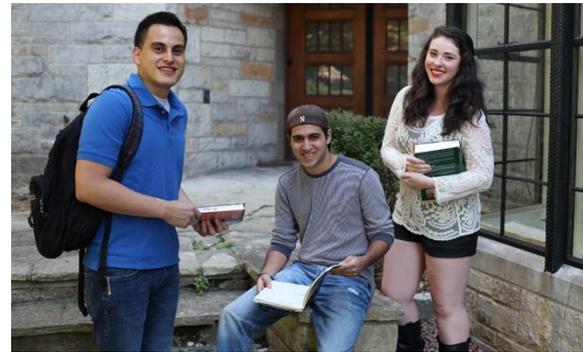


Providing Institutional Support for First Generation and Lower Socioeconomic Status Students

Aspasia Apostolakis Miller



Northwestern University

Session Outline

- Initiative to Assess Transition Support
- Social and Academic Integration
- Learning from Student Input and Benchmarking
- Developing A Coordinated Model
- Providing Ongoing Curricular and Co-Curricular Support
- Developing an Assessment Framework
- Q & A

Initiative to Assess Transition Support

- **Project Background**

- Programs to recruit and provide post matriculation support for incoming freshmen
 - Building communities of support
 - Preparing them for academic success

- **Infrastructure**

- Over a seven-year period, the number of programs increased by more than 50% and the number of participants increased by 40% without central oversight

- **Desired Outcomes**

- Identification of potential strategy and program coordination enhancements
- Designing an infrastructure to support students in their transition and ongoing success



Social and Academic Integration



Factors Impacting Retention and Satisfaction

- Social isolation
- Feeling a lack of belonging
- Lack of academic preparedness
- Financial barriers

(Sources: Read, Archer & Leathwood, 2003; Tett, 2000; Weidman & White, 1985; Stephens, Hamedani, and Destin, 2014)



Importance of Community and Sense of Belonging

- Peer Connections
- Faculty connections
- Academic integration

(Sources: ACT Institutional Data File, 2014; Ostrove & Long, 2007; Astin, 1984, Kuh et al., 2010; Tinto, 1987; Housel & Harvey, 2009; Richeson & Finkel, 2011)



Benefits of Pre-Enrollment Programs

- Develop a sense of belonging at the institution
- Increasing student-to-student interaction
- Academic preparedness
- Head start on enhancing study skills
- Engaging with the institution and the community
- Linking students with resources
- Create bonds that will carry forward



Post-Enrollment Curricular & Co-Curricular Support

- **Curricular**

- Tutoring (within departments/schools)
- Group study programs (centralized through teaching and learning center)
- Academic skill-building programs
- Within-college and cross-college advising

- **Co-curricular**

- Center for Campus Inclusion and Community
- Multicultural Student Affairs
- Sustained dialogues
- Financial wellness

Benefits of Post-Enrollment Programs

- Peer-led support
- Fine-tune academic skills
- Connect with faculty and administrators
- Build networks to make the most of the NU experience



Activity

What programs/initiatives exist at your institution that help students get acclimated to the campus environment and build a community of support with staff, faculty, and fellow students?





Learning from Student Input and Benchmarking



Student Feedback



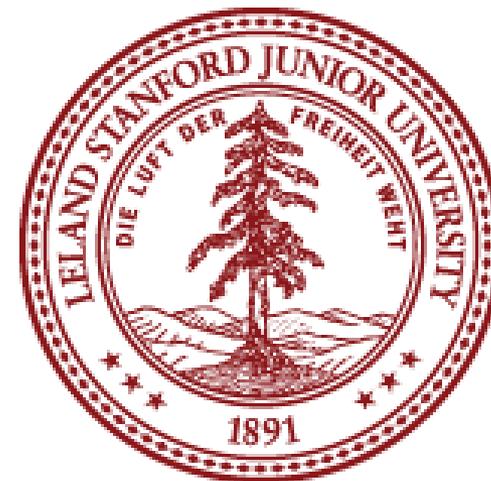
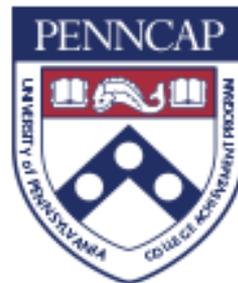
Learning from Student Input

- Reduce or eliminate barriers to participation
- Increase knowledge of academic resources and services and provide easy access
- Strengthen the co-curricular experience

“I knew I wasn’t strong in math, and I didn’t want to come here and be behind. So I participated in BRIDGE to help ease that transition.”

“Coming here to 8,000 undergrads, I felt like a drop in a bucket. I felt so insignificant coming here, and it was hard to adjust to because I felt that nobody cared.” Non-participant

Learning from Benchmarking



Enhancement Opportunities

- Strategy

- Programs are decentralized with no central person or strategy linking them or evaluating the effectiveness of the programs

- Student Recruitment

- Programs may compete for students due to lack of recruitment coordination

- Administration of Programs

- No strategic approach to providing financial aid to students
- Concerns that students are stigmatized by participating in programs
- Fourteen programs are overseen by four central administration units

Recommendations

- Establish a central mechanism to coordinate ongoing strategic planning and program enhancements.
- Determine what it would take to offer credit for all pre-enrollment programs with coursework.
- Assess the need for ongoing curricular and co-curricular support.
- Anticipate and plan for resource and infrastructure needs, including financial aid.
- Develop a common assessment framework for on-going improvement to ensure effective spending of university resources.



Developing a Coordinated Model



Developing an Institution-wide Strategy

Transition Programs Plus Council

- To address gaps in supporting the transition and ongoing success of our undergraduate students.
- To develop an assessment framework to assess our success University-wide in supporting these students.
- To anticipate and plan for our resource needs for current and future students and to ensure optimum use of these resources. This includes having the right infrastructure, programmatic resources, staffing, resources for assessment, financial aid, and more.



Providing Ongoing Curricular and Co-Curricular Support



Student Enrichment Services:

- Assists first generation and low-income students in facilitating the transition to the academy and increases their success and satisfaction with their college experience at Northwestern.
- Develops activities and programs to increase skills in leadership, financial literacy, and career planning.
- Assists in connecting students to various campus resources by collaborating with academic units, staff, and students.

“[These] people are always available - you can always reach out to them. It’s like your family.”
program participant

“...it can be a great transition to the emotional waves that you experience upon leaving home...” program participant

Academic Resource Portal

- A comprehensive web list of academic-support and free tutoring resources around campus
- Small-group study programs
- Peer-led study-skills and learning-related workshops
- Training for undergraduates who serve as tutors/peer learning group leaders

“Meeting academic advisors early was really nice – knowing I could go to them and having a relationship before school even started.”

“[I learned to] not be afraid to reach out to departments and resources. I was more comfortable emailing offices and asking about fellowships or advising.”

Developing an Assessment Framework

- Assess effectiveness of current programs.
- Develop common measures by which to evaluate
 - New programs
 - Expansion of existing programs
- Identify strengths and gaps in supporting student academic and social integration.

Activity

How have your institutions assessed the success of programs to support transition and ongoing success?



Questions?



Reference List

- ACT Institutional Data File. (2014). National collegiate retention and persistence to degree rates. Retrieved from http://thekeep.eiu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1061&context=eiuuca_assessment_docs
- Astin, A. (1984). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 25(4), 297–308.
- Barefoot, B. (2000). The first-year experience: Are we making it any better? *About Campus*, 12–18.
- Davis-Underwood, M., & Lee, J. (1994). An evaluation of the university of North Carolina at Charlotte freshman seminar. *Journal of College Student Development*, 35, 491–496
- Housel, T. H., & Harvey, V. L. (2009). *The invisibility factor: Administrators and faculty reach out to first generation college students*. Boca Raton, FL: Brown Walker Press.
- Johnson, S. E., Richeson, J. A., & Finkel, E. J. (2011). Middle class and marginal? Socioeconomic status, stigma, and self-regulation at an elite university. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 100(5), 838.
- Karabel, J., & Astin, A. W. (1975). Social class, academic ability, and college “quality”. *Social Forces*, 53(3), 381-398.
- Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J. H., & Whitt, E. J. (2010). *Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Ostrove, J. M., & Long, S. M. (2007). Social class and belonging: Implications for college adjustment. *The Review of Higher Education*, 30(4), 363-389.
- Pascarella, E., Terenzini, P., & Wolfle, L. (1986). Orientation to college and freshman year persistence/withdrawal decisions. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 57(2), 155–175.
- Porter, S. R., & Swing, R. L. (2006). Understanding How First-year Seminars Affect Persistence. *Research in Higher Education*, 47(1), 89–109. doi:10.1007/s11162-005-8153-6
- Richardson, R. C., & Skinner, E. F. (1992). Helping first-generation minority students achieve degrees. *New directions for community colleges*, 1992(80), 29-43.
- Starke, M. C., Harth, M., & Sirianni, F. (2001). Retention, bonding, and academic achievement: Success of a first-year seminar. *Journal of Freshman Year Experience*, 13(2), 7–35.
- Stephens, N. M., Hamedani, M. G., & Destin, M. (2014). Closing the social class achievement gap: A diversity education intervention improves first-generation students’ academic performance and all students’ college transition. *Psychological Science*, 25, 943-953.
- Terenzini, P. T., Springer, L., Yaeger, P. M., Pascarella, E. T., & Nora, A. (1996). First-generation college students: Characteristics, experiences, and cognitive development. *Research in Higher Education*, 37(1), 1-22.
- Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.