Suggested Activities/Strategies for Your Campus to Utilize this Webinar to Its Full Potential

Pre-Webinar
1. Share the latest IPEDS data indicating your institution’s graduation rate. (This can be found at [http://nces.ed.gov/IPEDS/](http://nces.ed.gov/IPEDS/) if you are unable to locate on your campus). Also share the latest Freshman to Sophomore and Sophomore to Junior retention rates with your group.
   • If you are viewing the webcast with a group, have a discussion prior to the start of the webcast on this graduation rate and these retention rates – What are the implications for your institution? For your programs?
2. Have a discussion prior to the start of the webcast on what initiatives, programs, or services exist presently focused on student success. Are the connected to each other? Are they known on campus?

Post Webinar
3. Since conducting an analysis of your campus/institution is essential in focusing on student retention, persistence and success, here are some activities you might do:
   • Either in small groups which will report to the full group or in a full group discussion, answer the following questions:
     o Which of the factors that affect retention have we as an institution/campus developed initiatives or programs to focus on? What are those programs/initiatives? Have they been successful?
     o How does our campus/institution intentionally or unintentionally affect negatively or positively the attitudes of our students toward leaving or staying on the campus?
4. The research indicates that successful initiatives focused on student retention and persistence are powerful enough to make changes in students and their attitudes, as well as changes in the institution. List the programs and/or initiatives your campus/institution has implemented and then list the ways these have changed students AND the institution. What still needs to happen on campus to address these issues?
5. Analyze what your campus/institution has done and/or could do in regard to the five strategies or techniques discussed in the presentation:
   • Collaborative Partnership built with academic advising
   • Clear Top Level Commitment and Grassroots Commitment
   • Identifying Leadership
   • Creating a Buzz
   • Factors that affect student success (conducting an assessment or audit)
6. Choose three of the high impact practices you either don’t have or have that need strengthening and discuss how you will implement or improve persistence based on these strategies. What resources might you need to implement or strengthen these efforts?

Resources and References


Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE) at the University of Oklahoma. http://csrde.ou.edu/web/index.html


MELMAC Education Foundation http://www.melmacfoundation.org/


Presentation Focus
• Research on student retention and persistence to graduation
• Utilizing the research in analyzing campus issues
• Communicating those issues across campus
• Developing strategies for connecting research to action
• Recognizing academic advising as a key to student success initiatives

No Magic Bullet!

Why should we be concerned about student persistence and success?
Persistence and graduation rates:
1. influence public perception of the quality of the institution which, in turn, affects recruitment and external funding possibilities
2. are becoming important components of program review activities (accreditation and reaccreditation)
3. are related to programmatic and fiscal responsibility

Issues of Student Success are complex and complicated

Begin with Careful Analysis
“Making the simple complex is commonplace; Making the complex simple, awesomely simple, that is creativity.”
- Charles Mingus

What do we know about student retention and persistence?

- Students who completed their degrees at the same institution within 6 years: 51%
- Students who completed their degrees within 6 years attending two or more institutions: 58%

First to Second Year Retention 2007-2008

- 4-Year: 66%
- 2-Year: 54%

Factors Important to Retention:
- Intentional and focused first year advising
- Orientation for credit
- Required tutoring and academic advising

Predictors of Academic Success
- Personal emotional adjustment
- Social adjustment
- Availability of strong support person on campus
- High school GPA
Students want:
- assistance creating connections
- to feel supported
- to become integrated into the campus community

Hixenbaugh, Pearson, and Williams (2007)

Three Retention Themes:
- Academic preparedness
- Campus climate
- Commitment to goal achievement

Swail (2004)

Institutional factors that directly affect student success:
- High Expectations
- Support
- Academic Advising
- Involvement
- Student-Learning Focus

Tinto (2007)

Bean & Eaton Psychological Model of College Student Retention
Combines:
- Attitude-Behavior Theory - links beliefs, attitudes, and intentions with behavior
- Coping Behavioral Theory - focuses on adaptive behavior
- Self-Efficacy Theory – perception of skills/ability
- Attribution Theory – locus of control

Assessment
“The assessment of retention programs needs to be based not only on what these academic or co-curricular programs are supposed to accomplish, but on whether, in providing their services, staff and faculty members shape students’ attitudes toward the institution in a positive fashion.”

-Bean in Seidman’s College Student Retention

Attitudes
“I have found that students evaluate their experiences and form attitudes toward the college that influence their intentions to stay enrolled and their decision to stay or leave. Anyone and everyone on campus can affect these attitudes, and for this reason everyone on campus is responsible for retention.”

-Bean in Seidman’s College Student Retention
First, clearly define:

- Retention
- Persistence
- Success

Retention (National Center for Education Statistics)
determined by tracking first-time, full time students in degree programs over time

Completion Rates for Different Student Populations
Understanding the Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Average Years to Complete a 4-yr Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 or older</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 17 or younger</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A college-educated parent</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-generation students</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private College or University</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public College or University</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All College Graduates</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average number of years to complete a 4-yr degree

Definitions:
- **Retention** - the ability of an institution to retain a student from admission through graduation
- **Persistence** - the desires and actions of a student to stay within the system of higher education from beginning through degree completion

What does the institution currently DO or NOT DO that either negatively or positively affects the student’s interaction/relationship with the institution?

Two Dimensions:
- the Institution
- the Students
Psychology of Leaving

“The intention to leave (or stay) is the best predictor of actual student departure.”
- Bean

What are we doing to positively influence students’ commitment to degree completion and to our institutions?

Need to affect change in the institution and in the student
Seidman (2004)
Retention is not the goal – Level of systems integration determines departure decisions
Tinto (1993)

Define Success Broadly
- Academic achievement
- Engagement in educationally purposeful activities
- Satisfaction
- Acquisition of desired knowledge, skills, and competencies
- Persistence
- Attainment of educational goals
- Post-college performance
Kuh et al (2007)

Identify Early
- Abilities
- Commitment
- Goals
Seidman (2004)

The Research shows that academic advising is an integral part of any retention, persistence, and student success initiatives on a campus

Academic advising is a way to connect students to the campus
Kuh (2007)
Academic Advising is a key/essential component of any student retention or persistence efforts but will not on its own change students or the institutional culture.

Build Partnerships

Build upon Grassroots efforts AND Top-down initiatives

Top Administrators must:
- Support and regularly communicate efforts
- Lead the charge for change
- Encourage analysis
- Be intentional in their leadership
- Foster a culture of student success and inquiry

Advisors and Advising Administrators must communicate with top level administrators about the value and connections that academic advising has to efforts to increase retention and persistence rates

The campus community must share the vision and foster the culture of student success

There must be a clear Leader with the responsibility and authority for coordinating campus efforts
- Provost or Vice President
- Office of Student Retention and Success – Director or Dean
- College-level Deans
- Student Retention Council, Committee or Task Force
Successful initiatives create a “buzz” of continual conversations

**Strategies**

- Formalize a campaign – clarify the role of advising
- Get campus leadership involved
- Share an article
- Share what you learned at a conference, workshop, or webinar

**Collectively identify factors**
that can affect positively or negatively the students’ success, retention, and persistence on our campus

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Analyze – Evaluate
Strengths – Weaknesses
Maximize – Minimize

**Evaluation Aids**

*What risk factors do the students on your campus face?*

- How do you know this – what analysis have you conducted?
- What can the impact of these risk factors be on the success of students?
- What initiatives do you have in place or can you put into place to deal with those risk factors?
- What partnerships can academic advisors develop to collaborate on such initiatives?
Quality Academic Advising has at its foundation the role and responsibility of teaching students and guiding students toward the experiences that will enhance their educational experiences at our institutions.

High-Impact Educational Practices

**First-Year Seminars and Experiences**
- 2646 Survey Invitations Distributed
- 968 Completed (36.6% response rate)
- 821 Responded They Offered a First Year Seminar (84.8%)

National Resource Center for the First Year Experience and Students in Transition
http://sc.edu/fye/research/surveyfindings/surveys/survey06.html

~ Direct students toward the right activities ~
- Kuh

High-Impact Educational Activities reinforce that the college experience is more than a classroom experience.
We each must define – and be able to describe – the student experiences on our campuses.