Defining the Faculty Role in Student Success

Building Ownership for Student Progression Among Individual Faculty and Distributed Academic Units
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The Student Success Silo Problem

Six Roles for Faculty in Student Success

Coda: Sustaining Momentum Through Structured Accountability and Incentives

Notes:
An Organizational Dilemma

Who “Owns” Student Success On Your Campus?

Provost

Enrollment Manager

VP of Undergraduate Studies

Academic Deans

VP of Student Success

VP of Student Affairs

Admissions

The First Year Experience

Departmental Programming

Success data and dashboards

Orientation

Scholarships and Aid

Honors Programs

Curricular Design

Overseeing initiatives

Student Involvement

Stop-Out Recruitment

Undeclared Advising

Academic Advising

Advising policies and practices

Counseling Interventions

The Student Success Office

“Student success needs to be someone’s job”

“Provost

“Enrollment Manager

“VP of Undergraduate Studies

“Academic Deans

“VP of Student Success

“I have academic credibility and run the first year”

“I know how to manage to numbers, not just ideas”

“We own the curriculum and the purse strings”

“All the Pieces in Place

Self-Reported Activity Suggests Nearly Universal Adoption of HIPs

System campuses compile list of 113 known best practices

Chancellors asked to select those already existing on campus

Self-audit results in nearly complete compliance with list

Recommendations for Increasing Retention and Graduation Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Campus A</th>
<th>Campus B</th>
<th>Campus C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Flag at-risk students prior to enrollment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Offer special summer programs</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>3. Ensure sufficient intro course capacity</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>4. Connect students with peer advisors</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ensure adequate student/advisor ratios</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Use prescriptive degree maps</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>...99. Mandatory exit interview for leavers</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Existence Does Not Equal Effectiveness

No Shortage of Best Practice Programs in Place, But Little to Show For It

Despite Prevalence of High-Impact Practices, Each Campus Lagged Behind Peers

Checking the Box

“Either these things are only happening one or two places on campus, or they’re written down on paper somewhere but not actually in practice. Something doesn’t add up.”

Vice President for Academic Affairs
State University System

A Similar Story Nationwide

Flat Graduation Rates, Despite Significant Student Service Investments

Average Five-Year Graduation Rates
Public and Private US Universities

11%
Average growth in student services spending per student FTE AY 2001-2011

1) Data reflects share of first-time students who have received a bachelor’s degree within 5 years

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Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Faculty Buy-In and Compliance Critical to Organizational Improvement

Reduce and standardize number of credits required by majors for graduation

Create new professional advising roles to help high-risk students navigate early years

Implement early warning system to track attendance and early performance

Hire instructional design staff to help faculty improve assessment design

4-year graduation rate stagnant, students struggle with aid limits and major changes

First-year and undeclared students drop out at high rates, pursue poor-fit programs

Preventable issues go unaddressed, and many students aren’t contacted until withdrawing

High-failure courses hamstring first-year students, forcing repeats and remediation

Unable to enact change without buy-in or approval

Changes enacted, but aren’t complied with or embraced

Faculty at the Center of Student Success

Research on Retention and Long-Term Outcomes Confirms Critical Role

Contributing to Persistence

"In accordance with Chickering and Gamson, several researchers documented the strong association of both formal and informal faculty-student contact to enhanced student learning. These interactions influenced the degree to which students became engaged with faculty and were frequently the best predictors of student persistence (Braxton, Sullivan, & Johnson, 1997; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Pascarella & Terenzini; Stage & Hossler, 2000)."

Paul Umbach and Matthew Wawrzynski

"Facility Do Matter: The Role of College Faculty in Student Learning and Engagement"

Contributing to Well-Being

"[I]f graduates had a professor who cared about them as a person, made them excited about learning, and encouraged them to pursue their dreams, their odds of being engaged at work nearly doubled, as did their odds of thriving in their well-being ... Feeling supported and having deep learning experiences means everything when it comes to long-term outcomes for college graduates ... Yet few college graduates achieve the winning combination. Only 14% of graduates strongly agree that they were supported by professors who cared, made them excited about learning and encouraged their dreams."

Great Jobs, Great Lives

The 2014 Gallup-Purdue Index Report

1. What should I expect of individual faculty?
"We administrators have a lot of ideas about how to fix graduation rates, but shared governance means that most of the important decisions about the student experience happen outside of central administration."

2. What should I expect of units, committees, and faculty governance?
"We talk about how everything we do supports students’ short- and long-term success, but that hasn’t changed anyone's behavior when they get back to their desk."

3. How do I hardwire changes into institutional culture?
"It’s hard to keep one particular issue top of mind when all of our faculty and departments have competing priorities. We’ve started a lot of initiatives over the years, but few lasted beyond the pilot phase."
1. The Student Success Silo Problem

2. Six Roles for Faculty in Student Success

3. Sustaining Momentum Through Structured Accountability and Incentives

Six Roles for Faculty in Student Success

Individual and Collective Responsibilities to Guide Institutional Change

1. **Remove Curricular Barriers to Completion**
   - Considering student success in each stage of curricular decision-making

2. **Redesign Academic Policies**
   - Garnering support for student-facing rule changes that promote persistence to degree

3. **Support Evolving Advising Models**
   - Building buy-in for, confidence in, and collaboration with central and professional advising staff

4. **Enhance the Learning Experience**
   - Evaluating and scaling high-impact learning innovations across courses and disciplines

5. **Flag Signs of Student Risk**
   - Equipping faculty with the right tools and techniques to maximize early warning systems

6. **Mentor Rising-Risk Student Groups**
   - Targeting faculty engagement efforts toward students lacking a strong connection to campus

**Sustaining Momentum Through Structured Accountability and Incentives**

- Determining the right metrics, organizational structures, and incentives to encourage improvement among central administrators, deans, department chairs, and frontline faculty
Six Roles for Faculty in Student Success

Individual and Collective Responsibilities to Guide Institutional Change

**Collective Decision-Making**

1. **Remove Curricular Barriers to Completion**
   - 1. DIY Enrollment Analysis Platform
   - 2. Enrollment Impact Audits
   - 3. Task-Based Retention Teams
   - 4. Guided Project Management

2. **Redesign Academic Policies**
   - 5. Academic Policy Audit (Resource Preview)

3. **Support Evolving Advising Models**
   - 6. Faculty-Led Advisor Training
   - 7. Advising Career Ladder
   - 8. Unit Liaison Roles
   - 9. Distributed Support Balancing

**Individual Contribution**

4. **Enhance the Learning Experience**
   - Scaling Learning Innovations: A Preview

5. **Flag Signs of Student Risk**
   - 10. Early Warning Design Requirements
   - 11. Adjustable Alert Parameters
   - 12. Effectiveness-Focused Feedback

6. **Mentor Rising-Risk Student Groups**
   - 13. Targeted First-Year Mentor Matching
   - 14. High-Flyer Transfer Intervention

**Sustaining Momentum**
Through Structured Accountability and Incentives

- 15. Leadership Scorecards
- 16. Performance-Based Bonus Funding
- 17. Departmental Performance Dashboard

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**Remove Curricular Barriers to Completion**

**Where Curricular Planning Breaks Down**
Both Faculty Incentives and Reform Mechanisms Block Progress

1. **Departmental decisions ignore impact on progression**
   - Desire to ensure quality of students admitted to major
   - Belief that 2-year institutions’ programs lack required rigor

2. **Committees and taskforces falter over time**
   - Desire to be inclusive and build broad consensus
   - Emphasis on open experimentation and small-scale pilots

**Unintended results harm students’ progress to graduation**

- Overly strict requirements force students into last-minute major changes
- Transfers from community colleges have to retake classes or undergo slow, case-by-case audits
- Meetings focused more on discussion than decision; limited capacity for analysis or technical implementation support
- New initiatives or changes never scale beyond initial enthusiasts; limited funding to sustain effort

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Practice #1: DIY Enrollment Analysis Platform

Arming Academic Units With Actionable Data

Embedding Analytics-Driven Analysis into Decentralized Decisions

Curated, queryable database enables instant answers to enrollment-related questions

Analytics platform is publicly available, streamlining the data gathering and analysis process

Interactive charts allow users to sort academic data by department, college, class year, and demographics

Dedicated “super users” from each college meet biweekly to discuss and curate unit-level dashboards

Practice #2: Enrollment Impact Audits

Guardrails on Curricular Changes

Strategic Enrollment Management Analyses Check Faculty Assumptions

Units and programs propose curricular changes

- Encouraged to conduct self-analysis of progression impact and strategic alignment, but often lack resources or expertise to rigorously vet proposals

Enrollment Manager analyzes claims and simulates impact of changes

- Vice Provost for Strategic Enrollment Management runs longitudinal analyses to test assumptions
- No veto power, but strong buy-in from provost and dean’s council to influence decisions

Curriculum committee and deans view final report

- Recommendations include analyses conducted by enrollment management office
- Traditional approval process keeps faculty in control

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Practice #3: Task-Based Retention Teams

Matching Talent and Task

Strategically Deployed Faculty Members Accelerate Campus Consensus

Data Management Team
- 5 members, mostly staff
- Data systems experience
- Gather data on request

Data Investigation Team
- 5 faculty, 4 staff members
- Specialized in analysis (e.g., math/statistics faculty)

Campus Response Team
- 20 faculty members
- Long-term planning skills
- Direct topics for analysis

Retention Committee
- 37 faculty and staff members
  - Approves/rejects proposals
  - Shares members with subcommittees

Prioritize high-DFW course redesign and request analysis

Compile and synthesize course DFW rate data

Analyze data and create easy-to-read visualizations

Practice #4: Guided Project Management

Project Management Framework Guides Reform

Ensuring Implementation of Scalable Innovations

Project Management Plan Outlines Roles
Taskforces designate team leads and assign tasks to members

- Dedicated project managers direct meetings and coordinate non-curricular project needs
- Role can be played by existing support staff or technical specialists

Logistical Support
University staff support faculty with timelines, budgets, and other documentation tasks

- Working plans assign team lead, executive sponsor, and liaison roles
- Teams submit budget and technology needs
- Ongoing progress reports

No Pilot Programs
Required full-scale implementation and sustainability plans

- Funded projects must be fully implemented by end of pre-determined timeframe
- Sustainability plan includes ongoing funding and management needs

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Removing Barriers to Completion

Summary of Key Insights

1. Equip faculty and departmental leaders with user-friendly enrollment analysis tools to enable them to check their assumptions against historical trends when planning curricular changes.

2. Ensure that curricular decisions are made with full transparency into the effect(s) proposed changes would have on student success.

3. Campus-wide retention committees should employ interested faculty in the collection, analysis, and responses to student outcome data.

4. Use a structured project management framework with concrete roles and responsibilities to carry forward working group proposals through full implementation.

Notes:
Individual and Collective Responsibilities to Guide Institutional Change

### Six Roles for Faculty in Student Success

#### Collective Decision-Making

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   - Distributed Support Balancing

4. **Enhance the Learning Experience**

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6. **Mentor Rising-Risk Student Groups**
   - Targeted First-Year Mentor Matching
   - High-Flyer Transfer Intervention

#### Individual Contribution

5. **Scale Learning Innovations: A Preview**

6. **Sustaining Momentum Through Structured Accountability and Incentives**

   - Leadership Scorecards
   - Performance-Based Bonus Funding
   - Departmental Performance Dashboard

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### Redesign Academic Policies

**Faculty Influence Extends Beyond the Curriculum**

Policy Decisions Have Direct and Indirect Effects on Student Progression

#### Course Planning
Departments plan sections one term at a time, limiting long-term planning

- 3% retention gain at Cleveland State University

#### Withdrawal Process
Easy Yes/No prompt for course or institutional withdrawal leads to poor student decisions

#### Registration Holds
Small, unpaid bursar fees lead to hundreds of stop-outs after registration hold

#### Enrollment Status
Many students take light course loads without anticipating impact on time-to-degree

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**Progression-informed policy change**

#### Multi-term scheduling
Annual course planning period enables full-year course registration for students

- 3% retention gain at Cleveland State University

#### Withdrawal surveys
Automated advising prompts walk students through consequences and campus resources

- 40% of students starting survey retained at Penn State

#### Emergency Grants
Students missing fee payments proactively counseled and assisted in exceptional cases

- 5-8% retention gain at Xavier University

#### Redefine “Full Time”
Students advised to take at least 30 credits per year unless they face serious conflicts

- Higher course loads led to higher GPAs and grad rates at University of Hawaii

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Supporting Reexamination on Your Campus

New Policy Audit Toolkit to Accelerate Revision Efforts

1. **Policies Every Institution Should Change**
   - Add course withdrawal advising prompt
   - Plan for multi-term registration
   - Enable section waitlists in scheduling system
   - And more...

2. **Calibrating Rules to Student Need**
   - Academic probation terms
   - Major declaration timeframe
   - Graduation requirements
   - Registration holds
   - And more...

3. **Critical Analyses to Identify Barriers**
   - Identifying major milestone courses and grade thresholds
   - Coordinating pre-requisites and course sequencing
   - Transfer success trends
   - And more...

Example Guide: Re-enrollment campaigns
- Identifying and prioritizing non-registrants
- Outreach scripts and templates
- Decision rules for escalating re-recruitment methods
- Streamlining re-admission

Example Guide: Bursar hold resolution rules
- Setting acceptable range for forgiving and assisting with unpaid balances
- Financial literacy and counseling practices
- FAFSA education and compliance campaigns

Example Guide: Demand-based course scheduling
- Guide to seat utilization analysis
- Best practices and incentives for encouraging efficient space use
- Using historical trends and real-time registration data to optimize section planning

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Six Roles for Faculty in Student Success

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Sustaining Momentum Through Structured Accountability and Incentives

- Leadership Scorecards
- Performance-Based Bonus Funding
- Departmental Performance Dashboard
Support Evolving Advising Models

Unbundling the Advising Process

Dozens of Discrete Problems Require Variety of Roles on Campus

**Success Coaches**
- "I don’t fit in and I’m stressed at work"
- "I can’t afford to finish my degree"
- "How many courses should I take?"
- "I need a new ID card"

**Faculty**
- "Which subfield should I study?"
- "I want to switch majors"
- "I need to pick a major"
- "I need to register for classes"

**Self-Service**
- "I can’t afford to finish my degree"
- "How many courses should I take?"
- "I need a new ID card"
- "I need to register for classes"

**Academic Advisors**
- "I don’t fit in and I’m stressed at work"
- "I want to switch majors"
- "I need to pick a major"
- "I need to register for classes"

Complex

Transactional

Non-Academic

Academic

Support Evolving Advising Models

Separation Anxiety

Quality and Resource Worries Preventing Advising Reorganization

**Trust and Familiarity**
"This will distance me from my students and their choices"

- Limited training and faculty-staff interaction give faculty little confidence in advisors

**Confidence in Advice**
"Students will be led astray by non-departmental staff"

- Losing control over academic guidance could lead to bad curricular choices by students

**Efficient Communication**
"This will add to, not relieve, my administrative workload."

- New advising staff will require ongoing development, management, and more meetings

**Operational Resources**
"Our advising staff is critical to the function of our unit"

- Distributed support staff often play a number of important roles, making centralization difficult

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Practice #6: Faculty-Led Advisor Training

Trust Through Training

Easing Faculty Skepticism by Creating Formal Mechanism for Influence

Faculty-Led Curricular Trainings

Central hires given college assignment
Faculty create degree maps
Advisors surveyed about needs
Ongoing topic-based trainings

Face-to-Face Meetings
- Trainings provided opportunity for faculty to meet advisors in person, not just over email
- Advisors gained faculty trust and connectedness

Beyond the Catalog
- Faculty leveraged as experts in major-specific curriculum
- Divisional faculty train advisors on degree maps and pathways
- Faculty share “not in the catalog” curricular highlights and pointers

Scenario Troubleshooting
- Advisors shared examples of student scenarios and questions where curricular advice would be beneficial
- Faculty impressed by depth of questions and sensitivity to student needs and outcomes

Practice #7: Advising Career Ladder

Creating a Career Path

Management Opportunities Help to Recruit and Retain High Performers

Four-step promotion path places advisors in increasingly managerial roles

Annual evaluations track advisor performance on concrete objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Performance Metrics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement</td>
<td>Involvement data, satisfaction survey feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentoring Engagement</td>
<td># meetings with mentees, % students with academic plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Engagement</td>
<td># early alert interventions, # students attended tutoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career Development</td>
<td>% students completed self-assessments, internships</td>
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<td>College Affordability</td>
<td>Aid status, FAFSA forms completed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Success</td>
<td>Persistence to degree by cohort, total earned credits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Promise of upward career mobility attracts better-quality candidates
2. Less staff turnover and greater employee engagement
3. Metric-based evaluation and promotion process incentivizes high performance
Practice #8: Unit Liaison Roles

The Virtues of Middle Management
Balancing Central Coordination with Disciplinary Specialization

Evaluating Performance
- Vice Provost for Student Success works with managers to track caseload outcomes and individual activity

Standardizing Practices
- Managers coordinate training and professional development to ensure institution-wide adoption of best practices

Tracking Curricular Change
- Managers meet with deans and department committees weekly to stay appraised of evolving curricular plans

Advising Managers

Advisors

Central Admin

Academic Units

Support Evolving Advising Models

Distributed Advisors Do More Than Just Advise
Units Hesitant to Lose “Jack of All Trades” Support Staff

Academic Advisor
College of Engineering

- Assist students with degree plans
- Reach out to off-track students
- Refer students to other offices
- Respond to in-classroom early alerts
- Assist students with career planning
- Answer financial aid questions
- Enter student registration info into form

Academic Advising
Tasks performed by advisors directly impact student retention and graduation in the college

Generalist Tasks
Centralization of advising reporting lines/funding would leave academic unit without anyone responsible

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Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Compensating Units for Unique Staffing Needs

Advisor Task Inventory Reveals Areas for Shared Service Streamlining

**Unit staff trained on central service referrals**
- Financial aid
- Mental health counseling
- Career services
- Event planning

**Unit staff trained on new tools and technology**
- Degree map software
- Online student records
- Budgeting and scheduling software

**Funds allocated to central advising corps**
- Degree planning
- Registration
- Proactive outreach

- **70%**

**Funds held back to hire support staff**
- Administrative logistics
- Departmental programming

- **30%**

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Summary of Key Insights

**Supporting Evolving Advising Models**

1. Faculty should meet and formally train new advising staff to acclimate them to curricular developments, degree maps, frequently-asked questions, and discipline-based career planning resources.

2. Limited upward career mobility is a significant barrier to the recruitment and retention of high-performing advisors. Institutions should build a managerial career path for advising staff that incentivizes hires to take ownership over their caseload’s long-term success.

3. Designate liaisons to coordinate professional development and standardized practices between central administration, academic units, and frontline advisors.

4. Assess each academic unit’s need for unique administrative support staff to address resource concerns related to centralizing advising roles.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
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   - Scaling Learning Innovations: A Preview

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Enhance the Learning Experience

A Profusion of Innovation

Institutions Across Segments Experiment with Curriculum and Delivery

Public 4-Year
- Accelerated Degree Pathways
- IAMSTEM Active Learning Redesign
- Adaptive Learning in First-Year Math
- Alternative Classroom Designs

Private 4-Year
- Competency-Based Education
- Course Modularization
- Prior Learning Assessment
- Online First-Year Gen Ed Courses

Canadian 4-Year
- Entrepreneurship Incubators
- Competency-Focused Syllabi
- Teaching-Stream Faculty Rank
- Active Learning Lecture Software

Public 2-Year
- Open Course Library
- Predictive Academic Analytics
- Employer Curriculum Collaborations
- Student-Centered Developmental Math

Source: Institutional websites; EAB interviews and analysis.
Scaling Learning Innovations
From Early Adopters to Campus Wide

The Learning Innovations Adoption Curve

Harnessing Grassroots Activity
Reducing the Risk of Adoption
Channeling Efforts to Priorities
Coda: Sustaining What Works

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**Sustaining Momentum**

Through Structured Accountability and Incentives

1. **Individual Contribution**
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**Flag Signs of Student Risk**

Don’t Let Classroom Contact Go to Waste

Faculty-Student Interactions Aid Risk Identification and Engagement

- Average first semester student hours spent...
  - 1...In an advising office
  - 225...In a classroom

Powerful predictive metrics right under our noses

- 1.6 First-year GPA gap between students with and without attendance problems
  (Mississippi State University, 2013)

In all cases analyzed, midterm and first-exam grades strongly predicted final grades... Midterm and final grades were also strongly correlated in a variety of other academic disciplines at the liberal arts college, including the humanities, the social sciences, and the fine arts.”

James Barron & Philip Jensen
Journal of College Science Teaching (2014)

In response, extensive deployment of early warning systems in higher ed

- 74% Public Universities
- 78% Private Universities
- 68% Community Colleges


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Flag Signs of Student Risk

Getting from Acceptance to Buy-In

System Design Only Part of the Challenge

Garner Initial Support

- Faculty and staff trained on early warning system
- Reporting and response processes are clear

Achieve Full Adoption

- Faculty convinced of system’s impact
- Processes customized to promote further use

0-50% Compliance
(Among target faculty)

50-100% Compliance
(Among target faculty)

Early warning design requirements

Customization and impact analysis

Practice #10: Early Warning Design Requirements

Allay Initial Concerns by Streamlining System

Early Alert Processes Should Be Simple, Strategic, and Sensitive

Making it Simple

Single Referral

- Faculty given option to suggest specific response, but able to send all alerts to single office

Target High-Risk Courses and Students

- Focus compliance efforts at highest-impact populations

All-Inclusive

- Single system for logging academic, attendance, and behavioral alerts

Includes Assistants

- Train graduate and teaching assistants to ensure coverage of introductory course sections

Addressing Faculty Concerns

Student Privacy

- Faculty, advisors, RAs, and support staff able to submit alerts, but full access limited

Positive Messaging

- Students encouraged to take clear action steps, rather than simply alerted of risk

Follow-up

- Faculty informed of alert receipt, as well as progress and resolution of cases

Flexible Faculty Role

- Faculty able to decide whether and how to get involved with student issues

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Practice #11: Adjustable Alert Parameters

Allow for Flexible Application

Instructor-Specific Time Window and Grade Scale Improve Adoption

Faculty asked to determine best early assessment point

Week 3

Week 6

Typical: Standard early grade deadline

Faculty determine examination and grade that constitutes “on track”

A B C D F

Typical: Single grade threshold for institution

Faculty able to choose and prioritize resources sent to students

1. Office hours
2. Supplementary instruction
3. Tutoring center
4. Departmental resource

Typical: Early warning office dictates response

Practice #12: Effectiveness-Focused Feedback

Illustrating Impact

Alerts Aim to Address Students’ Needs, Not to Punish Bad Teaching

1. Promotion and compliance messaging should come from academic leaders
   - Provost reminds faculty each term of relationship between early risk indicators and attrition
   - Department chairs and deans contact faculty who fail to submit necessary alerts (not central support office or academic advisors)

2. Demonstrate increased utilization of support services and effect on grades, retention

    | Promotion and compliance messaging | No Tutoring | Tutoring |
    |-----------------------------------|------------|---------|
    | 72%                               | 28%        |
    | 52%                               | 48%        |

More than Compliance at Stake

“If instructors and staff are not aware of how the systems work or why they are structured the way they are, and if the only messages they receive about it are regarding participation, a significant opportunity for campus-wide discussions about retention and student success has been missed.”

“Early Alert Project Action Team: Final Report”
Western Michigan University (2014)
Flagging Early Signs of Risk

Summary of Key Insights

1. Class attendance, early academic performance, and concerning behavioral cues are strong predictors of ultimate success, yet institutions struggle to attain the compliance needed among faculty to collect and act on these data.

2. Early warning systems should streamline the reporting process by using a single interface and referral point, and compliance efforts should focus on high-risk student groups in introductory courses.

3. Allow instructors to customize the design, timing, and remediation strategies linked to early warning systems (within a reasonable range).

4. Evaluate and regularly communicate the impact of early warning systems on support resource utilization, course grades, and GPA to overcome faculty skepticism.

Notes:
Six Roles for Faculty in Student Success

Individual and Collective Responsibilities to Guide Institutional Change

1. **Remove Curricular Barriers to Completion**
   - DIY Enrollment Analysis Platform
   - Enrollment Impact Audits
   - Task-Based Retention Teams
   - Guided Project Management

2. **Redesign Academic Policies**
   - Academic Policy Audit (Resource Preview)

3. **Support Evolving Advising Models**
   - Faculty-Led Advisor Training
   - Advising Career Ladder
   - Unit Liaison Roles
   - Distributed Support Balancing

4. **Enhance the Learning Experience**
   - Scaling Learning Innovations: A Preview

5. **Flag Signs of Student Risk**
   - Early Warning Design Requirements
   - Adjustable Alert Parameters
   - Effectiveness-Focused Feedback

6. **Mentor Rising-Risk Student Groups**
   - Targeted First-Year Mentor Matching
   - High-Flyer Transfer Intervention

---

**Sustaining Momentum**
Through Structured Accountability and Incentives

- Leadership Scorecards
- Performance-Based Bonus Funding
- Departmental Performance Dashboard

---

Overcoming Self-Selection Engagement as Retention Strategy

Involvement, or what is increasingly being referred to as engagement, matters and it matters most during the critical first year of college. What is less clear is... **how to make it happen in different settings and for differing students in ways that enhance retention and graduation.**

*Vincent Tinto*

*Research and Practice of Student Retention: What Next?*

Early Neglect Can Lead to Late Attrition

Support Services and Enrichment Activities Miss Most Students

**High Flyer Programming**
- Living and learning communities
- Undergraduate research
- Study abroad
- Internship and field experiences
- Independent study
- Honors college

**The Engagement Gap**
Disengaged students persist to upper division but lack faculty connection needed to complete

![31%]
Of students with a first-year GPA between 2.0 and 3.0 drop out between their second and sixth year.¹

**High-Risk Support**
- TRIO student support services
- Intensive coaching programs
- Tutoring and supplemental instruction
- Academic skills development workshops
- Math workgroups

---

"We have a ton of programming aimed at both the top 10 percent and the bottom 10 percent of our incoming class. Unfortunately, we hadn't done as much for all the students in the middle."

Paul Chinowsky, Associate Vice Provost for Student Success
University of Colorado - Boulder

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1) EAB analysis of 740,000 students at 73 public and private universities in the US (2014 "Murky Middle Project," SSC)

---

**Practice #13: Targeted First-Year Mentor Matching**
Where Faculty Can Help

Deploying Mentoring Efforts to Proactively Address Long-Term Risk

**The Faculty-Student Mentor Program**
University of Colorado Boulder

- Program created by Faculty Assembly to address upper-division success
- Students encouraged to sign up at orientation and throughout summer
- Students are matched to mentors based on interests and major choice
- Online sign-up form gathers critical information to assess risk (anticipated credit load, employment plans, concerns)

1. Outreach targets first-year students not involved in a Residential Academic Program (~50%)
2. 100 volunteer faculty mentors lead weekly "fireside chats" around known obstacles and student questions
3. Information gathered from conversations used to inform first-year programming
4. Faculty given resource guides and training on what questions to refer to specialists

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Practice #14: High-Flyer Transfer Intervention

Predicting Preventable Transfer Losses

From Stepping Stone to Disciplinary Destination

37%
Of all first-time students transfer or enroll at a different institution at least once within 6 years

33%
Attrition that occurs after the 2nd year in good academic standing

40%
Of leavers have estimated GPAs above 3.25

Students Matched with Faculty Mentors
Meeting with faculty in desired program to discuss opportunities for co-curricular involvement

Proactive Identification of Engagement Risk
Orientation survey, involvement analysis, or advisor referral prompts mentoring outreach

UC Davis Exit Survey
Diagnose motivation to inform attrition analysis

Reactive Engagement Monitoring
Transcript requests analyzed to identify potential transfer risks—students connected with faculty mentor

Matriculation
Transfer
Graduation

Mentoring Rising-Risk Student Groups

Summary of Key Insights

1. Most institutions have abundant programming available for first-year students, but the majority of resources are aimed at either students in need of academic support or high flyer / honors students.

2. Target faculty mentoring programs at students who lack a strong connection to campus. While many unengaged students persist for one or two years, they frequently stop out or transfer later on in their career.

3. Ensure that mentors are equipped with background information about student mentees and guides on critical topics to address prior to meetings.

4. Evaluate students’ likelihood to transfer upon matriculation (proactively) and in the event of transcript requests (reactively), and connect them with faculty mentors to discuss co-curricular opportunities.

Source: Delta Cost Project “Measuring the Costs of Attrition”; National Clearinghouse Transfer and Mobility Report; EAB interviews and analysis.
1. The Student Success Silo Problem

2. Six Roles for Faculty in Student Success

3. Coda: Sustaining Momentum Through Structured Accountability and Incentives

Avoiding Pitfalls in Incentive Design

Adjusted KPIs Allow for Fair and Effective Assessment

**Anticipate and Counteract Perverse Incentives**

- "We'll fight over students if we take retention too seriously"
  - Units not penalized when students are retained or graduate at the institution

- "Incentivizing greater retention means inflating grades"
  - Create and monitor quality KPIs to prevent exploitation

- "We can't be held accountable for early attrition and undecided students"
  - Incentivize units to improve "native junior" graduation rate

**Evaluate Units and Individuals Based on Controllable Outcomes**

- "External factors often cause spikes in the data—we can't control that"
  - Use rolling 3-year averages to compensate for outlier trends

- "How can I move the dial on an institution-wide metric?"
  - Measure and reward concrete activities that contribute to institutional success

- "I have different students and a different mission than other units"
  - Allow for limited customization in metric design and weight

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
**Practice #15: Leadership Scorecards**

**Starting at the Top**

Public Performance Reports Set the Stage for Organization-Wide Action

### President’s Scorecard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imperative</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Success</td>
<td>Degree Attainment</td>
<td>Degrees Conferred</td>
<td>5 = 2,400; 75%; 44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>Retention Rate</td>
<td>4 = 2,350, 74%; 43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td>6-Year Grad Rate</td>
<td>3 = 2,300, 73%; 42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = 2,250, 72.5%; 41.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 = 2,150, 72%; 41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Provost’s Scorecard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imperative</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Success</td>
<td>FY Retention</td>
<td>Retention Rate</td>
<td>5 = 77%; 61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2–3rd year Progression</td>
<td>30 SCH, 60 SCH</td>
<td>4 = 76%; 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = 75%; 59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = 74%; 58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 = 73%; 57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Vice President of Enrollment Management’s Scorecard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imperative</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Success</td>
<td>FY Retention</td>
<td>Retention Rate</td>
<td>5 = above 12,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2–3rd year Progress</td>
<td>30 SCH, 60 SCH</td>
<td>4 = 12,600-12,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = 12,450-12,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = 12,200-12,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 = below 12,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Administrative Unit Director’s Scorecard

**Practice #16: Performance-Based Bonus Funding**

**Signaling Expectations to Deans**

Decentralized Institutions Exploring Outcome-Based Incentives for Units

---

**Bonus Pool**
- $5M in funding from provost will go to colleges with improved outcomes and plans for retention and graduation efforts

**Performance-Based Funding**
- New budget model will incentivize 4-year graduation rate improvements as well as credit hours and majors.

---

**Accelerating Distributed Investment**

1. Ensure that goals and investments are aligned with central strategy
2. Provide a venue for sharing best practices among leaders
3. Require formal college and/or unit-level improvement plans

---

**Annual Review**
- Deans present yearly progress on retention, graduation rates, and re-enrollment efforts by college and department
- Review hearings are tied to annual budgeting process and impact funding decisions
- President awards $250,000 for college-level programming and $25,000 to most improved department

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Creating Departmental Accountability

Mission-Adjusted Performance Bonuses Push Units to Improve

### Strategic Accountability Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Student Success Metric</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Expected</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>Student Credit Hours lost to DFW</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student success metrics** include both outcomes and unit programs/investments. **Metric weight adjusted** according to unit characteristics (Philosophy judged less on internships placements).

**Negotiated by chair, dean, and provost to avoid unjustified alterations to formula.**

**Department performance evaluated across 18 strategic priorities, including:**

**High-Impact Practices**

1. Internships
2. Intercultural immersion
3. Freshmen degree plans
4. Advisee satisfaction

**Student Progression**

1. Credit hours lost to DFW
2. Midterm grade reports
3. 30 credits first year
4. 60 credits first two years

### Measurement Spurs Grassroots Innovation

Departments Quick to React to Now-Visible Performance Gaps

1. **Local Curricular Reforms**

   **Aligning pre-requisites with local community colleges:** Biology department adjusted introductory curriculum to better suit transfer students

   **Revitalizing first-year instruction:** Low-enrollment science programs shifted from “weeding freshmen out” to more engaged pedagogy

2. **Greater Investment in Student Support**

   **Increasing instructional support for at-risk groups:** Psychology department added supplemental instruction to address noticeable achievement gap

   **Requiring four-year degree plans:** Share of all first-year students with complete degree plans grew 45% in first two years of assessment

3. **Lasting Cultural Change**

   **Clarifying each unit’s role in contributing to institutional performance goals:** Unprecedented awareness of how the actions of each department add up to ultimate success or failure

   **Preempting performance-based funding:** Faculty, staff, and unit leaders acclimated to culture of evaluation and focused on continuous improvement, without top-down system dictate

**Source:** EAB interviews and analysis.
Summary of Key Insights

1. Start by establishing institution-wide student success goals and assigning specific performance targets for academic leaders.

2. Correct for differences among units by allowing (limited) flexibility in the relative weight of metrics and by focusing incentives on each unit’s independent performance against targets.

3. Hold academic departments accountable for program-level high-impact practices and student progression to graduation, measuring each against targets set based on prior performance.

4. Require student success program leaders to establish measurable outcomes, align objectives with institutional priorities, and assess progress against goals on an annual basis.

Engaging the Academy to Drive Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Curriculum</th>
<th>Guiding Student Choice</th>
<th>Changing the Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creating Support Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td><strong>Guiding Student Choice</strong></td>
<td><strong>Changing the Culture</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Milestone-based degree plans</td>
<td>• Degree scenario planning tools</td>
<td>• Redesign high-failure courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Early academic alerts</td>
<td>• Meta-majors and exploratory tracks</td>
<td>• Remove curricular barriers to completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Co-Curricular Experiences</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Target mentoring at rising-risk students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Integrated career advising</td>
<td>• Co-curricular major maps</td>
<td>• Promote best-fit major selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• First year experience programs</td>
<td>• Structured engagement policies</td>
<td>• Revise academic policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administrative Services</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Single-step referral process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Financial distress monitoring</td>
<td>• One-stop support portals</td>
<td>• Support evolving advising models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Retention policy committee</td>
<td>• Status alert notifications</td>
<td>• Utilize early warning systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Support</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Professional intake advising</td>
<td>• Multi-term registration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Intervention tracking system</td>
<td>• Automated withdrawal advising</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hardwiring Student Success

Promoting Student Self-Direction

Defining the Faculty Role