Student Success: Advising Interventions that Lead to Persistence

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Abstract

Why do some students succeed in graduating from university and other students fail? Theorists from Astin to Tinto have researched this question for decades. Over the years quality academic advising has been listed as having a role in helping students persist towards degrees. This presentation will cover a case study of how one university combined academic advising, technology and educational interventions to help students persist towards academic success.
Introductions and Overview

- Introductions
- Overview of the state of Higher Education
- Western Oregon University and Retention/Persistence Issues
- Development of the Wolf Connection System
- Ongoing Educational Interventions
- Challenges, successes and results
- Questions
Higher Education
Academic advising is the only structured activity on the campus in which all students have the opportunity for on-going, one-to-one interaction with a concerned representative of the institution.

Wes Habley
Retention

The view then-Students failed, not institutions. Now-recognition that there are multiple factors that impact student retention, from what the institution does to what students bring with them when they begin higher education.
Student Integration Model

* Students who socially integrate into the campus increase their commitment, and are more likely to graduate.
* Student attrition linked to both formal and informal academic experiences, and social integration.
* Degree of success a student has in pursuit of higher education influences the level of commitment to the institution, academic and career goals.
Students are in “a period of passage between the old and the new, before the full adoption of new norms and patterns of behavior and after the onset of separation from the old ones”

Vincent Tinto
Western Oregon University

* 4 year public liberal arts
* Founded in 1856
* 6200 students
* 52% of entering students are first-generation
* Large Latino/a population
* Significant Deaf population
Academic Advising at WOU

Shared Model
Mandatory Advising
Developmental
Advisor Training
Proactive (intrusive)
Advising
Students with Academic Risk

- Academically Underprepared
- Individual Risk Factors
- Familial Risk Factors
- Social Risk Factors (Miller and Murray, 2005)
- Millennial Generation (Keeling, 2003)
Student Success Initiative

* Student Success Specialist
* Wolf Connection Systems
* RFI’s from staff
* Collaboration across campus to provide wrap around services and referrals
Request for Interventions
Student Success Specialist Reaches out to Students
Provides resources, referrals and helps students to make decisions about their academics
Follows-up with students
* Academic advising that is targeted to the student is provided
* Specific information on dropping courses or retaking courses
* Online and in person educational interventions for students at academic risk
* On-line advisor notes
Tutoring

* SSS often recommends tutoring for students that are struggling in courses
* Free for students
* Up to two hours a week, per subject
* Ongoing communication with students
* Communication with faculty and staff regarding the RFI’s
* SSS reaches out to the academic departments and shows them the results
Students who received interventions had a success rates upwards of 10% higher

* Students on Academic Warning dropped 32%
* Students on Academic Probations 28%
* Students on Academic Suspension dropped 30%
* Financial Savings from Interventions
Next Steps

* Program expansion across campus
* Hire a second Student Success Specialist
* Continue assessment to determine which interventions are the most effective
* Add short videos to WCS
Final Thoughts

There are no insignificant conversations.

Dr. Larry Roper


