NSSR 2021 LIVE

Nov. 2-5, 2021

The National Symposium on Student Retention

HOSTED BY THE CONSORTIUM FOR STUDENT RETENTION DATA EXCHANGE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA®
START PLANNING NOW to present at next year’s Symposium. The eight-month process begins with an abstract proposal submission. Authors of accepted paper and panel abstracts are invited to submit a paper for peer review. Papers that score sufficiently high in this process are accepted for presentation at the Symposium and publication in the Proceedings.

The Call For Proposals Opens In January

For more information, contact us by calling (405) 325-2158 or email csrde@ou.edu. Full details on the papers, speakers, and topics of the symposium will be posted as they are confirmed on our website: https://csrde.ou.edu/

Fall 2022

Location to be Announced
The 17th Annual
National Symposium on
Student Retention
2021

Hosted by the
Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange at
the University of Oklahoma
Dear NSSR 2021 LIVE Participant,

On behalf of the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE) at The University of Oklahoma, thank you for joining us for our virtual conference, NSSR 2021 LIVE! This is our 17th year to host the Symposium, and we’re glad you are participating with us.

NSSR 2021 LIVE offers participants opportunities to hear the latest evidence-based research on post-secondary retention and graduation and network with a diverse group of colleagues about strategies that help their students succeed.

To benefit fully in the conference, we recommend that you set your calendar to Out of Office, turn off your email, participate in group or individual chats, and turn on your video camera during sessions. We have scheduled 45 minutes between sessions to give you many opportunities to engage with a diverse group of professionals using the networking/chat feature.

Papers presented at the symposium have been through an extensive peer-review process. Thank you to each of our presenters and reviewers for your contribution this year. Each NSSR 2021 LIVE participant has access to the Proceedings of the 17th Annual National Symposium on Student Retention on the conference website. This resource contains all the peer-reviewed papers, as well as abstracts for tutorials, posters, facilitated discussions, coffee talks, and the keynote address. We hope you enjoy reading the papers.

All sessions, except posters, will be presented live and will be recorded. You will have access to all materials on the conference platform through November 2022, including recordings, posters, exhibitor/sponsor information, Proceedings, and more.

The NSSR 2021 LIVE would not be possible without the support of Dr. Belinda Biscoe, Senior Associate Vice President for Outreach/College of Continuing Education. In addition, I appreciate the hard work of the CSRDE staff and other University of Oklahoma Outreach staff members, as well as our Board of Advisors. Please see the information in the front of the program to read more about our dedicated group.

Finally, many thanks to our sponsors and exhibitors who help support the conference. Their participation is crucial to the success of the Symposium each year. Please be sure to visit the Exhibitor/Sponsor Gallery to see how they can help with your student success efforts.

Enjoy your week!

All the best,

Sandra Whalen
Director, CSRDE
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All NSSR 2021 LIVE sessions will be presented live and recorded.

Poster and exhibitor/sponsor gallery videos were pre-recorded.

All videos will be available on-demand through November 2022 on the conference website.

Hosted by the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange at the University of Oklahoma®
CSRDE Staff

The Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE) at the University of Oklahoma hosts the National Symposium on Student Retention. Our staff is small but we all multi-task in order to provide top-notch service.

We look forward to helping with any questions you might have during the Symposium. For assistance and information after the conference, please email us at csrde@ou.edu, call us at (405) 325-2158 or check out our website at csrde.ou.edu.

Thank you to our NSSR 2021 LIVE tech assistants (Tim Bennett, Guimy Castor, Blake Cannon, Richard Feinberg, and Laurie Smith).

CSRDE Board of Advisors

Many thanks to our advisors, who offer support and guidance throughout the year and are serving as moderators during NSSR 2021 LIVE.

Blake Cannon
Director of Institutional Research
Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas

Julie P. Noble
Research Consultant

Mardy T. Eimers
Vice Provost for Institutional Research & Quality Improvement
University of Missouri

DeLaine Priest
Associate Vice Provost for Student Success and Advising
University of Central Florida

Ronald Huesman, Jr.
Director of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Policy Analysis
University of Minnesota

Reginald Ross
Vice President for Enrollment Management
William Paterson University

Glenn James
Higher Education Consultant

Jessica Shedd
Assistant Provost for Assessment & Institutional Research
Tulane University
CSRDE is a Data Sharing Consortium

The Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE) provides actionable retention and graduation data to help institutions respond to internal and external requests for accountability measures. Our reports are made available exclusively to participating institutions together with access to online peer data. Members also receive access to our Knowledgebase and most of the benefits of membership extend to the entire institution.

In addition, all members receive discounts on our electronic publication, Building Bridges for Student Success: A Sourcebook for Colleges and Universities, on registration for the National Symposium on Student Retention and for webinars.

JOIN US FOR WEBINAR WEDNESDAYS

CSRDE members and non-members are all invited to participate in this easy, cost-effective way to stay current. All webinars take place on Wednesdays from 1:00 – 2:00 pm Central Time.

Twelve presentations are selected from the top rated sessions at our National Symposium on Student Retention each year for live presentation. Each webinar registration includes five weeks of access to the recorded podcast.

ABSTRACTS for each presentation may be found on our website at csrde.ou.edu.

WEBINAR SCHEDULE

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<td>Underrepresented College Students' Usage and Perception of Campus Retention and Student Services Efforts</td>
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<td>Feb. 2, 2022</td>
<td>Master's Student Degree Completion: A Statistical Analysis of Master's Student Retention, Graduation Rates, and Time to Degree</td>
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<td>Crafting a Culture for Student Success</td>
<td>Case Willoughby, Joshua Novak, Sharla Anke, Belinda Richardson, &amp; Amy Pignatore of Butler County Community College</td>
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<td>Mar. 9, 2022</td>
<td>Redefining Campus Partnerships to Support Student Success</td>
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# PERSONAL AGENDA

**ALL TIMES ARE CENTRAL STANDARD**

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## WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3

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<td>11:45-4:15</td>
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## FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5

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## SESSION TRACK ICON KEY

As you read the schedule, you will notice that each session title will be followed by one or more symbols representing the tracks covered in that session.

- 🌐 Academic Advising
- 🏃‍♂️ Beyond the First Year Retention
- 📘 Data, Technology, & Methods
- 🎓 Faculty Engagement
- 🎓 First-Year Student Success
- 📚 Graduate Student Retention
- 🌐 Online and Distance Students
- 🎓 Programs & Initiatives
- 🎓 Retention & Special Populations
- 🏰 Theoretical Models of Student Retention & Success
- 🏀 Transfers & Retention
- ✨ Vendor Presentation
Keynote Address: Does Any of This Really Matter?: Truth, Retention, and Higher Ed in the COVID Era

Michael J. Sorrell, Paul Quinn College

We are living through one of the most historically significant periods in American history. Each day we are forced to reckon with not just our own mortality, but with the understanding that life as we once knew it is over. What does this mean for higher education? What does this mean for our students? How do we continue to keep our students engaged when the traditional college experience may never return? Paul Quinn College President Dr. Michael J. Sorrell will grapple with these questions and more during this presentation.

Confronting Our Grades: A Reading Program Takes a Hard Look at Its Grades

Grant J. Matthews, Lane Community College
Rita Ferriter, Moraine Valley Community College
Susan Godwin, Moraine Valley Community College
Jennifer Lee-Good, Moraine Valley Community College
Michael Morsches, Moraine Valley Community College

Like most developmental reading programs, the Developmental Education reading faculty members at Moraine Valley Community College have worked long and hard to develop transitional skills for students who place into reading/study skills courses. Seven years ago, the reading faculty members decided to review the grade patterns and distributions of their students to improve instruction. That initial analysis was eye-opening when faculty members discovered that there was a severe compression of passing grades—most of the successful students received grades of C, with only 4% receiving grades of A. The program decided to work on decompressing these successful grades without challenging the threshold between C and D students. The subsequent results were dramatic as faculty members shifted the distribution of passing grades and raised the overall course success rates by more than 45%. The developmental reading program has now changed focus to individual grade patterns and the actual meaning of the grades faculty members give. What happens to the students who earn A’s, B’s, and C’s when they move on and are at the next level? This paper will outline the faculty members’ general grade analysis as well as their individual explorations of the grades they give and the future success those grades can predict.

Creating a Culture of Accountability and Ownership for Student Success and Completion

Jason Terry, Utah Valley University
David Connelly, Utah Valley University
Michelle Kearns, Utah Valley University

As the saying goes, “not a single snowflake thought itself responsible after the avalanche”. This adage rings especially true within higher education where groups, often working in silos, are unable or unwilling to see how their individual efforts (or lack thereof) contribute to a larger campus phenomenon. Without a clear vision of accountability, progress inevitably slows, opportunities are missed, and student needs are left unmet. At Utah Valley University, creating a campus-wide culture of ownership for student success and completion has not come easily. Yet significant progress has been made. Over the space of just a few years, UVU has seen an incredible 12-percentage point increase in
student retention as well as a nine-percentage point increase in its Outcome Measure rates. This progress has come through successful efforts to disseminate information via completion dashboards, innovative collaborations from unlikely groups, strategic planning from senior leadership, and a fair share of setbacks. Please join us as we discuss Utah Valley University’s efforts and frustrations in creating a culture of ownership for student success and completion. Utah Valley University is a public (40,000+), open-admission, dual-mission university.

Audience: Intermediate; Practitioners; Administrators; Large Colleges & Universities
Keywords: accountability; assessment; student success; completion; retention; collaboration

First-Generation Students’ Academic Success: What Factors Contribute to Their Graduation Rate?

Paper

Yangzi Mao, Stevens Institute of Technology
Faxian Yang, University of South Carolina
Minghui Wang, Stevens Institute of Technology

Over half of the student population in the United States can be defined as first generation. Their six-year graduation rates are significantly lower at 56% compared to 74% for non-first-generation students. This is especially significant considering the increasing degree qualifications required across all levels in the vastly competitive workforce today, as well as the time and financial commitments the entire college experience can consume, no matter whether it results in a degree or not. There are a variety of contributing explanations for the lower graduation rates for first-generation students, whether they be socioeconomic, demographic, or academic in nature. This study sought to explore and identify the variables that impacted the graduation rate of first-generation students, specifically at a research university using the Fall 2014 entering cohort. Significant factors were identified using logistic regression and other statistical methods to confirm and examine the results. Among the factors identified, students' academic performance played the most important role. Since this study was related to indicators of student success, study results could assist senior administration with finding ways to support students who are at higher risk to not graduate as early as the beginning of their junior year.

Audience: Intermediate; Administrators; Two-Year Institutions; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Practitioners; Researchers; Faculty
Keywords: graduation rate; first-generation; persistence; retention rate

Q&A With Dr. Sorrell

Presentation

Michael Sorrell, Paul Quinn College

This session is available for participants who would like to continue the conversation from the keynote address with Dr. Michael Sorrell.

Infusing Technology Into a High Touch Success Model

Paper

Will Miller, Jacksonville University
Rob Berwick, Jacksonville University

A campus with an undergraduate experience rich in the traditional liberal arts, over the past eighteen months, Jacksonville University has worked to supplement a high touch model of advising and student success with new
technologies and partners to help ensure maximum potential for students to succeed. While ownership of student success had been disbursed historically, efforts began by creating a student success taskforce, which brought together two dozen institutional leaders that represent key areas considered in holistic student success and charging it with helping to ensure that “only students who we could envision retaining, graduating, and thriving were offered admittance to our campus.” The taskforce continued to maintain the importance of high touch interactions but also quickly saw the need for supplemental tools. As a result, just as COVID caused new challenges for student success, the campus rolled out a defined case management system to enhance communication, a proactive and reactive artificial intelligence-based textbot for regular check-ins and conversations, and a partnership to help our stop out students return and thrive. This was coupled with making student success data more accessible to the campus community. Technology has been integrated to augment the essential interpersonal relationships already on campus.

**Audience:** Intermediate; Administrators; Two-Year Institutions; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Practitioners; Faculty

**Keywords:** retention; student success; early alert; case management; predictive analytics; data visualization

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**Innovative Applications of Retention Intelligence to Impact Student Success**

*Vendor Presentation*

Matt Boisvert, Pharos Resources

Viva Gore, Pharos Resources

Join us as we discuss the institutional value of improving student success and increasing retention! This session will equip you to use novel data points to clearly identify your most at-risk students and then create pathways to lead those students to graduation. We will discuss both leading and lagging indicators of student success, methods to gather and analyze information on student experiences, and how to use data to uncover student perspectives in process decisions.
The retention rate for students seeking advanced degrees has been a concern for many institutions since graduate degrees were offered. Therefore, it is not surprising that COVID-19 has presented many challenges to higher education institutions across the country on how best to support graduate students and more specifically, doctoral degree-seeking students. For even the most disciplined students, the disruption caused by the pandemic has presented insurmountable financial, social, and mental health barriers that have negatively impacted progress and time to degree. During this facilitated discussion, attendees will identify the challenges PhD students are facing during this unprecedented time in our history. Strategies to overcome these challenges will be discussed along with resources that can be made available.

**Audience:** Intermediate; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Practitioners; Researchers; Faculty

**Keywords:** graduate students; retention; online education

After a short two and a half years of partnership with Montclair State University, the outcomes speak for themselves. Even through the pandemic, not only has student engagement grown each year, but Montclair State has leveraged Suitable and our data to improve student retention while also decreasing the rate of course withdrawal. What started as a pilot with first-year students, has rapidly transformed into an enterprise mission for student success; from the Provost's office to the Dean's of individual academic colleges. All with the help of the experts at Suitable and our groundbreaking web and mobile app.

**Audience:** Introductory; Large Colleges & Universities

**Keywords:** student success; student satisfaction; academic advising; adult learners; online learning
Creating Real-Time Assessment Performance Indicators in Retention Workflows

Facilitated Discussion

Neva Lozada, Kean University
Paul Croft, Formerly of Kean University

This collaborative session will engage participants in identifying and constructing new metrics of student success as related to student support workflows and intervention through the ongoing assessment of retention efforts at their own institutions. The session will begin with an introduction of the facilitators’ experience implementing proactive, non-traditional retention strategies at a four-year public university and how, through the assessment of such strategies and associated workflows, new indicators of student persistence are revealed through real-time predictive modeling. A focus will be placed on how these initiatives can be strategically implemented through collaborative campus partnerships and regularly assessed for continuous improvement to more easily identify who our students are and what we need to do as an institution to help them succeed. Thus, the performance of support structures, such as these, in a holistic sense, in addition to traditional student performance indicators, must be considered when defining key metrics and Key Performance Indicators of institutional processes. Participants will take part in an interactive discussion of assessment of retention initiatives and student support structures, drawing from their own experiences, and these will help in constructing the Key Performance Indicators.

Audience: Intermediate; Administrators; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Practitioners; Researchers
Keywords: retention; workflows; assessment; metrics; ROI
University Support Status: Holistic Student Success Support in Lieu of Punitive Exclusionary Practices

Melissa Young, Columbus State University
Kelly Koch, Columbus State University
Patrick McHenry, Columbus State University

Prior to Fall 2020, Columbus State University’s probation and exclusion policy, while a common practice in higher education, was punitive in nature. Students whose institutional GPA fell under a 2.0 were placed on academic probation, which escalated to a one-term exclusion for students whose GPAs remained below 2.0. However, only about 50% of students returned to the university after dismissal. Furthermore, data revealed that only 2% of students placed on exclusion graduated within six years. Therefore, we redesigned our policies and developed a new approach, University Support Status (USS), eliminating exclusion and probation. Instead, we are focused on retaining students by supporting them as they work toward good academic standing and graduation. USS students complete an intake assessment, which identifies their individual needs. After the assessment has been completed, students meet with dedicated advisors, peer coaches/mentors, access recommended workshops (time management, study skills, etc.), and are connected to other campus support services. Instead of dismissing students and leaving them to face a meaningless semester away from campus, we now support them in their time of need, arming them with the tools for success.

Audience: Intermediate; Administrators; Two-Year Institutions; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Practitioners; Researchers; Faculty

Keywords: student success; retention; graduation; probation; exclusion; advising
The Student Experience: Embedding Advising, Experiential Learning, and Career Engagement

Coffee Talk

Jennifer Murphy, Ohio University

Ohio University re-conceptualized the student experience by offering individualized curricular and co-curricular graduation plans for every student, with a clear timeline for completion. This new initiative offers individualized support structures for every student with graduation plans designed to be customized by academic program and personalized to the student so their pathway is clear. From the start of their first semester, students meet with a professional advisor, while also immersed in deep, meaningful experiences that will help them explore, reflect, and engage in the career exploration process. These three distinct areas of advising, career, and experiential learning are embedded throughout their undergraduate journey, and redefining the student experience at Ohio University. The conversation will focus on innovative approaches and best practices, as many institutions are re-imagining the student experience.

Wellness and Wellbeing: Who Nurtures the Nurturers?

Coffee Talk

April Fugett, Marshall University

Over the last 18 months, universities and colleges have seen an ever-growing population of struggling students. Anxiety and depression rates are on the rise, and phrases like “zoom fatigue” seem to capture a general exhaustion with virtual environments and technology. These shifts have meant long days and the need to craft new approaches during an ever-changing pandemic landscape for those on the forefront of student success. Faculty, counselors, advisors, and administrators are attempting to navigate this shifting environment while remembering that our students are humans who need care, protection, advice, and help, even while experiencing the same stressors as our students. It seems inevitable that those most responsible for the care of our students are now feeling exhausted and burnt-out, especially while navigating a world of vaccines and mask mandates. While decision-fatigue alone might be enough of a roadblock to derail years of student success work and progress, how can we protect and support each other while also remaining present for our students? This coffee talk discussion will focus on the wellness and wellbeing of our students, our colleagues, and ourselves.

What Good Has Come Out of the Pandemic?

Coffee Talk

Joanne Goldwater, St. Mary’s College of Maryland

Many institutions were creative and eliminated barriers for students (late fees for bill payments, more flexible student services, hybrid teaching/learning, review of policies leading to subsequent changes, etc.). These were barriers that people realized weren’t serving any use and don’t need to be reimplemented. On the personal side, many people were forced to work from home and made other changes in their lives that ended up working well for them. They are now realizing what is important to them and intend to try to make on-going changes to continue this level of self-care. What positive changes have you and/or your institution made? What changes would you like to make? Let’s find the silver lining together. Join us to listen to and share success stories and stories of creativity and resilience.
Hear our Call: First-Generation Student-Centered Success Initiatives

Facilitated Discussion

Marsha Besong, Rutgers University

First-generation students who enter college don't always possess the cultural capital necessary to negotiate and achieve success in higher education settings. To assist students in their transition to college and throughout their collegiate career, the first-generation programs cultivate safe spaces, academic support, peer engagement, and inclusive communities so that students feel as if they belong and develop social and cultural capital. During the facilitated discussion, the presenter will discuss how she created student-centered first-generation initiatives considering their multi-faceted identities based in the peer-reviewed literature, including Kuh's high-impact practices, and provide tools to replicate the programs. The presentation will focus on 1) data drawn from a survey of first-generation students to learn about their lived academic experiences during admission and throughout their collegiate experience and corresponding literature; 2) the first-generation initiative at Rutgers-Camden, including the student ambassador program, student organization, peer mentoring, Honor Society, interest groups, and advisory board, and recruitment strategies; and 3) how to replicate and implement similar programs at your institution. The session will include opportunities to discuss first-generation student identities and lived experiences; first-generation programs on your campus; and best practices for communication and collaboration with academic affairs and executive leadership to develop buy-in.

Audience: Introductory; Administrators; Two-Year Institutions; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Practitioners; Researchers

Keywords: student success; 1st-gen programs; student-centered

How Family Engagement Increases Student Success: Study Results From University of Alabama at Birmingham

Vendor Presentation

Dave Becker, CampusESP
Meredith Kahl, University of Alabama-Birmingham

In August 2019, the University of Alabama at Birmingham implemented CampusESP, a family engagement platform that enhances family communication and access to student records. The platform provides automated newsletters, personalized campus updates, and alerts about student academic and financial records. After one year, UAB did an exploratory study on the relationship between family engagement and student success for first-year students entering in the Fall of 2019. The study compared family engagement indicators with demographic data and retention outcomes, using descriptive statistics, correlational analyses, sample tests, and logistic regression. Results showed that family engagement was a statistically significant indicator of student success. As family engagement levels increased, so did cumulative GPA and retention. In fact, for every one-point increase in Total Family Engagement (a variable score based on engagement), the student was 1.3x more likely to be retained. This session covers this study’s outcomes and insights in more detail. It also highlights how institutions can leverage data such as family email open rate and click rate as predictors of student likelihood to persist. Most importantly, this session shares tips on how to develop a comprehensive family engagement strategy that supports student success, based on demonstrated results at UAB.
Identification of At-Risk Students Using Pre-enrollment Data

Laura M. Little, Johnson College

Graduation rates at a two-year, private, nonprofit career and technical college decreased from 73% to 61% between 2016 and 2018. To reverse this trend, a proactive approach to student support was needed to help at-risk students before they sit in their first class. The purpose of this ex post facto data study was to identify student characteristics associated with low graduation rates through cost-effective methods of statistical analysis. Student data (n=1,246) was used to detect significant relationships between 16 independent variables and graduation. Regression analysis identified six of these variables as being predictive of graduation. Of particular interest are the variables that were not found to be predictive of graduation despite previous research findings to the contrary: socioeconomic status, gender, and first-generation status. The study also revealed several gaps in data collection at the college under study which reduced the number of variables available for incorporation into the model. Recommendations for future research include investigating the generalizability of AppDays and the viability of using SAT/ACT participation as an indicator of ambition.

Audience: Intermediate; Administrators; Two-Year Institutions; Small Colleges & Universities

Keywords: predictive model; student success; pre-enrollment data; at-risk students
A Noncognitive Assessment Roadmap to College Student Success

Becky Bobek, ACT
Jason Way, ACT
Maria Ofelia Z. San Pedro, ACT

There is a growing focus on the use of noncognitive assessments to measure student progress and success in higher education. Research shows that noncognitive factors predict important postsecondary outcomes related to enrollment, retention, persistence, satisfaction, course grades, and graduation. In this paper, we describe these factors and their relationship with student success. The characteristics of noncognitive measures are also discussed, including common methods for measuring noncognitive factors, the importance of context when selecting or developing measures, and relevant data quality and interpretation considerations when using noncognitive assessments. These measures can be used to support key functions in colleges and universities such as identifying at-risk students, supporting student learning, academic and career advising, and evaluating program effectiveness. As next-generation assessment in higher education advances, technology-enhanced learning and big data support the use of noncognitive information through the implementation of data mining, learning analytics, and predictive analytics methods and tools. These advancements also bring with them challenges related to the accurate interpretation of results, data quality, and data privacy.

Audience: Introductory; Administrators; Two-Year Institutions; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Practitioners; Researchers; Faculty

Keywords: noncognitive; assessment; student success; measures; outcomes

Creating the Student Performance Metrics Dashboard (Advisor Assessment)

Jason Terry, Utah Valley University
Mark Leamy, Utah Valley University
Wade Oliver, Utah Valley University

Assessment can be challenging. Assessing an area that is highly qualitative, such as academic advising, can be even more challenging. Yet without accurate assessments progress is slowed, accountability is limited, and ultimately student needs are left unmet. At Utah Valley quantitative assessment of academic advising has come in the form of the Student Performance Metrics dashboard. This dashboard is a “homegrown” resource that highlights key advising performance metrics such as the percentage of students who persist to the next semester, have met their math and English requirement, enrollment by course benchmarks (<9, 12, and 15 credits), and other criteria all organized by academic advisor. In addition, this dashboard also highlights the amount, type, and average duration of contact the advisor is having with their caseload. This presentation will discuss the need for and the process of creating an advisor dashboard, the political considerations that took place, and the impact it has had on academic advising. Implementing a dashboard of this nature has not been easy, yet the results have been encouraging. Please join with us as we discuss the Student Performance Metrics Dashboard. Utah Valley University is a large (40,000 +) open-enrollment public university.

Audience: Intermediate; Two-Year Institutions; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities

Keywords: advising; dashboard; assessment; retention; completion
Data-Driven and Student-Centered: Strong Gains in First-Year Retention With the Introduction of a Warning Semester

Sarah Kyte, University of Arizona
Laura Andrews, University of Arizona
Jen Ludwig, University of Arizona
Christine Salvesen, University of Arizona

Seemingly neutral academic policies can have major consequences for student success. When institutional research revealed that the existing academic eligibility policy was having an outsized and negative impact on the persistence of first-generation and minoritized first-time students, The University of Arizona decided to introduce a warning semester. Rather than placing students directly onto academic probation, we sought to offer a clearer, more intentional policy and to use the warning semester as an opportunity to connect students with supports and resources to help them thrive in college. Also, by adopting principles of regression discontinuity designs—which are ideally suited to observing the impact of policies featuring a cutoff—we estimated that introducing a warning semester could lift retention among first-time students by as much as two percentage points. Indeed, we observed a one percentage point gain in retention among the first cohort of students under the new policy. In this paper, we review the institutional and scholarly research motivating a revised academic eligibility policy as well as the multifaceted assessment that drew on institutional, programmatic, and qualitative data to identify how it improved the student experience.

Audience: Intermediate; Administrators; Large Colleges & Universities; Researchers
Keywords: institutional research; policy; successful initiatives; academic eligibility; probation; student retention

Creating a Dashboard to Identify and Track At-Risk Students for Weekly Intervention and Continued Student Success

Hajara Mahmood, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
Donna Ferrell, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
Alex Hall, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

In collaboration with the University’s Information Technology department, a team within the College of Arts and Sciences developed a dashboard to help identify at-risk student populations using real-time data. The dashboard presented performance indicators such as current course score, course inactivity, and student details in a spreadsheet. This data was used by the college Educational Support Specialist Advisor and college faculty to perform weekly intervention in entry-level STEM courses in the Spring 2021 semester. Intervention included specific communication sent out to at-risk students to get back on track by connecting them to tutoring, evening supplemental instruction sessions, supplemental resources, and faculty office hours. To assess if weekly monitoring and academic advising had a meaningful positive impact on student performance, a quasi-experiment with non-equivalent comparison groups was performed to compare the average final exam score and failure rates for an entry-level physics course for the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters. The experiment revealed that average final exam scores significantly improved (15.82, p < 0.05) in the Spring 2021 term (63.15 ± 27.81, n=425) when compared to the Fall 2020 term (47.33 ± 30.57, n=132) and the proportion of students receiving failing grades was reduced from 0.46 to 0.16.

Audience: Introductory; Administrators; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Practitioners; Researchers; Faculty
Keywords: dashboard; weekly intervention; student success
Exploring Empathy and Student Retention: A Review of the Literature

Facilitated Discussion

Laura McCormick, Walden University

A review of the literature on empathy and higher education indicates that empathy in the instructor-student relationship influences student retention. With many brick-and-mortar universities moving to online courses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it became necessary for faculty to quickly learn how to navigate the online classroom and effectively respond to student stress and anxiety. According to the literature, when students feel heard and understood by their instructors, they experience lower levels of stress and anxiety and increased resilience as it relates to persistence in online education. Cognitive empathy, or the ability to view a problem from the student’s perspective, appears to be particularly important for addressing student concerns while maintaining academic standards and professionalism. The purpose of this discussion will be to provide an opportunity for faculty from both online and brick-and-mortar universities to explore the influence of empathy in the instructor-student relationship on student retention and to generate ideas for how to use empathy with the intent of creating positive learning experiences that lead to student success.

Audience: Introductory; Faculty
Keywords: empathy; instructor-student relationship; resiliency; retention

Fostering Institutional Change in Advising in Support of Student Retention

Paper

Kristen Nakamura Wallitsch, Bellarmine University
James D. Breslin, Bellarmine University
Lory L. King, Bellarmine University

Our institutional data was clear: academic advising was poorly understood, its reputation was lacking, and there was no clear impact on student retention. This paper presents the evolution of an advising model at a four-year, private, liberal arts institution from inception to maturity. In the new advising structure, all first-year students and many second-year students were assigned to a professional academic advisor. Students experience a proactive, holistic, and learner-centered approach aligned with the university mission and the strategic goal to create a transformative experience for all students. Once the model was established and ties to retention and persistence were evident in the data and assessment, we continued to advance the model through continual improvement and expanding opportunities. We provided a mandatory training and development program for all professional advisors and extended training opportunities to faculty advisors. Our goal was to create a culture of academic advising that empowers students to take ownership of their educational experiences and persist to graduation. In this paper, we will share our experiences, discuss how we overcame challenges, and share the evidence we used to demonstrate success, which goes beyond satisfaction to illustrating the impact and value of academic advising.

Audience: Intermediate; Small Colleges & Universities
Keywords: student success; academic advising; retention; assessment

Remove Barriers & Improve Student Outcomes With Engaging Student Support at Scale

Vendor Presentation

Jason Smith, Blackboard
Lisa Hansen, Blackboard

A recent study of a diverse student population revealed students’ mixed perspectives regarding support provided by their institutions throughout the pandemic and how that might impact their ability to persist.
Student support has become increasingly important for students, with 65% indicating that support services are more important to them now than before the pandemic. But what happens when students can't access the resources they need to overcome obstacles on their learning journey? With nearly 80% of at-risk students believing their institution might be able to offer the support they need to get back on track and persist, retention leaders should examine strategies for virtual support, retention outreach, and inbound engagement. This session will review complementary strategies in managing student support at scale to positively impact student retention and investigate how institutions have successfully implemented these strategies. Session takeaways include uncover student perceptions of support services provided by their institutions and identify the gaps in support services that have emerged during the pandemic; learn ways to identify and respond to at-risk students with actionable takeaways through example outreach strategies and campaigns; and identify key opportunities for institutions to positively impact student engagement and retention through a personalized, proactive student support strategy.

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Provide personalized student support and increase student retention at scale through integrated, data-driven experiences
A Learning Strategy Seminar's Impact on Academic Performance and Persistence

Poster

Christie Soltys, Quinnipiac University
Quinton Swan, Quinnipiac University

The learning objectives of this one-credit Learning Strategy Seminar course aim to help students become self-regulated learners by discussing evidence-based learning strategies that aid in metacognitive awareness and self-efficacy. To measure these outcomes, a pre- and post-survey was distributed to students in the course, students participated in weekly intentional reflections designed to show growth, and students’ GPAs were collected. The quantitative and qualitative data collected over the course of multiple semesters was analyzed in an effort to explore the impact of the course on student academic performance (GPA) and overall success at the university (persistence). The analysis will also explore if students who self-selected into the course achieved the same outcomes as those who were placed into the course by advisors as a remedial fix.

Audience: Administrators; Two-Year Institutions; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Practitioners; Researchers; Faculty

Keywords: Learning Strategy Seminar; persistence; academic performance; self-efficacy; metacognition

Cheating During Remote Courses: What Can be Done About it?

Poster

Jesse Edwards, Florida A&M University

My chemistry courses, all of which are remote—ranging from graduate chemistry courses through General Chemistry lectures for majors to Chemistry for Non-Science majors and their accompanying labs—are all targets for cheaters; academic honesty is a concern. How do I address it in such a wide variety of courses with different class sizes, materials being addressed, and modes of assessment being used? This work provides a preliminary review of different tactics used to insure student honesty during assessment in various chemistry courses at these various levels. The poster will present practices that help to insure academic honesty during assessment in remote large lectures and labs, and smaller graduate lecture courses. These methods include the use of Respondus Lockdown Browser and Monitoring systems, direct submission of written work and/or calculations, the use of algorithmic problem banks, and variations of problems covering the same concepts, along with varying data sets for each student in labs, handwritten exams for graduate work, presenting problems one at a time in a scrambled fashion, scrambling the answer choices, providing distractors in answer choices when possible, setting time limits on exams, and addressing the policy for cheating upfront with emphasis and in a repetitive fashion.

Audience: Faculty, Administrators

Keywords: cheating; remote course; Chemistry

Did Our Efforts Matter?: A Quantitative Analysis Measuring the Impact of Academic Support Initiatives

Poster

John Goepfrich, Quinnipiac University
Katie Landrey, Quinnipiac University
Keith Jacobsen, Quinnipiac University

Quinnipiac University is committed to achieving and maintaining a first-year retention rate of at least 90% while continuing to offer competitive undergraduate STEM programs. The Learning Commons, in its role of providing academic support services and retention-aimed interventions, has identified introductory biology as a crucial factor in student success (measuring success?). Data suggests that performance in introductory
biology coursework (a 2-part sequence) directly correlates to academic performance in future coursework, which is vital to student success. Data also suggests that performance and achievement (specifically, final grades) correlate to first-year student retention. The Learning Commons staff will be utilizing quantitative data to identify the potential impact of pre-enrollment data, curricular changes, and academic support initiatives on student performance in introductory biology. The results of this quantitative study are expected to lead to further instances of retention-focused research and the impact of academic support initiatives. This research will help The Learning Commons move from measuring inputs to measuring the outcomes of their efforts.

**Audience:** Administrators; Practitioners

**Keywords:** STEM; academic support; retention

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**Engineering Majors: Predicting First-Year Retention Utilizing Supervised Machine Learning Models**

Poster

Roseline Telfort, Louisiana State University

Low student enrollment and degree attainment and high attrition rates are major challenges in STEM education. The persistence and completion of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) students is of pressing concern in higher education. More than 50% of freshmen entering college as a STEM major either switched to a non-STEM major or dropped out of college (Chen, 2013). Colleges and universities have a constant pressure on improving student retention. One of the biggest challenges that higher education faces today is predicting the paths of students. Machine learning techniques in recent years have been applied to analyze student data to improve information processing through data mining. Data mining is a tool that universities can use to predict with high accuracy which students will return yearly and graduate. This study will present the application of several predictive analytic tools: logistic regression, classification & regression tree (C&RT), and random forest to predict and classify with high accuracy first-year retention of students who major in Engineering fields. Determining factors that influence first-year retention of students who major in Engineering provide important opportunities for better planning and development of retention strategies.

**Audience:** Administrators; Large Colleges & Universities; Practitioners; Researchers

**Keywords:** retention; engineering; STEM; predictive analytics; machine learning

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**How are Our Students Doing? Let’s Ask Them!: A Model for Self Assessment of Student Success and Support Needs**

Poster

Tabetha Adkins, West Chester University of Pennsylvania
Cheryl Neale-McFall, West Chester University of Pennsylvania

Institutions committed to student success often monitor students’ academic progress through programs like Early Alert, midterm grades, and observing network access and software utilization data. During the pandemic, student success professionals at our institution wondered how students themselves felt about their academic performance and overall experience: How were their classes going? What resources or information did they need? The result of these questions was a pilot survey deployed to undergraduates in Fall 2020 designed to prompt reflection on their academic performance, provide just-in-time information about resources that can support overall student success, and offer students the ability to request a personalized outreach based on their individual needs. Based on what was learned from that pilot, we changed the deployment strategy, revised the questions based on student feedback to include general well-being questions, and deployed the survey again in Spring 2021 when 79.2% of our undergraduate students responded. This poster will share best practices for obtaining responses from students—a challenge, as any higher education professional knows—and will demonstrate what we learned from students, what the data showed about student experience, and how we plan to utilize this practice in future semesters.
Implementation and Assessment of Two Strategic Outreach Campaigns on a Diverse Campus: Implications for Retention and Student Success

Brandy Smith, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Rebecca Smith, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

In fall of 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic where a majority of courses were delivered virtually and campus-wide cost efficiencies were well underway, two cost effective strategic outreach campaigns were initiated. The purpose of the first program, a direct call campaign, was to ensure students were aware of online Learning Support resources (e.g., Tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, and Coaching) and increase retention by increasing resource utilization. The second initiative, using a customer service perspective, aimed to increase direct communication with students from peers, ensuring questions were being answered and students felt engaged with the “remote” campus. The first initiative was supported by existing research in that outreach or “nudging,” particularly from peers, typically results in generating effective student engagement (Castleman & Page, 2015) and increased usage of resources. The second initiative added elements of peer support, which has been effective in prior research (Collier, 2017; Lindsay, 2017). This poster will discuss elements of the successful implementation of both programs, descriptive data from Fall 2020 and Spring 2021, and assessments, including usage statistics, retention rates, and resulting GPAs. Strengths as well as opportunities for improvement will be identified for both initiatives, particularly utilizing a customer service lens.

Audience: Administrators; Two-Year Institutions; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities
Keywords: retention; outreach; coronavirus impacts; nudging; peer mentors

Improving the Transfer Student Experience During COVID-19

Kate Doubler, University of Tampa
Alexandra Yanovski-Bowers, University of Tampa
Vanessa Sanchez Marquez, University of Tampa

Recent polls offer data on how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting college students, with many focusing on how the data both represents and elides issues faced by first-generation and/or low-income students. However, students who made the decision to transfer to a different institution during the pandemic have faced a unique confluence of circumstances in their postsecondary education. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the reasons why students at a private four-year institution transferred during the COVID-19 pandemic and how they believe the pandemic has affected their adjustment to a new campus. We conducted hour-long focus group sessions with transfer students and asked them questions about their decision to transfer, their adjustment to the academic and social dynamics of campus, and their opinions about how colleges can support transfer students during the pandemic. We used a thematic content analysis in order to identify recurring topics in the conversations. Our poster will highlight our findings from these focus groups and offer solutions to issues that can help other institutions better support and retain students who transferred during the pandemic.

Audience: Administrators; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Practitioners; Researchers
Keywords: transfer students; focus group study; COVID-19
Serving Underrepresented and Special Student Populations with New Strategies, Outreach Activities, and Service Models

Chun-Fang Kuo, University of Hawaii at Hilo

Universities changed to online teaching due to COVID-19, which impacted students who access services on campus. Counseling services moved from in-person to distance counseling. Our outreach programming also encountered changes due to social distancing. The changes to the service delivery were necessary to help the students who need support, especially those indigenous, underrepresented, and marginalized student populations most impacted by COVID-19. This poster will show innovative ways we utilized different approaches and models such as phone check-in, online COVID-19 support group, relaxation packages distribution, virtual relaxation station, care packages for faculty/staff, classroom Zoom outreach, Zen Gardening, and more to serve our students before and during the pandemic. The poster will also demonstrate how the different approaches, models, programming, and activities are conducted. It will include retention and graduation statistics of the students utilizing the different services, including the increase of those indigenous, underrepresented, and marginalized students utilizing our services. Future improvements and suggestions of different strategies will be provided. Lastly, we will also explore what we have learned from the changes to services due to COVID-19 that can benefit future post-pandemic services to our students.

Audience: Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Practitioners

Keywords: student success; retention; service delivery; outreach programs; special populations

Suitable

A Digital Transformation to Improve Retention and Lower Course Withdrawal Rates

Tuesday, November 2nd | 3:45pm (CT)

Featuring Montclair State University

Duane Williams
Director, Center for Leadership and Engagement

Gen Hinson
Director, Career Services, College of Science and Mathematics

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Identifying Metrics for Success for Non-Traditional Student Populations

Coffee Talk

Jessica Shedd, Tulane University

Metrics for success for traditional undergraduate student populations—such as first- to second-year retention and six-year graduation rates—are well established industry standards. However, the weaknesses in these metrics make them far from appropriate for the ever-growing number of undergraduates who are not part of these traditional cohorts. Join a discussion about developing success metrics for adult and part-time populations and working to overcome the challenges we face in doing so.

Student Success Workshops and the Virtual Format...What's Been Working?

Coffee Talk

Kristen Porter, Mercy College of Ohio

This session will offer conversation about how Student Success workshops and presentations were moved to the virtual format due to the pandemic and how it will continue. At a small, private healthcare-focused college, a program was created to focus on a student's Journey to Success throughout the entire semester. Student engagement has always been a challenge and shifting to a virtual setting allowed for more participants to easily attend. Conversation will be around what new programs colleagues have established since the pandemic began, and how and where they are going. Has there been a shift in programming back to in person? What does the future look like for engagement in Student Success programming?

Two and a Half First Years: (Re)Introducing Campus Life

Coffee Talk

Joanne Goldwater, St. Mary's College of Maryland

You've heard of the TV Show, “Two and a Half Men”? Well, most institutions are dealing with Two and a Half Years of students who are getting introduced/reintroduced to important parts of community building in college. Our current First-Year students spent their last year and a half of high school learning virtually. Most of our current Second-Year students spent their entire first year of college learning virtually or in hybrid modes, and our current Third-Year students only spent one semester of their first year of learning in-person. What have been the ramifications for these students? What will be the long-term implications for these students? What are you doing to provide support to (re)introduce them to campus life and campus traditions, empower their sense of community, and build their resilience and success in and out of the classroom? Join this session and share what you've tried and let's discuss steps we can take for the spring semester to create a strong foundation for our students and help them feel like they belong on our campuses.

A Case Study for the Successful Development and Assessment of a University-Wide Academic Recovery Program for First-Year Students

Paper

Daphne Holland, Coastal Carolina University
Deborah Conner, Coastal Carolina University
Mary Fischer, Western Carolina University
Coastal Carolina University was experiencing increasingly low retention rates for students after their first year. University leadership issued a call to action to address these alarming trends and increase first-year student retention. The Student Success Team, composed of student support practitioners, data analysts, faculty partners, and academic affairs leadership, undertook a data-driven, collaborative approach to identify and address underlying retention barriers. The multifaceted approach ultimately yielded successful results. An academic recovery program was implemented in Fall 2018 for students on academic probation with increasingly positive results over six semesters. Eligible students successfully completing the program in Spring 2020 were retained at 66.0% versus those who did not at 39.7%. This paper provides a roadmap to develop, implement, and assess a successful university-wide academic recovery program for first-year students, including updating an outdated probation policy, creating course curriculum, developing a comprehensive academic recovery program, and creating an academic coaching department to support students reactively and proactively through meaningful intervention. This has also led to investing in predictive analysis tools to further our success.

**Audience:** Intermediate; Administrators; Two-Year Institutions; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Practitioners; Researchers; Faculty

**Keywords:** probation; academic recovery; academic support; academic coaching; retention

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**A Little Advice: Making Data Matter**

*Facilitated Discussion*

Catherine Nutter, Texas Tech University

Joshua Barron, Texas Tech University

Enrollment numbers, retention rates, demographic breakdowns, enrolled student credit hours, GPA trends, academic standing reports...the university generates so much data. For academic advising, the central question is not, “Do we have those numbers?” It is, “How do these numbers help me help my students?” Our goal with this discussion is to help the data community better understand academic advisors and advising administrators on route to better collaborations, more meaningful insights, and improved student and institutional outcomes. This session provides the opportunity to discuss useful questions to ask, key processes to know (or develop), and impactful results to be found in data sets key to the advising community. By the end of the discussion, participants will be able to 1) Identify data sources and measures meaningful in academic advising; 2) Position research questions to appreciate and engage the advising process; 3) Facilitate understanding among advising personnel about how data can enhance advising practice, individual and programmatic; and 4) Find the means to share this understanding with advisors and those who lead advising.

**Audience:** Intermediate; Administrators; Two-Year Institutions; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Practitioners

**Keywords:** advising; collaboration; campus community

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**Equity, Engagement, and Early Intervention: Equipping Student Success Advocates to Support All Learners**

*Vendor Presentation*

Vance Gray, City Colleges of Chicago

Phoenix Harvey, Macmillan Learning

Because every student matters, every moment and engagement counts. When implemented with intentionality, instructional technology and short retention surveys can be used to support student engagement, retention, and help support your institution's equity and inclusion initiatives, in meaningful ways. Decades of research confirm that non-academic factors like students’ sense of belonging, financial concerns, and engagement are critical to student retention and success. This session will demonstrate how institutional outcomes can be improved by pairing brief retention surveys that offer early alerts for better, more targeted interventions,
with student response systems to engage all students in meaningful ways inside and outside of the classroom, including creating safe spaces and encouraging participation and event attendance, which can create community and foster a sense of belonging.

1:30-2:30

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Trellis Progress: Providing Timely Academic Interventions During Unprecedented Times

Paper

Christine Salvesen, University of Arizona
Jen Ludwig, University of Arizona
Stefanie Basij, University of Arizona

Postsecondary institutions are always looking for ways to improve student retention and success with timely academic interventions. Trellis Progress, an academic progress reporting tool, was launched in Fall 2019 at The University of Arizona, with the goal of using data to identify and positively guide individual students, providing reinforcing feedback through timely outreach. Trellis Progress allows instructors to provide feedback to one or many students enrolled in a course. Feedback that aims to create an affirming environment that fosters resilience and nurtures a growth mindset. This session will provide an overview of faculty adoption and usage of growth mindset messaging within the Trellis Progress system during COVID-19 at a public, four-year Research 1 university. Through group discussion this session will review challenges and opportunities related to faculty adoption and usage of early alert messaging and provide tangible tools for collaborative adoption of timely student feedback systems.

Audience: Intermediate; Large Colleges & Universities
Keywords: early alert; academic intervention; course feedback; growth mindset; retention; persistence

Using Risk Analytics to Develop and Support Student Success Initiatives and Interventions

Paper

April Fugett, Marshall University
Sherri Smith, Marshall University
Chris Atkins, Marshall University
Kateryna Schray, Marshall University
Karen McComas, Marshall University

In 2015, we began an experiment to increase retention for a group of students identified by high school GPA as “middle-ability.” This experiment resulted in a 14% retention gain for that population by Fall 2019 and in the creation and adoption of a risk analytics survey (Marshall University Student Success Forecasting Model [SSFM]) many times more predictive than high school GPA. Just as we started gathering strong evidence around our data-based interventions, COVID-19 changed the student success dialogue. After many conversations, we were able to modify the SSFM risk analytics survey and intervention strategy to create a program that allowed us to analyze risk and begin offering students customized interventions before Orientation. This paper will focus on the student success factors (cognitive, noncognitive, and behavioral) that we assess in our evaluation of incoming students in order to personalize the student experience and develop timely and appropriate success initiatives. In addition, we will focus on a variety of initiatives that utilize the SSFM including orientation (pre-matriculation), first-year seminar, peer mentors, and technology-enhanced centralized advising. Participants will learn about these initiatives and how the crucial, initial focus on experimental design of the SSFM has led to actionable, scalable, measurable, and real-time results.

Audience: Intermediate; Administrators; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Practitioners; Researchers
Keywords: retention; progression; intervention; success; risk analytics; initiatives
Y’All Come! Supporting First-Year Success at Open Enrollment Institutions

Facilitated Discussion

Elaine Lewis, Utah Valley University
Noemy Medina, Utah Valley University

“Education changes lives.” We hear this saying frequently, but the higher education institutions who make the largest impact are those who do not turn their back on any students, regardless of academic preparation or past experiences. This facilitated discussion will explore the ways in which open enrollment institutions support first-year student success, with a specific focus on the unique challenges and benefits that this institutional mission brings. Most of this session will be spent in small breakout groups to allow for more opportunities for discussion.

Audience: Introductory; Two-Year Institutions; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities
Keywords: open-enrollment; first-year; math success; growth mindset

Preparing STEM Scholars for Success (PS3) Program at Florida A&M University

Prepared Paper

Desmond Stephens, Florida A&M University
Maurice Edington, Florida A&M University
Lewis Johnson, Florida A&M University
Carl Moore, Florida A&M University
Serena Roberts, Florida A&M University
Codjo Akpovo, Florida A&M University

Two issues that impact the retention and progression of first-year students entering STEM programs are math placement and their ability to cope with the increased rigor and workload of the college curriculum. To address these issues, Florida A&M University instituted the Preparing STEM Scholars for Success (PS3) summer program. The PS3 program is comprised of a four-week online and one-week residential component designed to improve mathematics placement of incoming CST freshmen and provide strategies to help them adjust to college-level STEM courses. For the online component, incoming STEM majors use the Assessment of Learning in Knowledge Spaces (ALEKS) platform and work with peer mentors to strengthen their mathematics background and refine their study skills before attending a one-week residential boot camp. During the boot camp, students attend STEM lectures and participate in workshops on time management, study skills, and resilience. Of the 70 freshmen who participated in PS3 in the Summer of 2019 or 2020, more than 25% tested into a mathematics course one level higher than their original placement at the start of the program. Additionally, the average Fall 2020 GPA data indicates students who participated in the Summer 2019 boot camp had GPAs 0.39 points higher than those who did not with a 92% retention rate.

Audience: Intermediate; Administrators; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Faculty
Keywords: Summer enrichment; mathematics placement; STEM skills development; peer mentors; bootcamp

The Top Ten Challenges of Early Alert Systems (and How to Avoid Them!)

Vendor Presentation

Emily Siegel, Anthology

Early alert systems are a popular initiative to support student success. Yet often, campuses experience several challenges when managing them – from minimal buy-in, to alerts that go unresponded to, to inconsistent and varying degrees of interventions. In this session, we’ll share the top ten most common pitfalls of early alert systems, and the three key things campuses can do to avoid them all!
Understanding Institutional Culture in the Creation of Sustainable Support Systems for First-Year Students

Tabetha Adkins, West Chester University of Pennsylvania
Scott Heinerichs, West Chester University of Pennsylvania
Lisa Yannick, West Chester University of Pennsylvania

Institutions have an obligation to develop effective support systems that positively contribute to the educational experience and foster student success. The research is clear: institutions must focus retention efforts on not only high-risk students (GPA < 2.0) but also students within the “Murky Middle” (GPA < 2.0-3.0). This paper focuses on a comprehensive and affordable intervention at one institution that included entities from different divisions on campus, a day of programming we called RAMp Up. Using institutional data to inform the planning process, this day of programming between students’ first fall and spring semesters targets retention of first-year students who are at risk of not returning the following year or graduating within six years. Using a multi-pronged approach, institutional partners contributed to the program on a variety of topics including career readiness, goal setting, studying and learning strategies, and funding their education. In this paper we will share the specific approach taken by the institution and three years of outcomes data.

Audience: Intermediate; Administrators; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Practitioners; Researchers; Faculty; Student Success Professionals

Keywords: first-year students; student success; risk assessment; affordable programming; retention

What Beats Headphones and Starbucks Teach Us About Supporting Post-Millennial College Student Success

Michael Levinstein, Shippensburg University

Starbucks built an empire through hyper-customization while Beats leveraged marketing and technology to dominate its field. What can academic advising learn from these business case studies? As technology continues to permeate and influence everyday activities and experiences, today’s college students need assistance in minimizing distractions, connecting to peers and campus professionals in meaningful ways, finding purpose and joy in what they do, and practicing patience by delaying gratification. This facilitated discussion addresses how engaging advising assists students in cancelling out the noise in students’ lives that negatively impacts academic success, as well as methods to provide personalized advising utilizing student engagement as a means to support students’ success.

Audience: Intermediate; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Practitioners; Faculty

Keywords: advising; student engagement; personalized advising; post-millennials; gen-z

Publishing in the CSRDE Sourcebook

Julie Noble, Consultant
Mardy Eimers, University of Missouri
Brad Patterson, Henderson State University

Are you interested in publishing in CSRDE’s Building Bridges for Student Success: A Sourcebook for Colleges and Universities? Come and meet Julie Noble, Editor, and Associate Editors Mardy Eimers and Brad Patterson to learn about this publication and get all of your questions answered about submitting a manuscript.
Faculty empower a mix of students to thrive in an evolving and challenging personal and professional environment and need new skills and mindsets to excel. The three most important competency sets are facilitation, evaluation, and coaching, the last of which is not common but essential for helping students develop to their fullest capabilities. In addition to enhancing academic knowledge and skills, coaching develops key personal attributes including confidence, efficacy, growth mindset, self-improvement, and problem-solving. The University of Maryland Global Campus implemented coaching in its first-term courses and supports adjunct faculty to skillfully coach its diverse adult undergraduate and graduate students. Faculty learn the ROCK-SOLID Coaching Method through a short online course. A condensed version of this course addresses participants’ discovery of where coaching fits in teaching, why it helps learning, retention, and persistence of all students, and how participants can use it to prepare welcome and impactful feedback. Participants will use the ROCK-SOLID mnemonic to remember the stages of academic coaching, apply concepts, and take-away materials so they may continue to practice at their institutions. Three contexts span most situations: developing relationships that foster coaching, coaching student assignments, and coaching personal problem-solving.

**Audience:** Introductory; Administrators; Two-Year Institutions; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Practitioners; Faculty; Mentors; Advisors

**Keywords:** retention; coaching; academic performance; personal success competencies; implementation at-scale
UNDecided: A Good Decision for Retention

Catherine Nutter, Texas Tech University

How does being undeclared or exploratory relate to persistence and time-to-graduation? The answer is, it seems to help. In a data review at a large research university in the southwest, two-year retention analysis suggests that students who begin college as undeclared in an exploration program before declaring a major are retained at a rate equal to or higher than the general declared student population.

**Audience:** Intermediate; Administrators; Two-Year Institutions; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Practitioners

**Keywords:** academic advising; exploratory; changing majors

Collaborations for Success: Employing a Case Management, Occupational Therapy Perspective to Student Success

Kelly Westeen, University of Arkansas
Ashley Jordan, University of Arkansas

This facilitated discussion shares programmatic highlights, case studies, and lessons learned from the University of Arkansas’ case management approach to working with academically underprepared students during their first semester on campus, with a focus on the benefits of leveraging the perspectives of occupational therapists to facilitate student success. During Fall 2019 and Fall 2020, the Student Success Center at the U of A piloted a targeted case management approach in working with students entering the university with academic markers historically situating them as at risk. The center’s professional staff and graduate students led small independent study sections of the university’s FYE course for these students, giving this cohort access to one-to-one, tailored instruction and mentorship. Fall 2020’s cohort benefitted from the addition of a graduate student enrolled in the university’s new Doctor of Occupational Therapy program. The partnership between student success and OT professionals on campus has enjoyed early success and is a critical and innovative approach that can foster success in more holistic ways through employing the OT perspective.

**Audience:** Introductory; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Practitioners; Faculty

**Keywords:** student success; case management; retention; occupational therapy; campus partnerships

Enhancing Learning and Persistence Using Academic Coaching (Part 2)

David Leasure, University of Maryland Global Campus

Faculty empower a mix of students to thrive in an evolving and challenging personal and professional environment and need new skills and mindsets to excel. The three most important competency sets are facilitation, evaluation, and coaching, the last of which is not common but essential for helping students develop to their fullest capabilities. In addition to enhancing academic knowledge and skills, coaching develops key personal attributes including confidence, efficacy, growth mindset, self-improvement, and problem-solving. The University of Maryland Global Campus implemented coaching in its first-term courses and supports adjunct faculty to skillfully coach its diverse adult undergraduate and graduate students. Faculty
learn the ROCK-SOLID Coaching Method through a short online course. A condensed version of this course addresses participants’ discovery of where coaching fits in teaching, why it helps learning, retention, and persistence of all students, and how participants can use it to prepare welcome and impactful feedback. Participants will use the ROCK-SOLID mnemonic to remember the stages of academic coaching, apply concepts, and take-away materials so they may continue to practice at their institutions. Three contexts span most situations: developing relationships that foster coaching, coaching student assignments, and coaching personal problem-solving.

**Audience:** Introductory; Administrators; Two-Year Institutions; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Practitioners; Faculty; Mentors; Advisors

**Keywords:** retention; coaching; academic performance; personal success competencies; implementation at-scale

### Examining the Effects of Peer-Led Team Learning as a Support for Community College Transfer Students STEM Achievement

**Paper**

Audrey Meador, West Texas A&M University
Vinitha Subburaj, West Texas A&M University
Pamela Lockwood-Cooke, West Texas A&M University
Anitha Subburaj, West Texas A&M University

Peer-led Team Learning (PLTL) is a model of instruction and learning that has been in use for many years to combat low success rates in various science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses and other fields in higher education. While research conveying the efficacy of this model of instruction remains mixed, this project sought to add to the body of knowledge communicating the benefits of PLTL for STEM achievement. To this end, this study examined the experiences of STEM community college-transfer students’ engagement in PLTL within their major course of study when a suite of supports was provided. Specifically, study participants were enrolled in degree programs at a four-year rural, regional university in the engineering, computer science, and mathematics (ECSM) fields and were provided social, financial, and academic assistance. Qualitative analysis of the data revealed that with a PLTL component, ECSM community college-transfer students were more likely to participate, engage, and perform better in coursework given the additional supports. Study participants indicated the community of learners created through PLTL was a primary motivator for continued engagement and progress towards ECSM degree attainment. Implications for practice extend to engagement and retention efforts of STEM students from the community college population.

**Audience:** Intermediate; Administrators; Two-Year Institutions; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Researchers; Faculty

**Keywords:** community college transfer students; STEM; peer-led team learning

### Advising, First-Year Courses, and Strategic Goals: The Roles of Data, Technology, and Leadership in Student Retention

**Paper**

Coral Hanson, Utah Valley University
Kari Gary, Utah Valley University

Universities across the nation are faced with the challenge of retaining students to graduation. Administrators also face challenges adopting technology to support student retention and effectively using data to evaluate programs to drive change aimed at increasing retention. Data and technology alone are not sufficient to manage organizational change. Rather, data are meant to inform student retention strategies and technology
to support the execution of said strategies. Informed leadership and clearly defined strategies remain essential to propel and implement programs to meet student needs, particularly underprivileged populations who are at risk for attrition. This study evaluated two programs, common to universities across the country, for their effect on student retention or persistence. The programs studied were academic advising and high impact courses targeted to students in their first year at the University. The results from academic advising showed significant positive movement in retention across many sub-groups of students, particularly populations most at-risk for attrition. Results from high impact courses were mixed showing statistically significant lifts in persistence for a few groups, but the majority of groups returned non-significant findings. This paper also documents the challenges and successes Utah Valley University experienced while sharing data and fostering adoption of new technologies in support of student success.

**Audience:** Intermediate; Administrators; Large Colleges & Universities; Researchers

**Keywords:** student retention; technology; high impact practices; leadership; data

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### Creating and Developing a Culture of Growth Mindset on a University Campus

**Paper**

Kimberly McElveen, Columbus State University  
Sri Sitharaman, Columbus State University  
Gina Sheeks, Columbus State University

A growth mindset, as conceived by psychologist Carol Dweck and colleagues (1999), is the belief that a person’s capacities and talents can improve over time. Columbus State University (CSU) engages all incoming first-year students into the theories and practices of having growth versus fixed mindsets. Students take a survey that gauges their perception and values on different growth versus fixed concepts. The results from these surveys has been used to inform pedagogy and develop programs that support academic success. CSU has created a culture and belief system that talents are attainable through hard work, sound strategies, and input from others.

**Audience:** Intermediate; Faculty; Administrators; Two-Year Institutions; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Practitioners

**Keywords:** growth mindset; retention; student success

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### Program Effectiveness and Growth: A New Model for First-Year Success Through Coaching

**Paper**

Samantha Raynor, University of North Carolina-Greensboro  
Tiffany L. Tovey, University of North Carolina-Greensboro  
Kathy J. Baker, University of North Carolina-Greensboro

The University of North Carolina-Greensboro’s Academic Success Coaching Program is a unique approach to executive coaching for first-year undergraduates that incorporates rigorous training standards with theoretical constructs found to promote student success such as self-efficacy, growth mindset, resilience, sense of belonging, and help-seeking. As the program was created, an extensive mixed methods evaluation and assessment plan was developed and implemented in order to: (1) articulate the theory and logic of the program, (2) understand program implementation and operations, (3) understand the efficacy and outcomes of the program for its stakeholders, and (4) provide areas of reflection to inform further program development. This session will share our distinctive model for an executive coaching program in a higher education context as well as the evaluation plan and results from the first year’s pilot. This session will highlight both the quantitative outcomes achieved by the program as well as the rich experiential information gained through interviews and focus groups with both coaches and first-year program participants.

**Audience:** Intermediate; Administrators; Large Colleges & Universities; Small Colleges & Universities; Practitioners; Researchers

**Keywords:** executive coaching; first-year student success; program model evaluation
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