

# Student Engagement and Success: Action, Assessment and Dialogue

**37<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on the First-Year Experience**

**San Antonio, TX**

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## Presenters

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# Presentation Objectives

- Review current research practices to increase student success
- Explain current MSU first-year experience for incoming freshmen
  - Review issues reported by our freshmen which affect their persistence
  - Share results of three years of a collaborative student success initiative
- Identify collaborations that could:
  - be initiated at your institution to increase student success
  - benefit your students, faculty, professional staff
- Identify action steps to begin this process at your institution

I do not go to a committee meeting merely to give my own ideas. If that were all, I might write my fellow members a letter. But neither do I go to learn other people's idea. If that were all, I might ask each to write me a letter.

I go to committee meetings in order that all together we may **create a group idea**, an idea that will be better than any of our ideas alone, moreover, **which will be better than all of our ideas added together.**

-- Mary Parker Follett, *The New State: Group Organization the Solution of Popular Government*  
(1918)

# High Impact Practices

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

# Vincent Tinto

***Student involvement (engagement) serves as the foundation for social and academic integration; and, as students become more involved, the likelihood increases that they will remain and graduate.***

# Joe Cuseo

*“Student success is a holistic process that involves supporting and developing the student as a ‘whole person.’ “*

# Major Issues Reported by MSU First-Year Students

- Homesick (separation)
- Test Anxiety
- Struggling in at least 2 courses
- Low social aspects (on-campus living)
- Not confident about finances
- Academic self-efficacy
- Advanced academic behaviors

# Current MSU First-Year Experiences

- **Summer O**
- **Great Beginnings / Student Leaders**
- **Residential Colleges**
- **1-credit First-Year Experience/Transitions courses housed in academic disciplines + Undeclared**
- **Mapworks early alert / retention system**
- **Mapworks Survey**



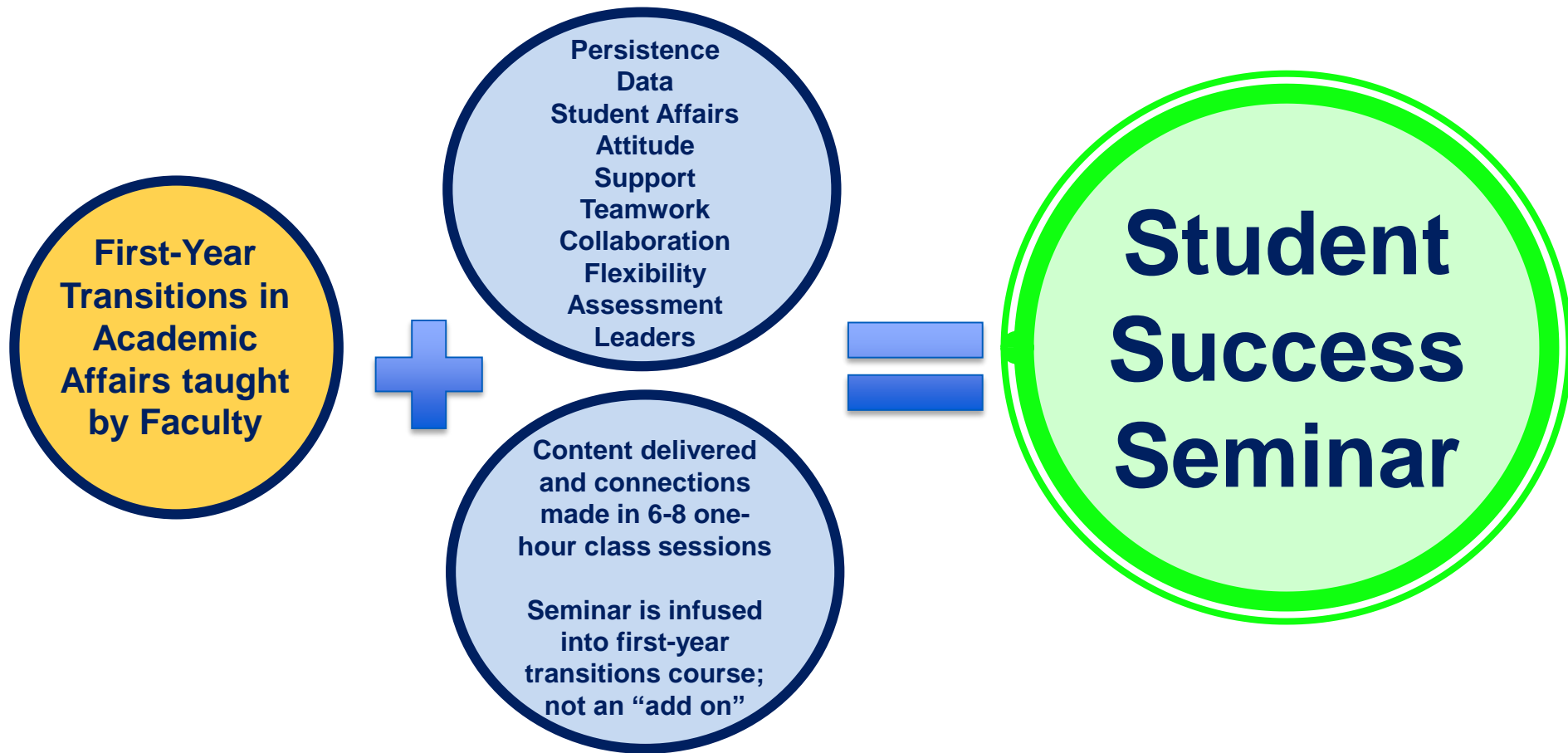
# First-Year Experience/Transition Course Challenges

- Only one course taken by all freshmen
- Faculty lead the course and are trained in their discipline; few are student-success trained
- Unable to add a new course because we must keep degree programs to a total of 120 credits

**Faculty report that “their least favorite” part of transitions teaching “is teaching study skills, and that the area they feel least prepared for is . . . helping students develop holistically.”**

**Porter and Swing**

# Our Solution



# Timeline

First Year Experience /  
Students in Transition  
Conference

KY Student Success  
Summit

Pilot: 1 Academic  
Program , 2 Sections

Data Analysis;  
Adjustment to  
Content

“As many Student  
Affairs people as you  
need”

Year 1: 10 Academic  
Programs, 26 Sections

Year 2: 9 Academic  
Programs, 16 Sections,  
  
Library Faculty and  
Graduate Student  
(Postsecondary Education  
Administration)  
Participation Began

S 2013

F 2013

S 2014

F 2014

S 2015

F 2015

# Timeline

Funds acquired for the first time to pay success seminar instructors

New team member:  
BIO

Year 3: 11 Academic Programs; 9 Sections

S 2016

F 2016

Three-year longitudinal retention and persistence data shows higher rates for those in the success seminar.

Content adjusted; text replaced by pre and post study skills and attitudes survey

S 2017

Year 4: 13 Academic Programs, 10 Sections

New team members:  
MAT and AGR

Returning team member:  
PSY

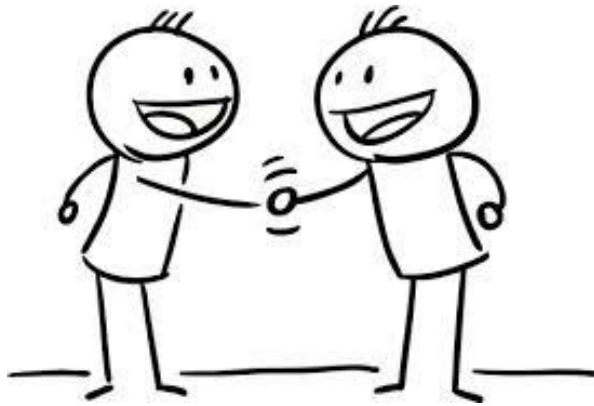
LASSI added

F 2017

# Assessment Data

- **Retention and persistence data**
- **LASSI assessment**
- **Courses, BIO 100T**

**Academic & Student Affairs**  
**Collaboration**  
**Trust**  
**Communication**  
**Resource-Sharing**



**Students**  
**“Lifelines”:**  
**Direct and Consistent**  
**Contact w/**  
**Student Affairs**  
**Academic Affairs**

## Students Commented:

**“To come to realization that I will fail and that’s okay.”**

**“During this semester I have developed better habits in how to space out everything which needs to get done. So my time management and organization have improved by leaps and bounds.”**

**“Time management, study skills, and confidence.”**

**“New techniques on how to get the most out of your study time and how to read a textbook properly so I can maximize my efficiency.”**

**“As important as it is to have a social life and be involved, it’s more important to study.”**



# Faculty and Success Instructors Appreciated:

- **“I see the value in it, both in theory and in practice.”  
Department Chair & Faculty Instructor**
- **It’s obvious that the added engagement in Transitions results in a better pass rate and likely greater success in their other academic endeavors.” Faculty Instructor**
- **“Reaching a group of students that I otherwise would not get a chance to.” Success Seminar Instructor**
- **“Meeting freshmen and their energy and enthusiasm. I am still connected with several of them.” Success Seminar Instructor**
- **“Interaction with the students and the content we taught.”  
Success Seminar Instructor**
- **“Collaboration” Faculty and Success Seminar Instructors**

# Keys to Success

- **Flexibility**
- **One or two champions for the cause**
- **Data driven decisions**
- **Accepting small wins**
- **Low cost**
- **Build the right team. Look at who can add value to initiative**
- **Persistence**

# “We HAVE to make the Success Seminar happen.”

Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education



# Questions

## Could, Would, Should – Let's Talk!

- What successful collaborations are already happening on your campuses?
- What collaborations *could* be initiated at your institution?
- How *would* collaboration, short or long term, benefit your students, faculty members, professional staff?
- What action step *should* you take to begin this process?
- Who is one person you *should* contact to begin this process?
- What other initiatives *should* your university explore to promote student success?

Thank you for attending our workshop. Enjoy the conference.



# References

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Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education. A theoretical synthesis of recent research. *Review of Education Research*, 45(1), 89-125.

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