Piloting a Case Management Approach to Academic Advising: Impacting Retention Through Advising Practices

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Learning Objectives

1. Define the case management approach to academic advising employed within the University College at Indiana State University.

2. Identify which academic advising practices had the most positive impact on student retention for this pilot.

3. Discuss and learn from others how to adapt and apply aspects of this advising approach at your home institution.
Institution Demographics

• Public; comprehensive

• 13,000 students with approximately 10,500 undergraduates

• High percentage of first generation, 21st Century Scholars and Pell Grant recipients, and historically underserved populations

• Access University; 82.5% acceptance rate; growing honors population
History of University College

- Improve student retention
- Established in 2012 with first cohort entering 2013 and first class to graduate in 2017
- Advise all freshmen including those accepted into their academic colleges
- Provide scaffolding and support to conditionally admitted students and students on academic probation
- General education program housed within the UC
Why a pilot?

- Strategic plan created an entrepreneurial environment
- Opportunity to develop, resource, and assess initiatives
- Proposition that a reduced advising load would allow UC to live up to mission of providing intrusive, developmental, and holistic advising thereby positively impacting first-year retention
Development and Implementation

• Timeline
  • Conversations start spring 2015
  • 2 year pilot begins fall 2015

• People
  • Three new professional advisors
  • One graduate assistant
  • Advisory board

• Defining “case management”
  • Relational
  • Holistic
  • Intrusive
  • Developmental

• Quasi-experimental design
  • Control and match group
  • Populations already receiving structured academic support excluded
Results: Persistence and Retention

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<th>OffEnrSpr1</th>
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<th>OffEnrFa2</th>
<th>Retention %</th>
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• Fall 2015 pilot persistence +3.13% higher than control; first-year retention +2.92% higher than control

• Fall 2016 pilot persistence 5.97% higher than control; first-year retention + 4.72% higher than control

• Fall 2016 pilot first-year retention +6.08% higher than 2015 pilot
Results: Best Practices

• Case management
  • Relational
    • 1:1 appointments
    • 6 meetings within academic year

• Holistic
  • Advising Checklist

• Intrusive
  • Avoided yes/no questions
  • Addressed non-verbals
  • Used tools to address academic performance concerns

• Developmental
  • Show/navigate tools together during initial appointments
  • Helping students to anticipate upcoming critical advising points
Results: Best Practices

• Outreach
  • Tiered approach – 48 hours
    • Email; phone calls; scheduling appointments on student’s behalf; Mapworks referrals; texting; letters
  • Cohort-wide programming

• Accountability
  • Contact Tracking Sheet
  • General advising calendar
  • Framing reports from dean and executive director
  • Progress and final reports
Successes and Challenges

• Positive impact on retention

• Advisor training

• Identified best practices

• Scalability

• Luxury of hiring staff for a pilot

• Size of cohort
Discussion

• **Questions about our process?**

• **How could key components be implemented on your home campus?**
To continue the conversation...

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Resources

McReynolds, J. (n.d.). *Advising as case management* [PowerPoint slides].

