

Academic Advising
NACADA Summer Institute

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*Academic Advising:
 Impacting Student
 Learning, Persistence,
 and Retention*

Casey Self
 Arizona State University

Special thanks to Charlie Nutt for significant contributions to this presentation

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Making the simple complicate is commonplace. Making the complicated simple, awesomely simple, that's creativity.

Charles Mingus

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People will forget what you say. They will even forget what you do. But they never forget how you made them feel.

Maya Angelou

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Why Student Retention/Persistence Is Important?

- ✓ College retention, persistence, and graduation rates influence public perceptions of quality
- ✓ State legislatures and governing boards are increasingly concerned about graduate rates
- ✓ Focusing on student success is programmatically responsible
- ✓ Improved student persistence towards graduation can provide additional resources to invest in people and programs

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Improving Student Success Must Be Based On Careful Analysis Of:

- ✓ The research in the field of student success, retention, and persistence
- ✓ The institution and the students
- ✓ The changes in the student experience we want to make on our campus

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Students who completed their degrees at the same institution **within 5 years** **51%**

Students who completed their degrees **within 6 years** after attending two or more institutions **58%**

Berkner et al, 2002
 NCES 1995-96 Cohort

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Graduation Rates
Baccalaureate Degree Seeking Students
Cohort Year: 2002

Time To Degree	Total	Public	Private Not-For-Profit	Private For-Profit
4 Year Graduation Rate	36.4	29.9	51.0	14.2
5 Year Graduation Rate	52.3	49.2	61.3	17.2
6 Year Graduation Rate	57.2	54.9	64.6	22.0

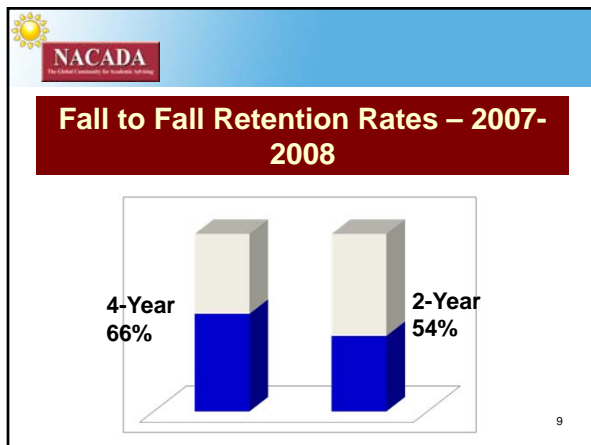
Source: NCES First Look FY 2008
April 2010

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Graduation Rates: 2-Year Institutions
100%, 150%, 200%
Cohort Year: 2004

Time To Degree	Total	Public	Private Not-For-Profit	Private For-Profit
Graduation within 100% Normal Time	18.9	11.5	41.7	42.0
Graduation within 150% Normal Time	31.4	22.0	53.3	61.2
Graduation within 200% Normal Time	37.3	28.4	58.1	65.4

Source: NCES First Look FY 2008
April 2010



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- Key Literature/Research In the Field**
- ✓ Page 6-11 in Pocket Guide
 - ✓ Glenn (2007)
 - ✓ Schwartz/Washington (2007)
 - ✓ Hixenbaugh et al (2007)
 - ✓ Swail (2004)
 - ✓ Tinto (2007)
 - ✓ Bean/Eaton (2002)
 - ✓ Seidman (2004, 2007)
 - ✓ Kuh (2007)

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Academic Advising is viewed as a way to connect students to the campus and help them feel that someone is looking out for them.

George Kuh
Student Success in College (2005)

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Good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience.

Richard Light
Making the Most of College (2001)

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Advisors are interpreters who help students navigate their new world. As such, academic advisors have to make connections.

Nancy King
Kennesaw State University

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In a 2004 Pell Institute Report, Tinto states the campuses that support student retention must have programs that:

- ✓ Teach students how to make decisions effectively
- ✓ Teach students how to investigate and make decisions on careers and majors
- ✓ Teach students how to maneuver higher education channels and to identify and utilize support services


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In another Pell Institute Study (Dec 2004), common elements of ten institutions with higher than expected graduation rates were identified:


- ✓ Intentional, focused, and intrusive academic planning programs existed
- ✓ High student participation in programs that provide academic advising and academic support
- ✓ Educational innovations to assist students with ease to college, adjustment to college, and maneuvering higher education from entrance to graduation.

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WHAT DO STUDENTS WANT FROM ADVISORS?




Accurate Information	“Do they know?”
Accessibility	“Are they there?”
Caring Attitude	“Do they care?”

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Student Engagement

The intersection of student behaviors and institutional conditions over which colleges and universities have at least marginal control.

Kuh et all
2007

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Educationally effective institutions channel student energy toward the *right* activities.



HIGH IMPACT ACTIVITIES are those initiatives identified by practitioners such as Kuh, Gardner, Tinto, and the AAC&U's Leap Initiatives, that have had positive impact on students' educational experiences, and, in turn, their retention and persistence.



- First-Year Seminars and Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- Learning Communities
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments and Projects
- Undergraduate Research
- Diversity/Global Learning
- Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
- Internships
- Capstone Courses and Projects



Engagement in **HIGH IMPACT ACTIVITIES** leads to gains in

- ✓ Deep Learning
- ✓ General Gains
- ✓ Personal Gains
- ✓ Practical Gains



What matters most is what students **do and the effort they expend**, not who they are.



But Who They Are Affects What Students Do and the Effort They Expend

And

Understanding This is Important to Designing Academic Advising Programs



- Good advising should link a student's academic capabilities with his or her choice of courses and major, access to learning resources, and a belief that the academic pathway a student is traveling will lead to employment after college.
- Advising should be done well so students recognize their abilities and make informed choices.



Five Strategies for Advisors to Focus on Student Success



1. Adopt a Talent Development Approach to Advising

- Know your students
 - Who are they? What are they telling you?
 - An entitlement mentality
 - Cumulative deficits in attitudes, study habits, academic skills
 - More diverse than previous groups
 - Techno-savvy "NetGens"



1. Adopt a Talent Development Approach to Advising

- Meet students "where they are"—academically, socially, psychologically, culturally
- Set high expectations—challenge, implore, cajole, and support



2. Make Advising a Tag Team Activity

- Share responsibility for student success
- Draw on multiple sources of expertise and perspectives on students



3. Help Students Map Out a Path to Success

- Draw a Map for student success
- Teach newcomers about the campus culture
- Emphasize student initiative
- Point students to programs, resources, and activities that work



4. Make Every Interaction Meaningful

- Participate and connect before college and during orientation
- Provide accurate information
- Push students to THINK!!
- Develop peer mentoring programs
- Imbed advising into a first-year program



- Encourage students to experience diversity early



5. Focus on Culture Sooner Than Later

- Identify cultural properties that impede advisor effectiveness and student success
- Expand the number of cultural practitioners in advising
- Install an ethic of positive cultural communication



- While retention programs and initiatives are found everywhere at all types of institutions, most institutions have not truly taken retention seriously or had significant effects on their attrition concerns—why?



- They have done little to change the essential character of the college
- They have done little to alter the prevailing character of the student education experience
- They have done little to address the deeper roots of attrition



- They have “tinkered” with the margins of institutional life (adding courses or programs) but not analyzed the organization of the educational activities
- They have not faced the fact that retention issues lie not only in their students and the situations they face but also in the very character of the institution and its educational settings



Institutional Changes for Retention

- Focus on student learning and the places in which students are asked to learn
- Stress shared, connected learning, and the importance of the educational community—involving all campus personnel and students



- Provide all levels of assistance in a manner which is connected to learning, not isolated from it—assistance is provided in ways that enable students to utilize assistance for learning and collaboration with the learning experiences



Condition #1 for Student Retention

- Expectations for Student Achievement and Success
- “No one rises to low expectations”
- Too many institutions do not expect enough of their students, demanding too little with regard to student learning



Condition #2 for Student Retention

- Quality Academic Advising and Guidance is expected and provided
- Students must understand the “road map” to completion of their academic goals and know how to use it and the campus resources to achieve personal goals



Condition #3 for Student Retention

- Academic and Personal Support
- Students need academic, social, and personal support
- Structured bridge programs, mentor programs, student clubs, intentional interaction with other students and faculty in the learning environment and the co-curricular environment



Condition #4 for Student Retention

- Involvement at all levels in the institution and in educational experiences
- Providing, even requiring, this involvement is essential during the first term of enrollment and throughout the first year when students’ attachments to their college experience is least certain and the pull of the college most weak



Condition #5 for Student Retention

- The educational experience is focused on student learning – not teaching
- Students must be involved in the learning process
- Learning cannot be experienced as a “spectator sport” or one of passivity—or passive aggression



- Students do not learn in isolation from their peers
- Courses are not detached, individual unit separated from one another in content and peer group—unrelated to all other courses or content



In Conclusion:

Developing strong advising programs and building a campus-wide focus on retention is essential to the academic success and retention of students at institutions of higher education



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