

An Inclusive Model for Institutional Reform: An Institutional Study of First-Generation College Student Success

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This study explored the characteristics, perspectives and learning of First Generation College Students and the institutional context that affect first year persistence.

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4 Steps to Student Success

- Determine data available and necessary to understand institutional culture and the policies and practices that support or hinder student success
- Communicate findings
- Create data driven policies
- Move policy into practice

- Challenge assumptions of what is supporting and hindering student success.



- Four related dimensions/ data points: Institutional Context, Student Demographic and Academic Data, Student Perspective, Student Learning

- Create a cohesive institutional plan to change policy; and move policy to practice

- Reframe the institutional structures of Student and Academic Affairs

Social Justice Inquiry of Traditionally Under-served Populations

- Challenge assumptions of what is supporting and hindering student success

Discussion Questions

1. Who are you losing and when?
2. What supports / hinders the success and persistence of these students at your institution / program?

Institutional Context

- Institutional Culture and Social Organization
- Institutional Academic Integration
- Student Support Services & Resources
- Institutional Reports, White Papers

Academic and Demographic Student Data

- Student Information Systems
 - Demographic Data
 - Pre-college Academic Data
 - University Academic Data
- University Financial Aid Data
 - Demographic Data
 - Income Level

Student experiences of social and academic integration

- Individual Student Interviews
- Focus Groups
- NSSE Data

Student Learning: Entrance, Mid-point and Exit

- Syllabi - Academic expectations, criteria, grading practices
- Student Work - Embedded assessments, Capstones
- Diagnostic and Placement Scores, GPAs

Recursive Analysis

- How might one of these dimensions affect the other two?
- What relationships exist between?
- And what implications do those relationships have for improving student success?

Our FGCS Have Similar Characteristics



FGCS Are Significantly More Likely To:

- Be Low Income, Minority, Female
- Have Additional Work and Family Responsibilities
- Lack Academic Preparation
- Have Poor Integration into Higher Education
- Attend Part-time
- Live Off-campus
- Rural

Student Interviews Findings

The students' personal histories cultivated specific dispositions and skills that prepared them to persist and led the students to enroll in higher education.

- Balance
- Tenacity
- Launched
- Purpose

Balance

Quitting is not an option...I have a lot of personal obstacles, a part-time job, three kids in the house, and bills that need to get paid. I am still trying to balance all of this and school. It's about growing up surrounded by people who just won't accept whys and excuses for not getting something done.

Tenacity

My mom was an immigrant. She had worked in pretty much a sweatshop environment and my Dad survived being a prisoner of war during Vietnam War. I have parents who were very strong willed; so it's kind of part of who we are, the family, we're just tough.

Launched

I didn't really didn't consider going to college until Ms. G. said, 'you should really go'...I just didn't think about it.

Purpose

- *I've always worked in service industries...I can make a difference in one person's life by doing the physical work, but if I do the paper work it can make a difference in a lot more than one person's life.*
- *I planning on doing public policy...probably politician...I hate saying it, but I want to make a difference*
- *I'm a criminology major. I want to get into law enforcement but at the federal government level.*

Major Findings

Integrating into the institution is an *internal* process that is achieved through purpose and tenacity.

It is through purpose that a student develops a *commitment to their personal goals*, not to the institution.

Supports Research on High Impact Practices

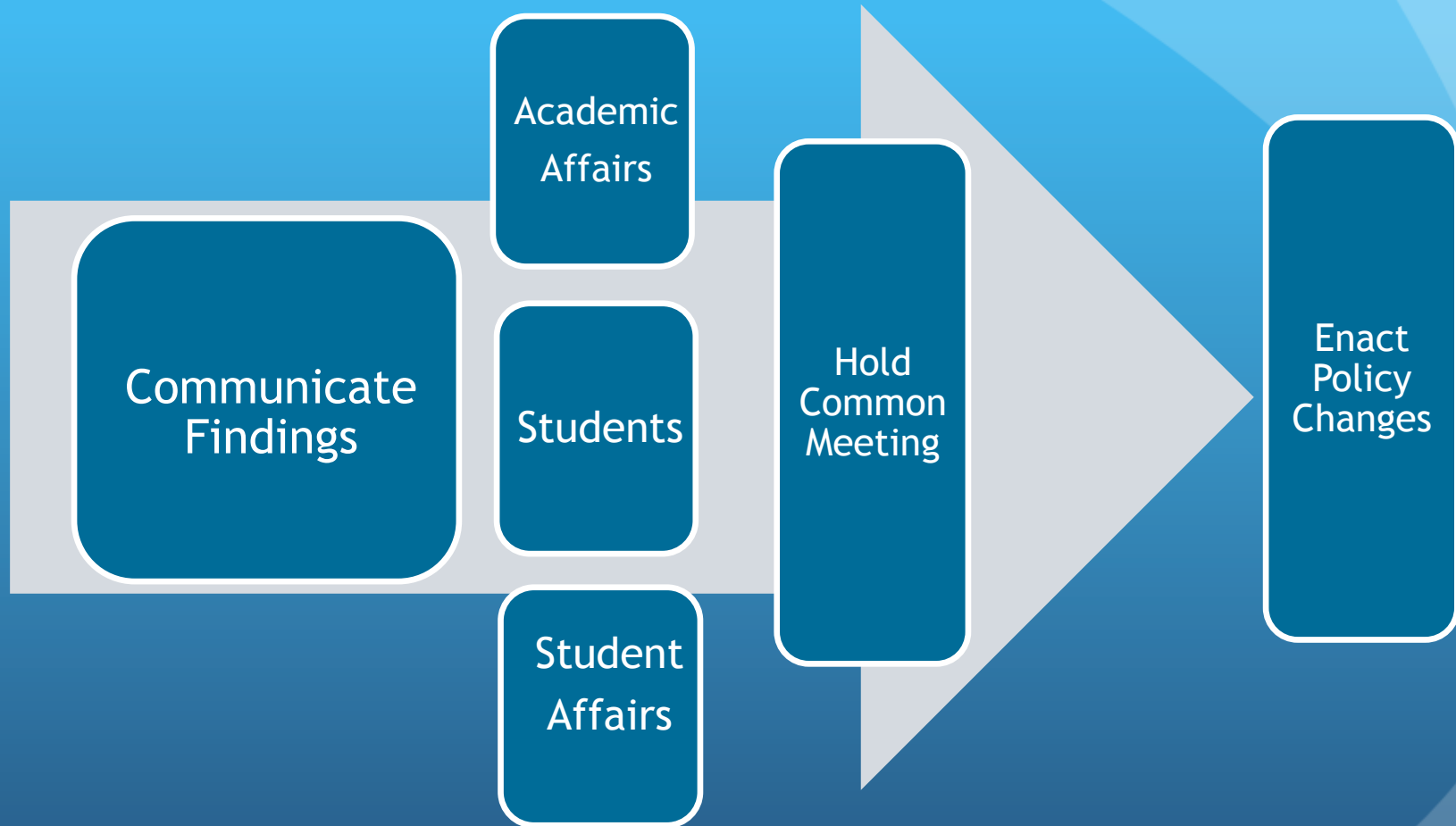
- Holistic Academic Advising
- Integrative & Applied Learning
- Community Based Learning & Service Learning
- Learning Communities that Provide Peer Interaction

Supports of NSSE Findings

Findings in this study aligned with the University's retention plan which was informed by 2006-2011 NSSE findings

- Student - Faculty Interaction
- Supportive Campus Environment
- Enriching Educational Experiences Through Authentic Learning

Strategic Communication of Findings



Recommended Changes in Policies, Practices and Pedagogies

- Comprehensive Advising
- Student Centers and Clubs
- Declaring a Major
- Authentic Learning Opportunities
- Freshman Orientation

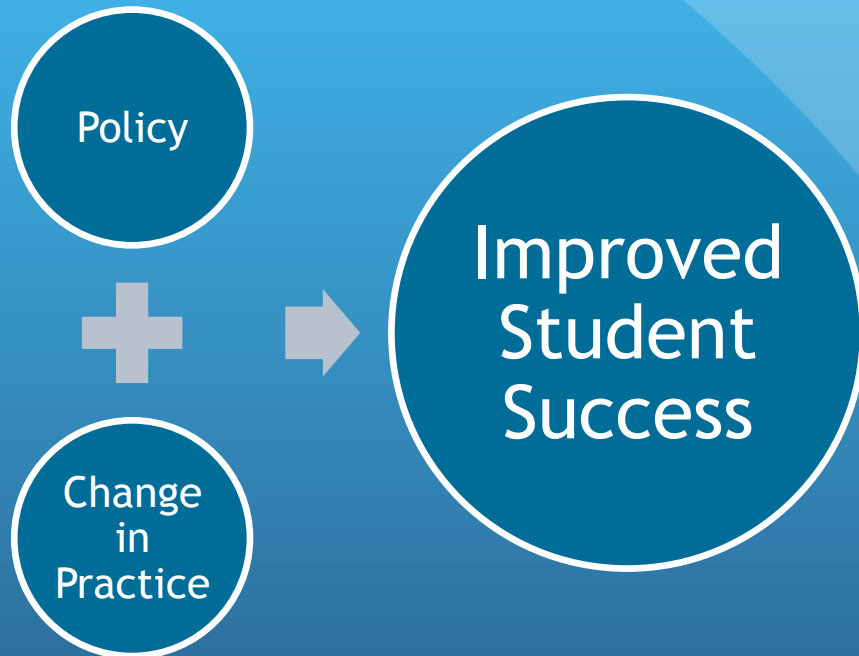
Centers and Clubs Serve as Sanctuaries of Support

“I had a hard time at first relating to my own personal struggle in being here and wasn’t sure if or what resources I might use. It felt like... overwhelming. But then S. from the LSU [Latino Student Union] emailed me and invited me to a welcoming. I think it really helps people when they first are coming to college. He’s been really great.”

“For me, having all these resources, the Women’s Resource Center, the QRC [Queer Resource Center]... all these things with all the support and mentors. It just bring it all together. I encourage everyone I know to join one or all if they want. I know that I’m still here because of their support.”

“My first quarter, I could never come to BSU [Black Student Union] meetings, the president at the time was just, ‘Hang on until you can.’ Once I showed up, it was like, ‘Okay what are we doing?’ They would be talking about classes and arguing issues. It was intimidating at first, but also exciting. I discovered classes I wanted to take and really got into the whole school thing. So, it’s really all the connections that I made here that made me decide I want to stay. I think I’m getting a better value out of my education

Change Policies and Practices



Changing Practice

Professional
Development



Job-Embedded
Professional
Development

Invest in
Ambassadors

Identify Links
to
Accreditation

Analyze HIP
Design &
Quality

Job Embedded Professional Development

- Pervasive: Institutional on-going activities, Daily work
- Diversified
 - Depth and Delivery
 - Job alike, Cross role, Disciplinary
 - Dialogical, Reflective, Egalitarian
- Facilitated by Cognitive Coaching Strategies

Links to Accreditation

- Compliance to Professional Development
- Managerial Activity to Issues of Student Success

What's different about the Inclusive Model?

- Directly addresses the needs of traditionally underserved populations
- Focuses on institutional conditions, responsibilities, and match, not on individual student shortcomings
- Addresses issues of policy and practice
- Aligns to our accreditation process which is on-going

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