2015-2016 Mapworks Training: You Spoke, and We Listened!

The Office of Student Academic Success values your feedback. Our mission is to empower campus partners to utilize Mapworks in the way that best suits their department's individual needs while still supporting the broader mission and purpose of Mapworks at NIU. To accomplish this mission, we launched a training assessment in June to learn how we could improve your Mapworks experience.

The Mapworks program has gone through extensive system enhancements this year, and training is necessary to learn how to navigate the new program. For the 2015-2016 year, ALL USERS (new and returning) are required to attend training before being granted access to Mapworks. To meet the needs of Mapworks users, we have enhanced our training and are excited to offer two types of opportunities for users to learn about the program.

The first option is to participate in an online training module. This can be done anytime that fits within for your schedule. Users need to make sure they follow the instructions given during training to receive credit for participating.

The second option is to attend one of our seven, one hour, face-to-face sessions to learn the new Mapworks program. Training session dates and times are listed on page 4 of this newsletter.

To sign up for training, or to participate in the online training module, please visit www.niu.edu/osas

Two Types of Training 2015-2016

Online Module: Participate in an online training environment at your convenience (coming soon!)

In Person Course: Come to one of 7 courses being offered for a point and click session on the new Mapworks program.

2015-2016 Mapworks Food For Thoughts

The Office of Student Academic Success is excited to offer three extended training opportunities for Mapworks users to engage in discussion about the program at NIU throughout the academic year.

Topics for our Food for Thought sessions are based on responses from the training assessment that was conducted in June of this year.

Users can enjoy lunch and engage in discussion on relevant Mapworks topics such as program implementation, using Mapworks to work with students, and Fall outcomes, how NIU compares to national data, and how those lessons can be applied to the Spring Semester.

A full listing of Food for Thought dates, times, and locations is located on page three of this newsletter and can also be found at www.niu.edu/osas
System Enhancements for 2015-2016

Northern Illinois University was at the forefront with suggestions for the new Mapworks program. Randi Napientek, Assistant Director of the Office of Student Academic Success, and current Mapworks Campus Coordinator, participated as a Beta Tester for the new program. Being able to express concerns and share suggestions to enhance the NIU user experience.

There are many enhancements that have been made to the new program as a direct result of NIU’s constructive feedback of the program. Some of those system enhancements are as follows:

**Quicker Response Time**

Mapworks programmers listened to frustrations regarding the length of time it took to complete simple tasks in the program. To fix this problem, the structure of the program was completely rebuilt over the summer and was moved to a new server to allow for faster speeds. SkyFactor, the company that owns Mapworks, has stated that if it takes more than FIVE SECONDS for any task to take place, users should contact their Campus Coordinators so they can report any issues.

**Longer Session Timeouts**

Another concern from NIU Mapworks users was the constant timing out due to inactivity in the system. From this point forward, users will be logged out after 60 minutes, instead of 20 minutes.

**Enhanced Search Capabilities**

In the past, Mapworks only allowed you to use “and” statements when searching for students based on demographics and survey responses. New this year is the ability to include “or” statements. For example, we are now able to view all students who said they want to be peer mentors OR do research with faculty AND are Education majors. This increases the ability to find students based on expanded criteria.

In addition to and/or statements, Mapworks has added a feature that will allow users to share searches with other individuals on campus. The shared function only provides the characteristics of the search, not the results. The results will vary depending on the students they are connected to and a users access level.

**Improved Dashboard Screens**

On the main dashboard, an in-depth analysis of students and their needs will now be easier to find. Starting this fall, the top five issues of a user’s caseload will be one of the first screens encountered in the program as well as referrals, and a snapshot of student’s risk level.

These are just a few of the MANY system enhancements for this year. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Student Academic Success at 815-753-HELP or osas@niu.edu.

NIU Played a Large Role in Program Rebuild

Shared notes on student interactions can increase effectiveness and quality of student interactions.

That’s right! According to the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), unified, electronic notes improves the quality of interventions and interactions campus staff has with students by providing individuals with already gathered information.

Rather than spending time, re-gathering information, individuals can instead spend time focusing on meeting with students and creating action plans. This system also allows other campus individuals to reinforce messages in and information that you have shared with the student to work together as an institution to achieve student career success.

Mapworks is currently NIU’s only holistic shared note system where individuals from all areas of campus (Academic Affairs, Athletics, Outreach, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, etc.) can interact together for the betterment of our students.
The MAP-Works Spring Transition Survey showed that the struggles that students demonstrated in the beginning of the fall semester remained throughout the entire academic year, but varied on the level of importance for each survey. Below are the top five issues that were found:

HOMESICKNESS (Separation)

Homesickness was the top issue on two of the three surveys that were administered this year. Thirty-five percent of students in the Spring Transition Survey were identified as being homesick, compared to 43.8% of students on the Fall Transition Survey. Many people think that students have overcome these thoughts by spring semester, but that is not always true. With the expansive programming in the fall such as Welcome Days and homecoming events, perhaps a smaller variety of activities could be sponsored in the beginning of the spring semester. These programs could welcome back returning students and welcome new transfer students to NIU.

TEST ANXIETY

Test anxiety was another one of the top five issues NIU students faced during the 2014-2015 academic year. During the Spring Transition Survey, 31.6% of our students were identified as having test anxiety compared to 34.2% on the Fall Transition Survey and 33.1% on the Fall Check-Up Survey. Students indicated that they need more assistance with test taking skills and strategies as well as how to adequately prepare for exams.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

Present in all three surveys was student uncertainty and unease regarding personal finances and the ability to pay for school. On the Spring Transition Survey 23.6% of students said that they were concerned about their financial situation and paying for tuition, books, and even living expenses. Comparatively, 27.2% answered the same on the Fall Check-Up Survey, and 29.7% on the Fall Transition Survey. With limited state and federal funding, it is important to educate our students on financial literacy topics, especially early in the semester.

STUDY SKILLS

On the Spring Transition Survey 23.5% of students indicated that they only planned to study five hours or less a week. Comparatively, 37.5% of students responded the same on the Fall Transition Survey and 27.2% on the Fall Check-Up Survey. Despite improvement in this area, students seem to have unrealistic expectations of the time and work required to be successful in college.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

On the Spring Transition Survey, 26.9% of students said that they had missed two or more classes. This was also the number one issue on the Fall Check-Up Survey with 58.4% of students having missed at least 2 classes by the midpoint of the semester. One of the main predictors of student success is class attendance. There is a clear opportunity to help students understand the connection between attendance, classroom engagement, and success.

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MAP-Works Dates to Remember

Training Sessions

**Online**
Available on the OSAS website.

**In-Person**
All in-person training sessions will be held in Cole Hall 106

**Friday, August 14**
10:30-11:30pm
**Tuesday, August 18**
9:30-10:30am
**Wednesday, August 19**
2:30-3:30pm
**Thursday, August 20**
2:30-3:30pm
**Wednesday, August 26**
12:00-1:00pm
**Monday, August 31**
12:00-1:00pm
**Friday, September 11**
2:30-3:30pm

*To sign up for or complete training please visit: www.niu.edu/osas*

Surveys

**Fall Transition Survey**
September 13 - October 5

**Fall Check-Up Survey**
October 31 - November 16

**Spring Transition Survey**
February 6 - February 29

**Mapworks Summer in September BBQ**
September 23 (rain date 9/30)
11:00am - 2:00pm
Office of Student Academic Success / Academic Advising Center Front Lawn

Food for Thought

**September 17**
12pm-1pm – Campus Life 100
Case Studies: Working through real life student situations and using Mapworks.

**November 3**
12pm-1pm – Campus Life 100
How to increase student interest and participation in Mapworkrs

**February 10**
12pm-1pm – Campus Life 100
Data: Fall Outcomes & Assessment, National Comparison, and Spring Outlook

The MAP-Works Minute

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Office of Student Academic Success

Academic Advising Center 113
Phone: (815) 753-HELP
Fax: (815) 753-2902
Email: osas@niu.edu
Website: http://www.niu.edu/osas