



Defining the Faculty Role in Student Success

Building Ownership for Student Progression Among
Individual Faculty and Distributed Academic Units

Academic Affairs Forum



University of Alabama in Huntsville

Huntsville, AL

1 The Student Success Silo Problem

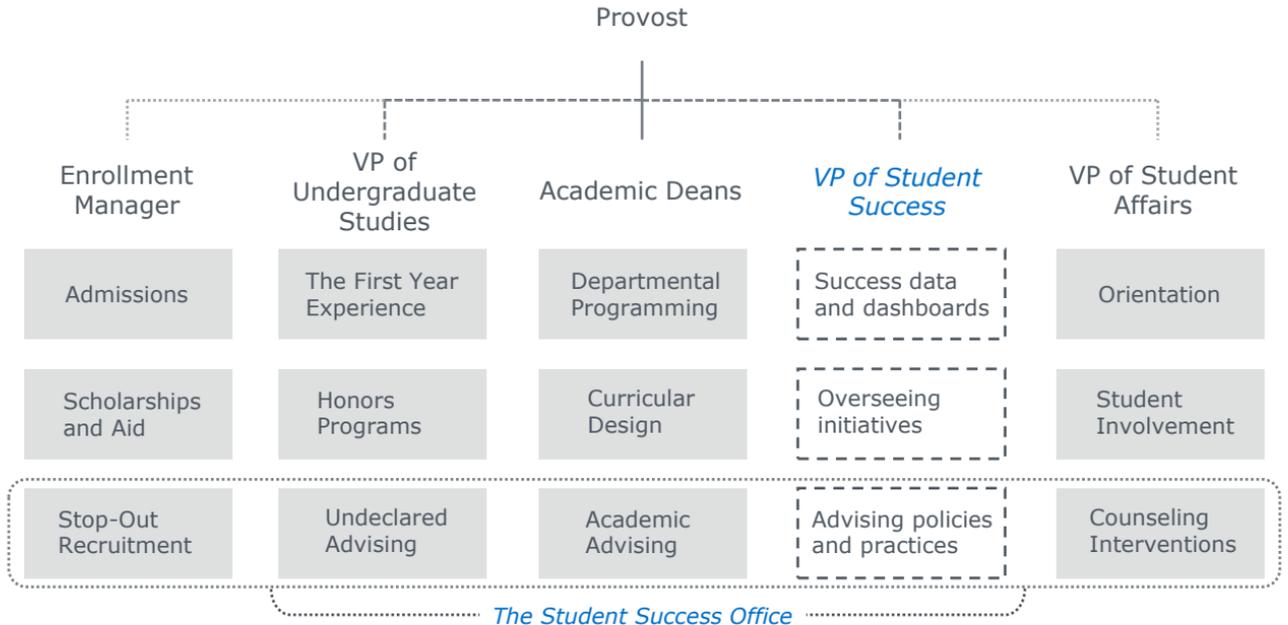
2 Six Roles for Faculty in Student Success

3 Coda: Sustaining Momentum Through Structured Accountability and Incentives



An Organizational Dilemma

Who "Owns" Student Success On Your Campus?



"I know how to manage to numbers, not just ideas"

"I have academic credibility and run the first year"

"We own the curriculum and the purse strings"

"Student success needs to be someone's job"

"I understand the non-academic roots of attrition"

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

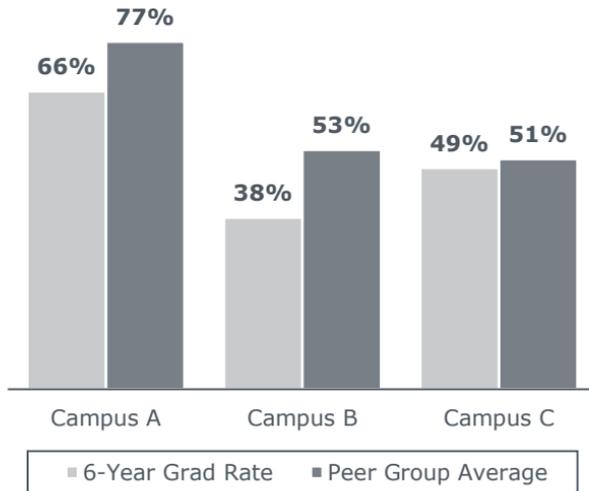
Recommendations for Increasing Retention and Graduation Rates

	Campus A	Campus B	Campus C
1. Flag at-risk students prior to enrollment	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Offer special summer programs	Yes	Yes	Yes
3. Ensure sufficient intro course capacity	Sometimes	Yes	Yes
4. Connect students with peer advisors	Yes	Yes	---
5. Ensure adequate student/advisor ratios	Yes	Yes	Yes
6. Use prescriptive degree maps	---	Yes	Yes
...99. Mandatory exit interview for leavers	Yes	---	Yes

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

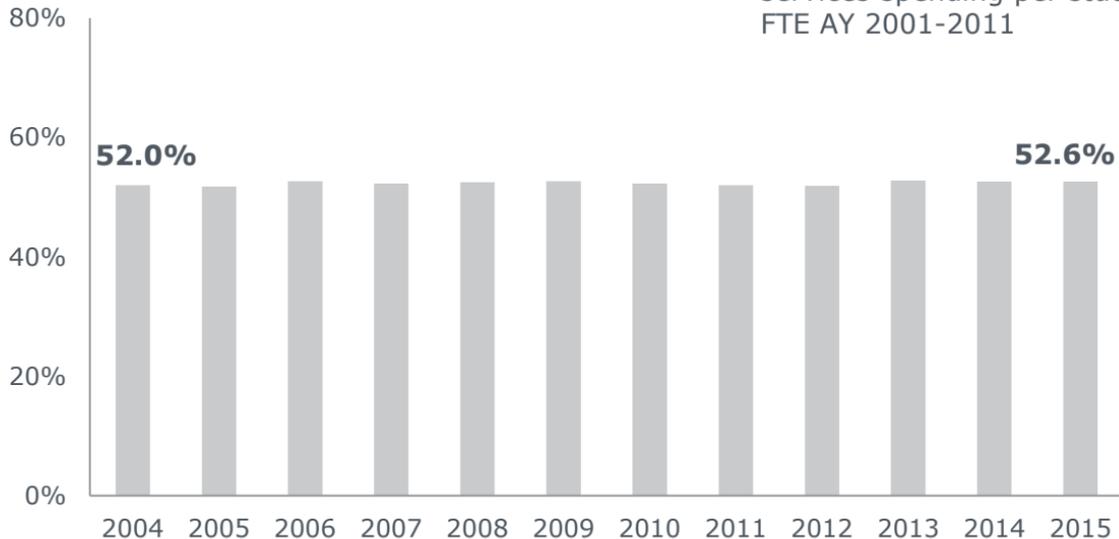
Flat Graduation Rates, Despite Significant Student Service Investments

Average Five-Year Graduation Rates¹

Public and Private US Universities

11%

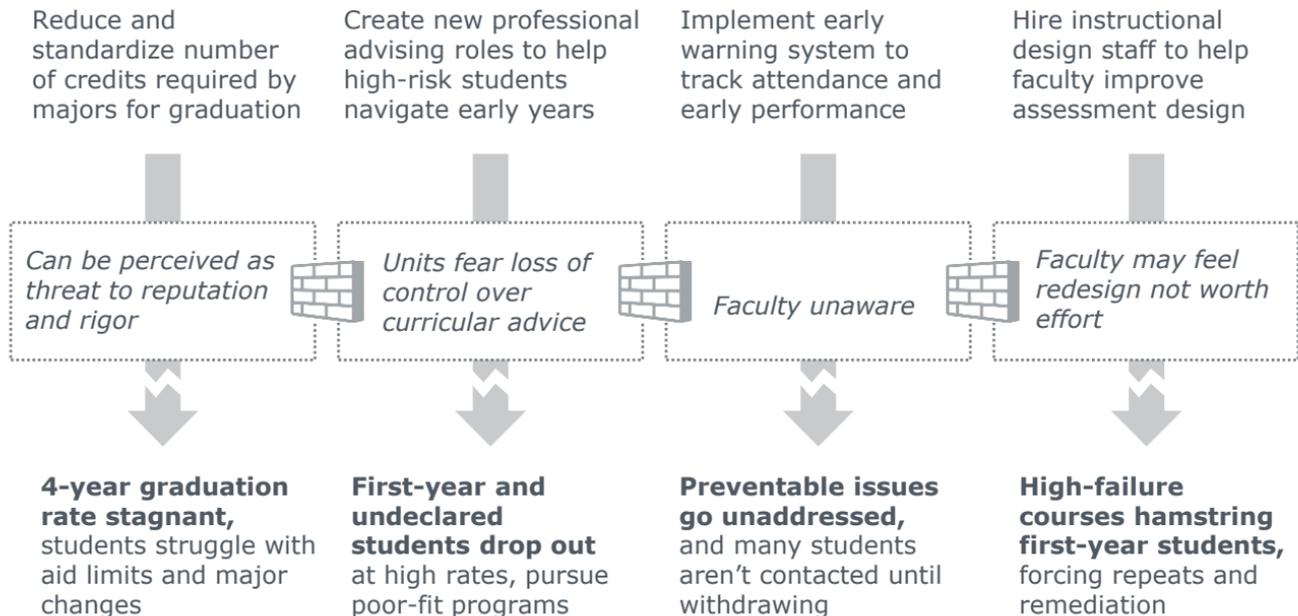
Average growth in student services spending per student FTE AY 2001-2011



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

Top-Down Changes Rarely Stick

Faculty Buy-In and Compliance Critical to Organizational Improvement



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

"Faculty 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."

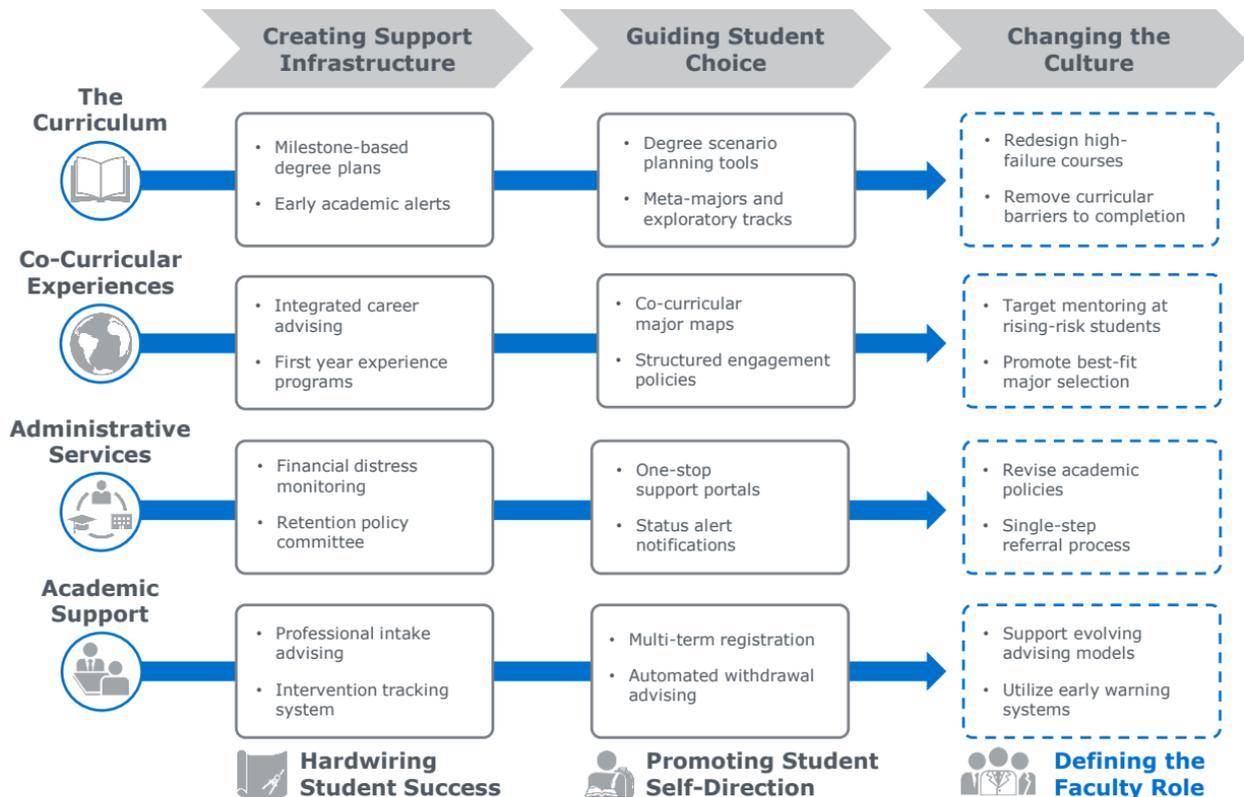
Great Jobs, Great Lives

The 2014 Gallup-Purdue Index Report

Source: Paul D. Umbach and Matthew R. Wawrzynski, "Faculty Do Matter: The Role of College Faculty in Student Learning and Engagement," *Research in Higher Education* (2005); "The 2014 Gallup-Purdue Index Report," Lumina Foundation (2014); EAB interviews and analysis.

Engaging the Academy to Drive Change

Transforming the Institution Around Student Success



Three Critical Questions

Overcoming the Silo Problem and Garnering Campus-Wide Support

1

What should I expect of units, committees, and faculty governance?

"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 individual faculty?

"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



Collective Decision- Making

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



Individual Contribution

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

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2. Enrollment Impact Audits
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7. Advising Career Ladder
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Scaling Learning Innovations

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15. Leadership Scorecards

16. Performance-Based Bonus Funding

17. Departmental Performance Dashboard

Where Curricular Planning Breaks Down

Good-Faith Decisions Can Unintentionally Harm Degree Progress

1 Departmental decisions can underestimate impact on progression

A+



Desire to ensure quality of students admitted to major

Belief that 2-year institutions' programs lack required rigor

2 Committees and taskforces may 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

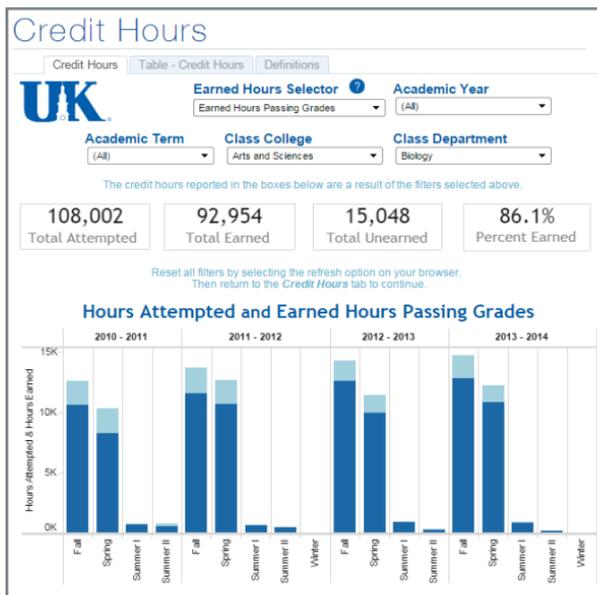
Meetings focused more on discussion than decision; limited capacity for analysis or technical implementation support

New initiatives or changes never scale beyond initial enthusiasts; limited funding to sustain effort

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



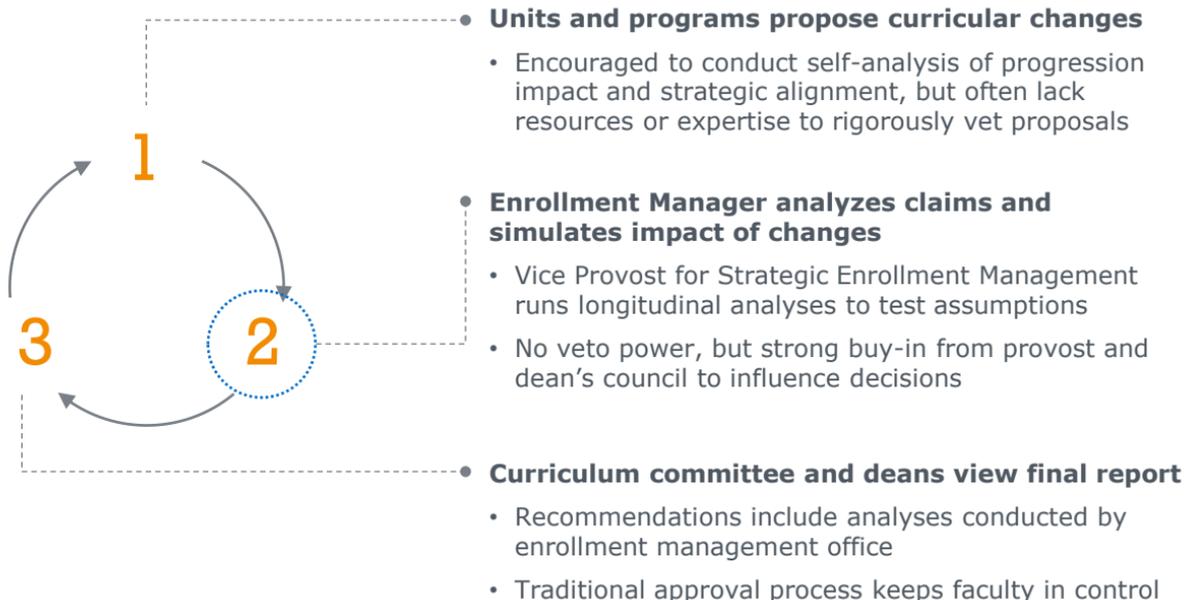
Interactive charts allow users to sort academic data by department, college, class year, and demographics



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

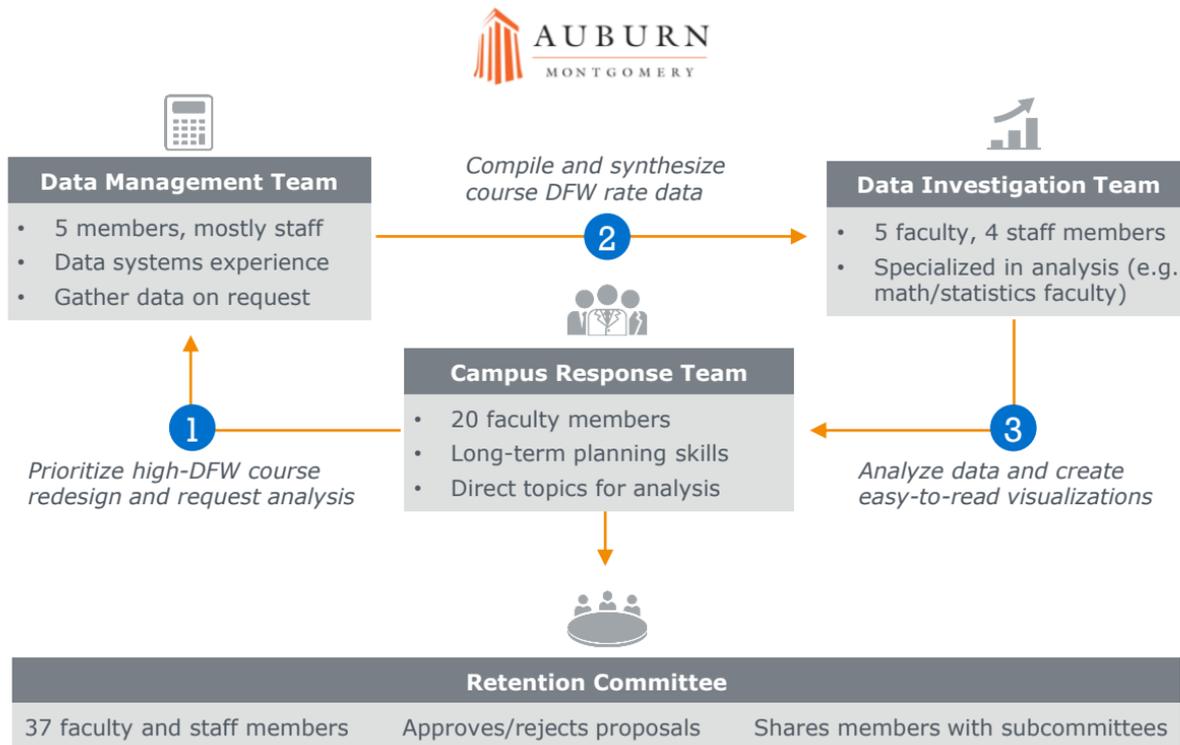
Guardrails on Curricular Changes

Strategic Enrollment Management Analyses Check Assumptions



Matching Talent and Task

Strategically Deployed Faculty Members Accelerate Campus Consensus



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



No Pilot Programs

Required full-scale implementation and sustainability plans



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



Logistical Support

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

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

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.

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Unbundling the Advising Process

Dozens of Discrete Problems Require Variety of Roles on Campus



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

Efficient Communication

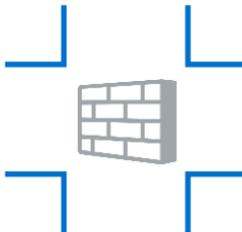
"This will add to, not relieve, my administrative workload."

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

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



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

Trust Through Training

Easing Faculty Skepticism by Creating Formal Mechanism for Influence

Central hires given college assignment

Faculty create degree maps



Advisors surveyed about needs

Ongoing topic-based trainings



Faculty-Led Curricular 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

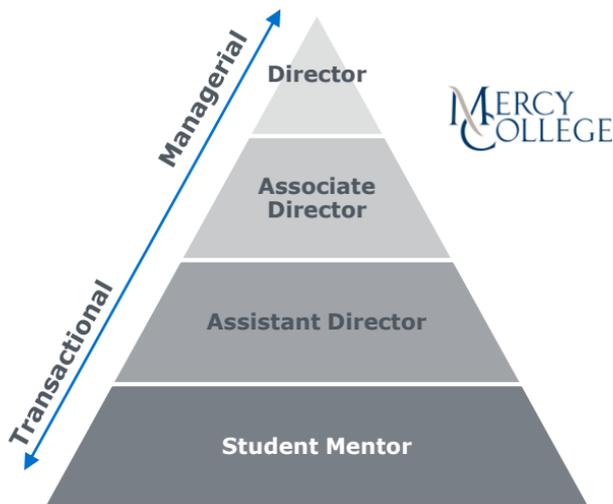
Scenario Troubleshooting

- 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

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

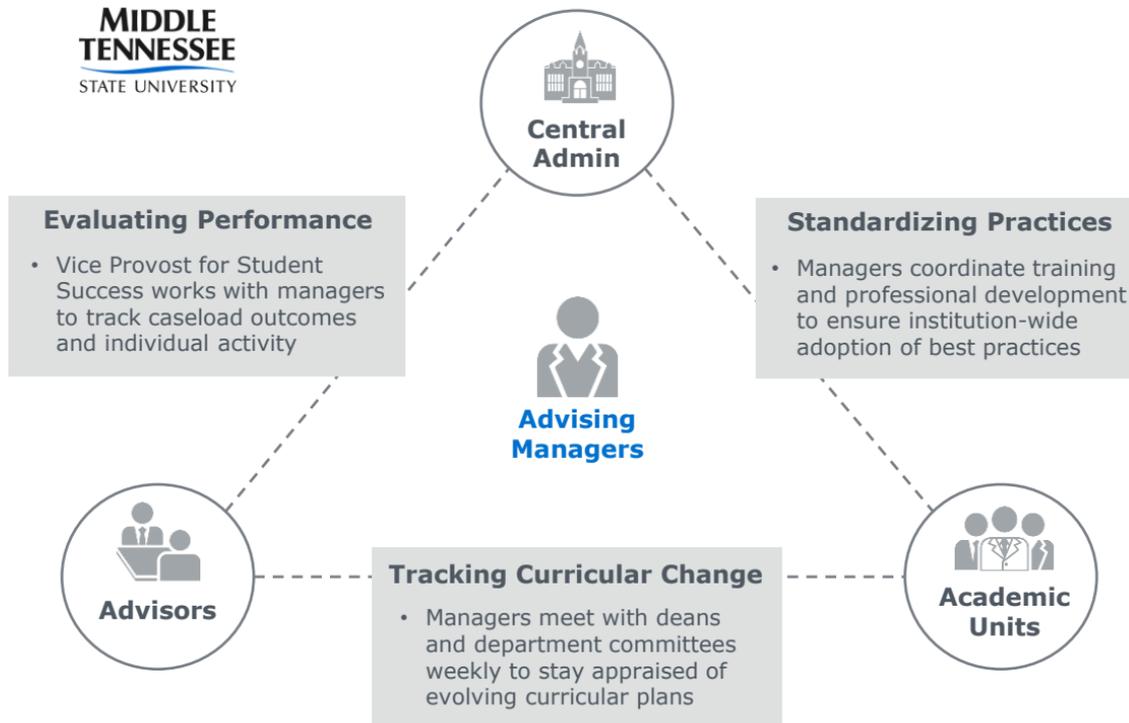
Competency	Performance Metrics
Student Engagement	Involvement data, satisfaction survey feedback
Mentoring Engagement	# meetings with mentees, % students with academic plans
Faculty Engagement	# early alert interventions, # students attended tutoring
Career Development	% students completed self-assessments,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

- 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

The Virtues of Middle Management

Balancing Central Coordination with Disciplinary Specialization



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

- Manage meeting schedules and sign-ups
- Answer office phone during work hours
- Assist with college first-year orientation events
- Plan yearly faculty retreat



Academic Advising

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



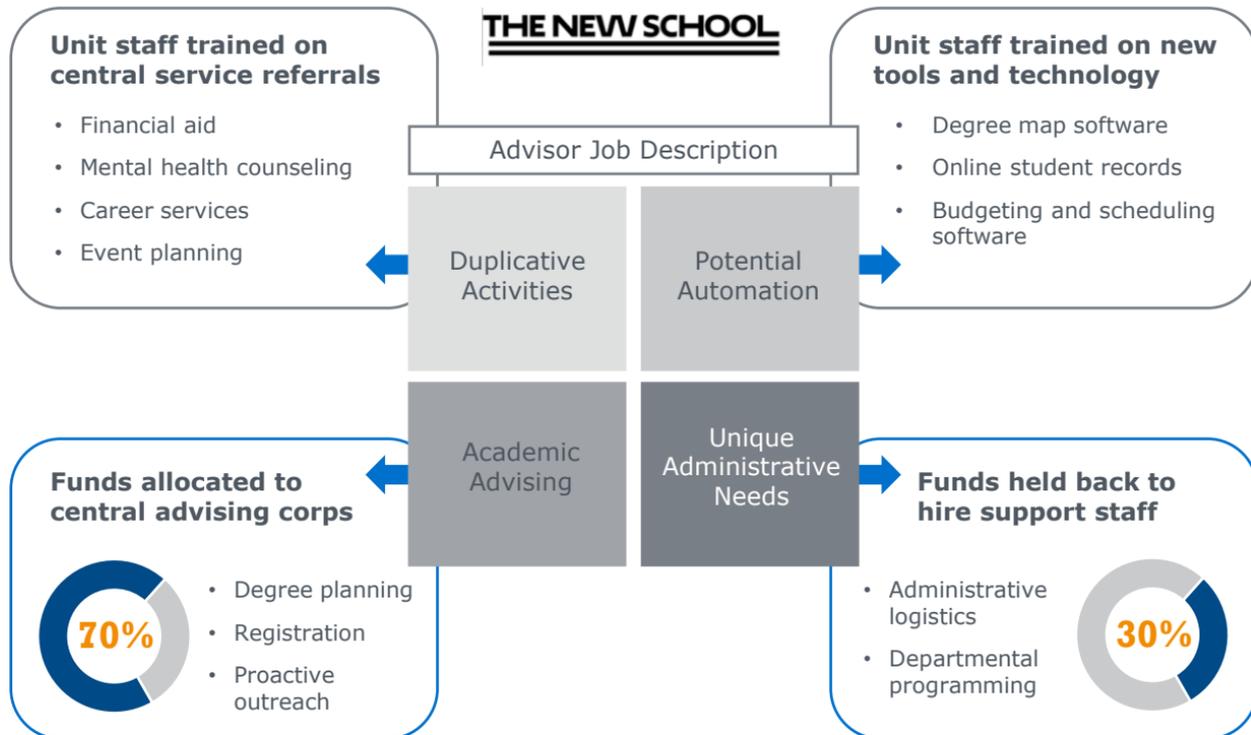
Generalist Tasks

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



Compensating Units for Unique Staffing Needs

Advisor Task Inventory Reveals Areas for Shared Service Streamlining



Supporting Evolving Advising Models



Summary of Key Insights

- 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.

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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 classroom¹

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

1) Based on assumed course load of 15 credit hours over a 15-week semester

Getting from Acceptance to Buy-In

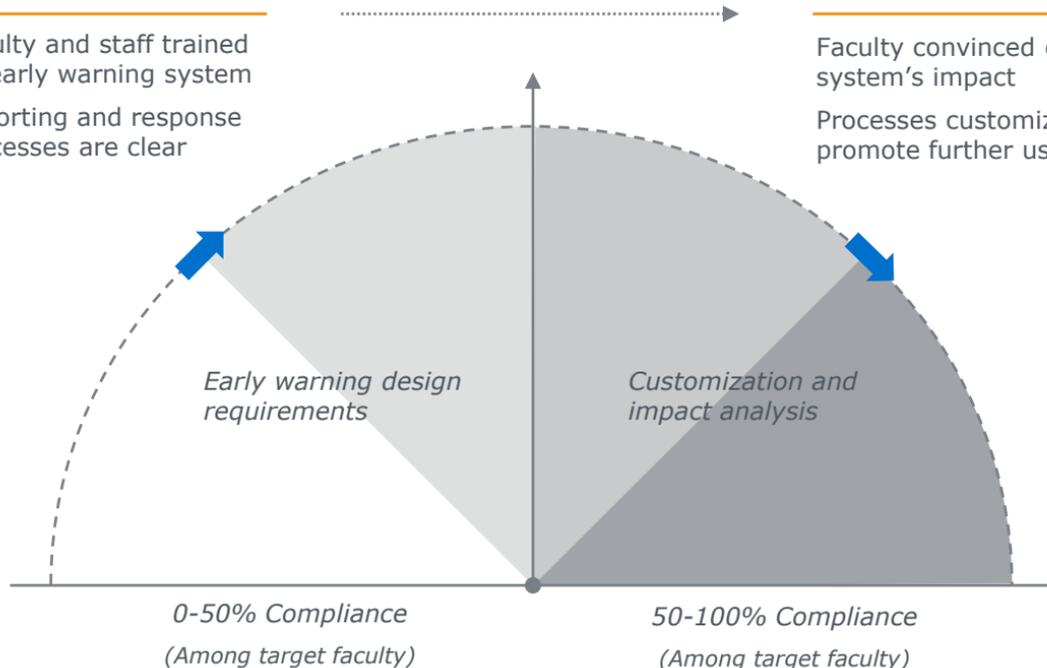
System Design Only Part of the Challenge

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



Alley 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

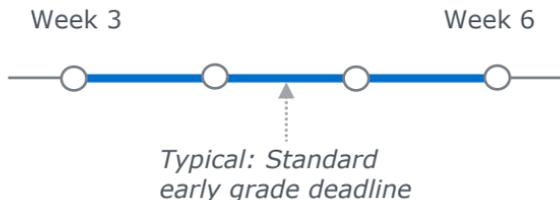
- Faculty able to decide whether and how to get involved with student issues

Allow for Flexible Application

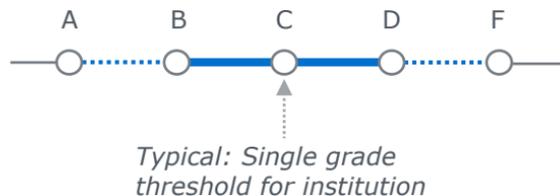
Instructor-Specific Time Window and Grade Scale Improve Adoption



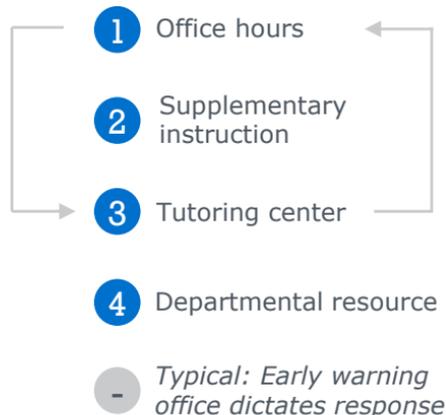
Faculty asked to determine best early assessment point



Faculty determine examination and grade that constitutes "on track"



Faculty able to choose and prioritize resources sent to students



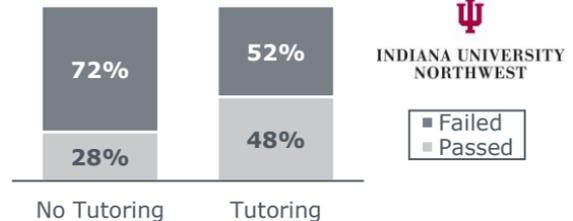
Illustrating Impact

Alerts Aim to Address Students' Needs

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



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.

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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*

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

Where Faculty Can Help

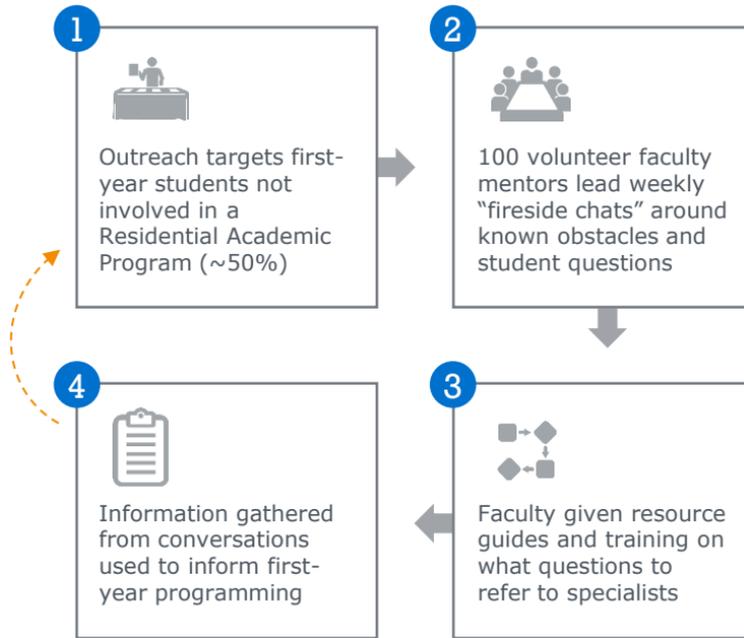
Deploying Mentoring Efforts to Proactively Address Long-Term Risk



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)



Predicting Preventable Transfer Losses

From Stepping Stone to Disciplinary Destination

37%

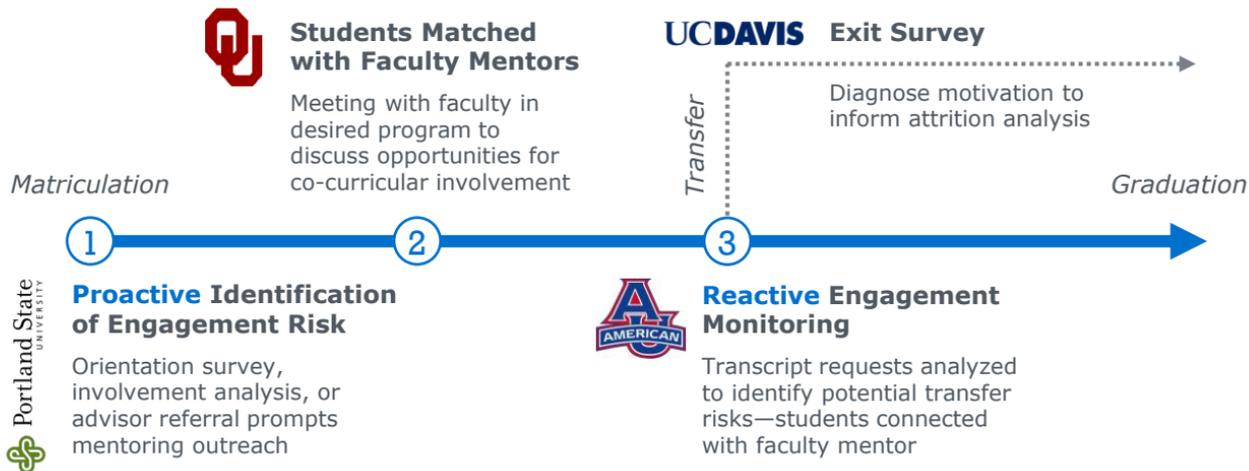
Of all first-time students transfer or enroll at a different institution at least once within 6 years

33%

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

40%

Of leavers have estimated GPAs above 3.25



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.

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**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

Starting at the Top

Public Performance Reports Set the Stage for Organization-Wide Action

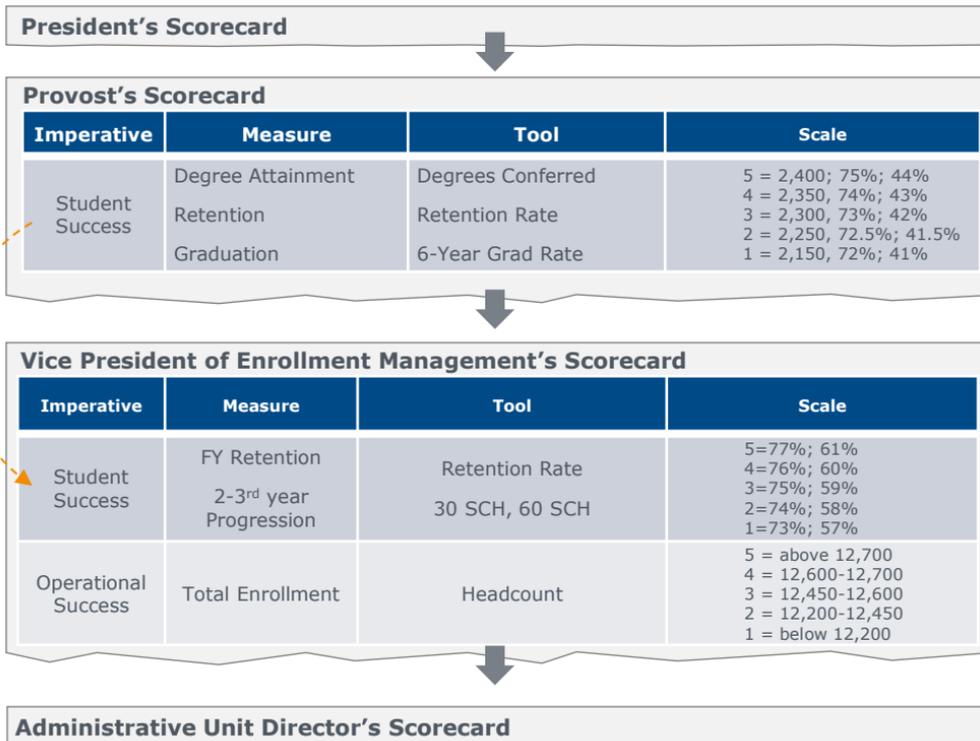


Aligned at each level



Specific to each role

Next step
(2016)



Creating Departmental Accountability

Mission-Adjusted Performance Bonuses Push Units to Improve



Strategic Accountability Matrix

Department	Student Success Metric			
	Example: Student Credit Hours lost to DFW			
	Weight	Expected	Actual	Score
Biology	2.0	381	518	↓ 0.74
Anthropology	1.0	201	173	↑ 1.16



Student success metrics include both outcomes and unit programs / investments



Ratio of actual to expected performance determines share of annual bonus funds (\$400,000 pool)

Metric weight adjusted according to unit characteristics (Philosophy judged less on internship 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

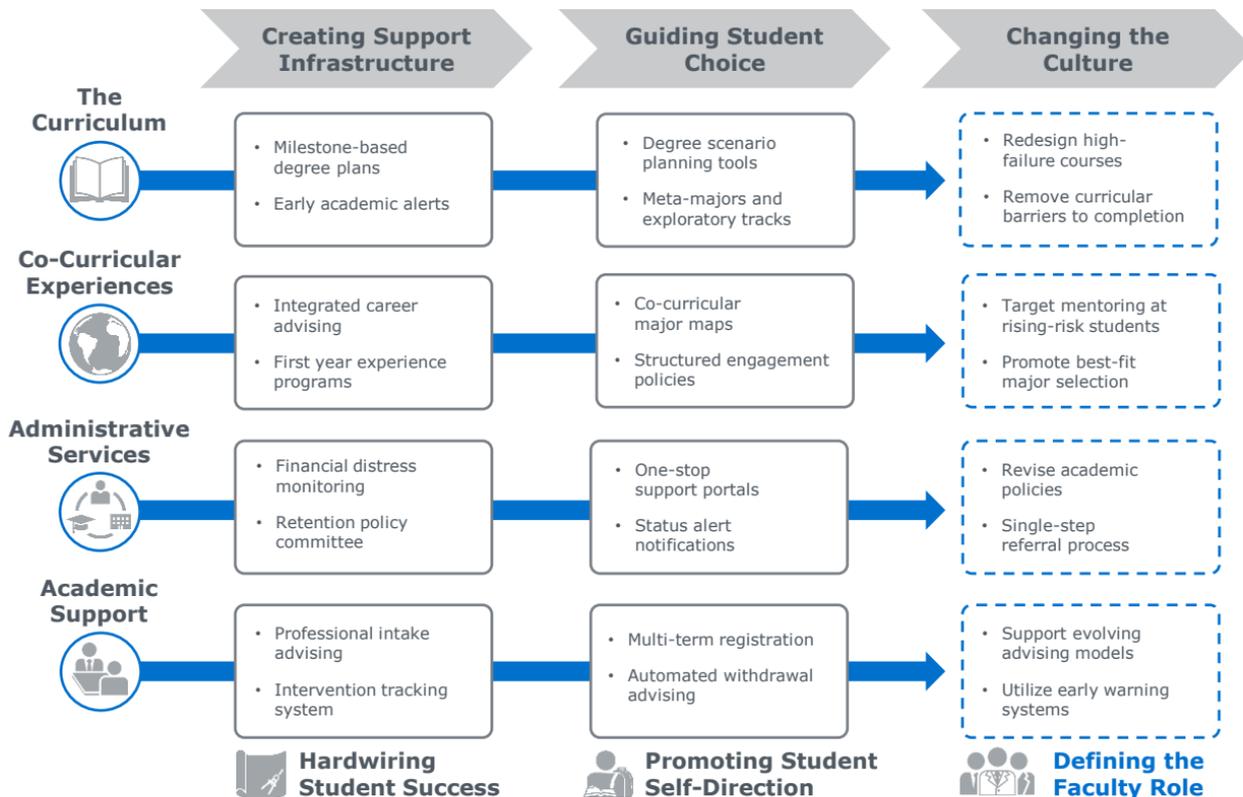
Sustaining Momentum Through Accountability



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





Where We Can Help Your Institution Today

Resources Available in the Academic Affairs Forum Library

▶ Academic Planning

Redefining the Academic Library

Revitalizing the Program Portfolio

Instructional Capacity Planning and Management

Next-Generation Classroom and Instructional Design

▶ Academic Administration

Maximizing Space Utilization

Optimizing Institutional Budget Models

Organizing Academic IT Support

The Future of Academic Analytics

▶ Globalization

Increasing International Enrollment

Supporting International Partnerships

Managing International Branch Campuses

Global Learning in the Undergraduate Curriculum

▶ Online Education Strategy

Engaging Faculty in Online Education

Online and Hybrid Course Prioritization

Understanding the MOOC Trend

Developing Successful Third-Party Partnerships

▶ Revenue Growth

Targeting Emerging Student Markets

Organizing Continuing and Professional Education

Capturing Alternative Revenues

Interdisciplinary Program Management

▶ Student Success

Hardwiring Student Success

Revitalizing the Program Portfolio

Instructional Capacity Planning and Management

Next-Generation Classroom and Instructional Design

▶ Faculty Affairs

Developing Academic Leaders

Improving Faculty Diversity

Effective Post-Tenure Review

Calibrating Faculty Policies

▶ Research Enterprise

Achieving Scale in Multidisciplinary Research

Assessing Faculty Research Productivity

Contracts and Grants Administration

Managing Research Centers and Institutes

Major Initiatives in 2015-2016

Insights and Implementation Tools to Support Provosts' Strategic Priorities

Grow Revenues and Develop a Sustainable Business Model

- **What Are the Sustainable Business Models** for Research Universities, Master's Universities, and Liberal Arts Colleges in the Decade Ahead?
- **Funding Strategic Priorities in Lean Budget Times:** Innovative Strategies and Funding Models for Creating Central Discretionary Dollars
- **Future Revenues Playbook:** What Will Be the Fastest Growing Student Markets and Required Investments to Compete?

Enfranchise Faculty in the New Budget Reality

- **Making the Case:** Leveraging Data, Leadership Development, and Incentives to Foster Academic Leaders (and an Academic Culture) Motivated to Change
- **Working Smarter, Not Harder:** Improving Instructional Efficiency and Research Output Without Increasing Overall Faculty Workloads

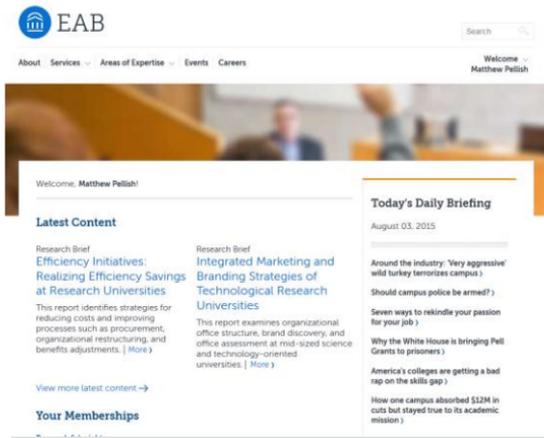
Align the Institution around Student Success

- **Realizing a Retention Task Force Isn't Enough:** Making Deans, Academic Departments, and Faculty Accountable for Student Retention and Graduation
- **Rethinking Academic Advising:** Next-Generation Models, Practices, and Skills That Address the (often Non-academic) Root Causes of Student Attrition
- **It Takes More Than a Map:** Working with Faculty to Simplify Degree Requirements and Reduce Curriculum Complexity Without Sacrificing Academic Rigor

Make the Right Investments in Next-Generation Learning

- **The Provost's Guide to Learning Technologies:** Where to Invest and What to Avoid as Next-Generation Learning Platforms and "Big Data" Products Vie for Scarce Budget Dollars

EAB Contact Information



Holly Chatham
Director

HChatham@eab.com
202-909-4313



Michal Abraham
Dedicated Advisor

MAbraham@eab.com
202-568-7819

 www.eab.com



EAB

Education Advisory Board

2445 M Street NW, Washington DC 20037

P 202.266.6400 | F 202.266.5700 | eab.com