have been encouraged to be an independent learner by AESC staff
- I found the AESC program intellectually stimulating
- I would like to have more computer based or online learning
- There is a positive attitude towards learning amongst my fellow AESC students
- The quality of teaching in my AESC program has been generally good
### YOUR LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements:

- The AESC staff are good at explaining things
- AESC staff made it clear from the start what they expect from students
- AESC staff here usually give helpful feedback on my progress
- AESC Staff try hard to make the programs interesting
- AESC staff made a real effort to understand any difficulties I was having with my work
- AESC staff are enthusiastic about the material they teach
- Overall, my AESC program has been enjoyable

### YOUR UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements:

- My program workload is too heavy
- The volume of work means that I can’t comprehend it all thoroughly
- There is a positive attitude towards learning amongst my fellow students
- Overall, I am very satisfied with my university experience so far

### USE OF SERVICES

How often have you used the following service?

- Academic Help Desk
- Academic writing workshop
- Essay writing workshop
- e-journals
- Managing a large reading load
- Time management workshop
- Goal setting workshop
- Exam preparation Strategies
- Stress management workshop
- IT course
- Library databases
- UNDA website navigation
- Black Board workshop
- Endnote workshop

How often do you use the AESC Service below?

Academic help desk

Please state your reason for using/not using the Helpdesk:
## IMPORTANCE OF SERVICES

Whether or not you have used this service, how important is it to you?

- Academic Help Desk
- Academic writing workshop
- Essay writing workshop
- e-journals
- Managing a large reading load
- Time management workshop
- Goal setting workshop
- Exam preparation Strategies
- Stress management workshop
- IT course
- Library databases
- UNDA website navigation
- Black Board workshop
- Endnote workshop

## SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES

If you have used the service how satisfied are you (answer only for the services you have used)

- Academic Help Desk
- Academic writing workshop
- Essay writing workshop
- e-journals
- Managing a large reading load
- Time management workshop
- Goal setting workshop
- Exam preparation Strategies
- Stress management workshop
- IT course
- Library databases
- UNDA website navigation
- Black Board workshop
- Endnote workshop

## FUTURE SERVICES

How did you hear about the AESC program?

- Email
- Lecturer
- Library staff
- Direct mail
- SLO newsletter
- On-campus poster
- Other (please specify)

The AESC has trialled a number of suitable times to run programs. What times best suited you (You can tick more than one box)

- Wednesday 12.30-1.30pm
- Wednesday 4.00-5.00pm
- Wednesday 5.00-6.00pm
- Saturday session

Is there another time that suits?

In your opinion, what can we do to encourage students to enrol in AESC support programs?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What other services can you suggest that students will find useful?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any additional comments you wish to make about the AESC programs and services?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your age group?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your gender?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female/male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your student status?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic/International/Permanent resident</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Survey instrument weighted five point scales

Weightings for the five point ratings scales for agreement, importance and satisfaction have been applied as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Not So Important</td>
<td>Not Important</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>Very Dissatisfied</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Item scores were summed and divided by the number of respondents to each respective item.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements:

**Please tick the box that best describes your status when you accessed university:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>School leaver (students over 20yrs)</th>
<th>Disability student</th>
<th>Aboriginal/Torres Straight Islander</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I found the AESC program intellectually stimulating

| Strongly Agree | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Agree          | 5 | 16 | 0 | 0 |
| Disagree       | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| N/A            | 3 | 6 | 3 | 0 |

There is a positive attitude towards learning amongst my fellow AESC students

| Strongly Agree | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Agree          | 5 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| Disagree       | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| N/A            | 4 | 5 | 3 | 0 |

The quality of teaching in my AESC program/s has been generally good

| Strongly Agree | 1 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Agree          | 6 | 14 | 1 | 0 |
| Disagree       | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| N/A            | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 |

Overall, my AESC program has been enjoyable

| Strongly Agree | 1 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Agree          | 5 | 17 | 1 | 0 |
| Disagree       | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| N/A            | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

**Figure 11: Example of weighted mean rating calculations**

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