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KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Education, Health and Human Services

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION DEFENSE

of

Kathy Megyesi Zarges

For the degree of

Doctor of Education

Interprofessional Leadership

THE SAGES ACADEMIC COACHING PILOT PROGRAM

FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

March 22, 2024

12:00p.m.

308D White Hall

Microsoft Teams Meeting ID: 279 720 802 479

Meeting Passcode: prqWPu

[Teams Link](#)

Kathy Megyesi Zarges

M.Ed. Higher Education Administration
Kent State University

B.A. English, Communication Studies
University of Mount Union

Kathy Megyesi Zarges currently serves as the Assistant Dean of Advising, Student Success, and Licensure in the College of Education, Health and Human Services at Kent State University. In this role, she supports the advising and student success initiatives for undergraduate students in the college. This includes academic advising, academic coaching, and outreach to students who may need additional academic support. She also oversees the teacher licensure process for the university. She began her career in academic advising over 20 years ago and has been committed to supporting students through their academic journey.

Kathy has also been heavily involved in the professional association, NACADA, The Global Community for Academic Advising. She has held several leadership positions and has been on the faculty for the NACADA Assessment Institute for 15 years. She serves as a consultant and speaker through the NACADA Consultant and Speakers Service. In this role, she has delivered workshops on assessment and conducted external reviews of advising programs for a variety of institutions.

She has published and presented on the topic of assessment of academic advising. Awards and recognition include the 2017 NACADA Region V Outstanding Advising Administrator, the 2018 NACADA Global Outstanding Advising Administrator award, and the 2023 KASADA (Kent Academic Support and Advising Association) Outstanding Advising Administrator.

The SAGES Academic Coaching Pilot Program for Students with Disabilities:

An Action Research Study

This qualitative action research study examined the SAGES academic coaching program, a pilot program for first-year students who identify as having a disability. The study focused on the student-coach relationship and goal setting during coaching. Five students and three coaches participated in the study. I observed one coaching session for each student and interviewed students and coaches. I also reviewed survey data and academic performance for each student.

Through observations and interviews, I identified four primary strategies coaches used when establishing a relationship with their students: (a) coaches took a genuine interest in the student; (b) coaches created a positive coaching experience; (c) coaches created an inclusive coaching experience; and (d) coaches ensured student voice and agency were present during the coaching session. I identified four steps coaches and students experienced when setting goals: a) coaches helped students clarify goals; (b) coaches and students worked together on skills and strategies for goal attainment; (c) students used trial and error to test out skills and strategies; and (d) students learned how to implement skills and strategies independently.

Through the study, I identified aspects of the program that should be expanded and components that should be added. The program will expand access and build on the individualized and proactive approach. It will emphasize the student-coach relationship, goal setting, and transition to the university. New components include creating a success team, using the LMS to share resources, incorporating sense of belonging and self-determination, adding training aligned with ICF competencies, and implementing assessment.