Student Engagement and Success: Action, Assessment and Dialogue

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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

**First-Year Transitions in Academic Affairs taught by Faculty**

- Persistence
- Data
- Student Affairs
- Attitude
- Support
- Teamwork
- Collaboration
- Flexibility
- Assessment
- Leaders

**Content delivered and connections made in 6-8 one-hour class sessions**

- Seminar is infused into first-year transitions course; not an “add on”

**Student Success Seminar**
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
Funds acquired for the first time to pay success seminar instructors

New team member: BIO

Year 3: 11 Academic Programs; 9 Sections

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

Year 4: 13 Academic Programs, 10 Sections

New team members: MAT and AGR

Returning team member: PSY

LASSI added
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.


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