

Student Achievement ~~Retention~~ workshop

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BACKGROUND

Where did this idea of Retention Management come from?

- Conversation and Study at least ten years on-going; e.g., Noel-Levitz consult in 1992; “Who’s at-risk and why and what can we do about it” project in ’99; etc.; resulting in –
- First Year Programming; e.g., Freshman Seminar Development and Growth; Freshman Learning Communities in General Studies; College Student Inventory administration; and attendant evaluation and research leading to –
- Information clearly indicating that improving retention takes an entire campus community. It’s bigger than General Studies.
- SAT – identifying cultural and institutional conditions that influence student academic achievement, developing & recommending and assessing best practices for student success, communicating these strategies to the ASU community
- Complex, multi-layered, on-going task

Principles of effective retention

- An enduring commitment to student welfare
- A broad commitment to the education, not mere retention, of students
- Supportive social and educational communities that actively involve students in learning

Vincent Tinto: Student Success and the Construction of Inclusive Educational Communities

THE BOTTOM LINE

An Ethic of Care

Why do you want to retain students?

- Drop-outs are expensive.
- **A systematic and comprehensive retention effort should, over time, lead to more valuable and challenging educational experiences for all kinds of students and an enhanced academic culture for our campus.**

Success

Resides in the work of the faculty and in the institution's capacity to construct educational communities that effectively engage students in learning.

Tinto

3 things matter a lot

- Getting students engaged and connected, especially their first year
- A genuine emphasis on the quality of undergraduate teaching and learning
- Administrators and faculty monitoring student progress, mining data to tease out patterns of student success

Carey

And a 4th thing

- It matters a lot whether campus leaders make student success a top institution-wide priority and whether they stick with that priority over multiple years

Carey

Retention Rates?

- Recognizing that most of the students who are going to leave an institution do so by the end of the first year, the measure established to indicate an institution's performance has become the rate of full-time first year students who return for their second year
- In 2002, the national average was 80.4 (CSRDE); ours – about 2.5 points better (UNC-GA)
- In 2004, the national average was 75.2 (CSRDE); ours – about 10.5 points better (UNC-GA)
- Good but not good enough

Graduation Rates?

- 1,000,000 new students start 4-year colleges every year with great hopes
- 6 years later, barely 6 in 10 emerge with a degree
- Low income, 1st generation – 5 in 10

Kevin Carey: Choosing to Improve
From the Education Trust's collegeresults.org

- Ours are very similar

Accountability

Federal and State legislators and administrators are holding Universities accountable

- Appalachian's Retention Goals Submitted to UNC-GA

Enter as Freshman	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011
Retain as Sophomore	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
	Retention Rate	<i>Prelim.</i>		Goal	Goal	Goal	Goal	Goal
ASU	85.8	84.5		85.5	86.0	86.5	87.0	87.5

- Graduation Goals

Freshman Cohort	Fall 1999	Fall 2000	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006
6-Year Graduation Rate	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
	Graduation Rate	<i>Prelim.</i>		Goal	Goal	Goal	Goal	Goal
ASU	64.0	61.6		63.5	65.0	66.5	68.0	70.0

Retention = necessary but not sufficient

- What retention efforts leave out:
 - Nearly 60% of those who attain a bachelor's degree attend more than one institution
 - “retention” figures ignore spring admits, retention after first year
 - Most important predictors are not programmatic (selectivity, parental income, rigor of high school)
 - Different subgroups require different strategies: no single solution

From *College Learning for the New Global Century* (AAC&U/LEAP, 2007):

- “Student Success in college cannot be documented—as it usually is—only in terms of enrollment, persistence, and degree attainment. These widely used metrics, while important, miss entirely the question of whether students who have placed their hopes for the future in higher education are actually achieving the kind of learning they need for a complex and volatile world.” (1)

What We've Learned

- Appalachian's retention rate (2005 first-time full-time freshmen): 84.5%
 - This rate compares to 80.6% at all UNC institutions
 - 3rd in the UNC System behind UNC-CH (96.5%) and NCSU (89.4%)
- Appalachian's graduation rate (6 years; 2001 freshmen): 61.6%.
 - This rate compares to 59.3% at all UNC institutions
 - 4th in the UNC System behind UNC-CH (83.8%), NCSU (70.1%), and UNCW (65.1%)
- Appalachian's National Peer Institutions
 - Retention: 83%; 6-Year Graduation: 59.6%
- National 6-Year Graduation Rate: 63% (55% at original institution)
 - Public 4-Year Institutions: 50%
- Large class size has generally adverse effects on student learning, engagement with instructor and classmates/subject matter
 - Appalachian's average class size= 25
 - Student-to-faculty ratio: 17:1

What We've Learned

- Students at risk for leaving Appalachian include:
 - Students with lower entrance measures
 - Males
 - Out-of-state students
 - Students with financial need not met
 - Students not engaged or performing academically in the first year
 - Students who do not return the 2nd semester or 2nd year
 - Under-represented minority students
 - CSI: Drop-out prone, Family Support, Financial Security, Desire to Finish College, Desire to Transfer, Parents' Education
- Where do they go when they leave us?

Engagement

- The more students are challenged and engaged, they stay
 - Academic performance in the first year (*The F Study; Hours Attempted and Earned*)
 - NSSE measures have given insight
 - Learning Community involvement as well as other programmatic interventions can help

How do we use our data?

- To respond to the GA mandate to set goals for retention and graduation
- To plan for achieving these goals by addressing four areas:
 - Admissions policies
 - Financial aid
 - Summer Bridge programs
 - Programmatic interventions

Academic Perspective

- Quality teaching and involving classroom and co-curricular activity should be the norm of student experience. Tinto

Academic Affairs-Student Development Collaboration at Appalachian

- Multi-use facilities
- Faculty/Student Development, orientation
- Housing (faculty in dorms)
- Gen ed: co-curricular components
- Grant writing
- Shared funding
- Joint appointments in Academic Affairs/Student Development

- Honors
- Student research
- Living-learning communities
- Student conduct
- Sustainability initiatives
- International programs
- Service learning/community-based research

- Strategic planning: intentional collaboration
- Program Assessment: data-based decisions on resources (example:
 - FYI report
- Foundation grants for faculty career development
- Student Achievement Team
- Career services
- Plemmons Fellows' work with schools

Breakout Groups

3 Prompts

- How can your unit make use of this data?
- What data is missing that you can contribute or need?
- What programming/interventions are suggested for your unit?