

SIA Grant – Research and Development of a WSU Parent Handbook
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<http://www.winona.edu/advising/ParentHandbook.htm>
Summer 2006

1. Executive Summary of Project

The development of a WSU Parent Handbook rose out of an Advising and Retention Departmental retreat in the spring of 2006.

By providing current information about WSU specifically to parents of new and current students, it is hoped that parents will become more familiar with university policies and procedures in addition to helping their students in proactive ways. It may also help to address “helicopter parents” who hover around their student and the effects of that parenting style.

2. Objectives with measurable results

A. To research Parent Handbooks at other colleges and universities in order to determine the most relevant material needed

B. To include input from the Dean’s Council, the Counseling Center, Health Services, the Vice President of Student Life and Development, Housing and Residential Life, Academic Advising, Admissions, Security, and the President of WSU.

C. To disseminate the Parent Handbook to the parents of new students through the WSU website and to highlight the availability throughout the year; in particular during New Student Registration in April and June, Prospective Student campus visits, New Student Orientation, and other related opportunities as they become available

3. Assessment

A. 1. A variety of online Parent Handbooks were surveyed from around the country. They included regional public universities, small private colleges, large private and public universities such as Princeton, Purdue, University of Chicago, Truman State University, Wayne State University, Eastern State Tennessee University, University of Connecticut, University of San Diego, Gustavus Adolphus College and the University of New Hampshire.

B. 1. Input was requested and received from all of the designated offices and personnel listed above in 2.B. The input was reviewed and considered after consulting with the current online parent handbooks at the researched institutions. Volunteer proofreaders included Pat Ferden, Director of the Counseling Center, Diane Palm, Director of the Health Services, Maggie

McDermott, Project Coordinator, Advising and Retention, and Dr. Mary Beer, psychologist and parent of a new first year student at WSU.

4. Dissemination of results

Rick Rhone, webmaster, and Maggie McDermott, Advising and Retention, collaborated and trained the author in the use of website software. An online Parent Handbook allows more parents and departments to gain access to the designated information. It is hoped that offices such as Admissions, the Counseling Center, Health Services, Housing and Residential Life, the Disability Resource Center in addition to other departments within Student Life and Development and Integrated Academic Services will be able to utilize the Parent Handbook tool either online or in printed format. The Parent Handbook will be available in alternative formats upon request to the Disability Resource Center, Howell Hall 136, drc@winona.edu, 507-457-2391.

The webmaster has monthly tallies of the number of people who view various departmental homepages on the WSU website. The author will request those tallies on a monthly basis to track the visibility and usage of the Parent Handbook. In addition to the online availability from the Advising and Retention home page, the Parent Handbook will be featured on the WSU Home Page at various appropriate times of the year including spring time when many college decisions are finalized and late summer into fall when new students arrive on campus.

5. Attach any product produced (report, handbook, study results, etc.)

The online WSU Parent Handbook is located at <http://www.winona.edu/advising/ParentHandbook.htm>. A hard copy is attached for your perusal. Comments and suggestions can be sent to Nancy Dumke at ndumke@winona.edu.

The Parent Handbook will be updated frequently during the 2006 – 2007 academic year in response to feedback from parents and departments. Annual updates will occur in the following years and will be coordinated by the author.

Conclusion

The author is grateful for the opportunity to develop a tool for parents who are seeking more information about their student's experience at WSU. WSU has a significant percentage of new students who are the first generation in their families to attend a four year college. It is hoped that the information in this handbook will ease concerns and reassure the parents, as well as educate "helicopter parents" about the effects of that parenting style.

NSD 9/1/06