Advisory Council for Enhancing Student Success (ACCESS)

November 28, 2007

Expanding the Conversation regarding the Retention and Graduation of NC State Students

... because retention is EVERYBODY’S job.
The Origin

• 2002-03 Task Force on Undergraduate Retention and Graduation Rates
  – Recommendation #6:
    Efforts to implement appropriate strategies for improving retention and graduation rates, to monitor and assess these strategies, and to modify these strategies and develop new ones as necessary should be institutionalized immediately.
The Charge

The council is a working group tasked to:

• Facilitate the development and implementation of a functional university student success network that seeks to integrate all segments of the university directly or indirectly responsible for undergraduate students;

• Ensure that each participating unit identifies its role, sets objectives for its focus on student success, and identifies measurable outcomes that provide information for ongoing improvement.

• Share broadly information about successful retention efforts and identify student success best practices; and where appropriate

• Propose new programs, policies, and initiatives designed to have a positive impact on the retention and graduation rate of our students.
The Recommended Process

• Catalogue and give credit for current efforts
  – Student Success Inventory
• Expand the conversation
• Establish agreed upon key (dashboard) indicators
• Explore best practice models
• Monitor and assess (prove and improve) current efforts
• Add new initiatives where needs are identified.
The Movement
“We’ve Come A Long Way, Baby!”

Seminal Reading
– Dick Light’s *Making the Most of College*

Presentations
– Assessment
  • University Planning and Analysis Repository
  • Dashboard Indicators
– ACCESS Data Review
  • Part-time Status
  • Third Semester Freshmen

Outside Studies
– Retention Study
  • UNC-Chapel Hill
  • University of Georgia

Speakers
– Frank Hale (external)
– Marvin Titus (internal)

Workshops
– NRC FYE Series

College Interviews
The Goals for Today

1. Articulate our value and presence within the greater NC State Community pertaining to student success issues and initiatives

2. Present our progress to date

3. Preview emerging recommendations

4. Engage in a discussion
The Workgroups

• Assessment (Divided into four task groups)
  – Assessment Criteria Task Group
  – Exit Task Group
  – Longitudinal Study Task Group
  – Retention Dashboard Task Group

• Policy and Practice Review

• Student Engagement
The Assessment Workgroup

Co-chairs:
Pamela Steinke, Trey Standish

Team Members:
Samara Burnette, Terry Braiser, Roger Callanan, Monica Leach, Roxanna McGraw, Dianne Raubenheimer, John Tector, Janice Wetherbee, Carrie Zelna
Assessment Subgroups on Dashboards and Longitudinal Data

Presenter:
Trey Standish

Group Members:
Terry Braiser
Samara Fleming Burnette
Monica Leach
Longitudinal Data

• Objective: Create Longitudinal Data set for student retention studies that combines:
  – Student Data Files
  – Survey Responses
  – Pre-Admissions/Post-Graduation Data
  – Course Taking Patterns

• Benefits: allows comparison of subjective opinions (from survey data) to actual behavior (data files)

• Requirements: funding for a temporary position over approximately four months
Retention Dashboard - Overview

- **Objective:** Create quick-reference, internet-based dashboard displaying retention measures for University to Department level
- **Benefits:** Allows standardized and quick assessment of trends in student progress, satisfaction, and retention
- **Requirements:** University Planning & Analysis can estimate costs upon request
Retention Dashboard – Wish List

Pre-Admissions
• Recruiting
• Incoming Student Qualifications

Objective Data
• Student Involvement
• Major Dedication
• Comfort with NC State life
• Faculty Interactions
• Parental Involvement
• Learning Community Involvement

Post-Graduation
• Employment
• Graduate School Participation

Current Students
• Demographic Information
• Head Count Totals & Flow
• Class-Taking Patterns
• Retention Rates
  – By year
  – By demographics
  – By Major
• Financial Aid
• Graduation Rates
• GPA Report
• Student Progress
• Advising
• Survey Responses
• Employment
Retention Dashboard - Textiles
Retention Dashboard - Textiles
Withdraw Forecast - Overview

• Objective: Before spring semester, use a statistical model to identify students most at risk of not returning the next Fall and create an intervention program to retain them.

• Benefits: Allows NC State to make a personal connection, collect additional data, and even create controlled retention experiments

• Requirements: Program is being tested in CHASS now, would need more time to expand to entire university
Assessment Subgroup on Coding

Presenter:
Pam Steinke

Group Members:
Roger Callanan
Monica Leach
Roxanna McGraw
Dianne Raubenheimer
Carrie Zelna
Coding Subgroup

- Origin and Purpose of the study
- Source of Data: UPA Sophomore Survey 2006
- Original Question: Did you ever consider withdrawing or transferring from NC State?
  - No: (812) 56.8%
  - Yes, but not very seriously: (367) 25.7%
  - Yes, I seriously considered it: (230) 16.1%
  - Yes, I left and came back: (20) 1.4%
- Total number of students giving written responses: (482)
- Total written responses: (683) *more than one per student
Process

• Created codes from literature on retention
• Coded individually
• Normed as a group
• Reorganized statements by codes
• Recoded as needed
• Reviewed as group to determine themes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>Self efficacy/confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>Coping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>Locus of control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>Self development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>Dependency (homesick, boyfriend/girlfriend, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>Lack of Direction/Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>new experience-or new location just because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>Performance-GPA, in a class or on an assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>Major options</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>Tutoring,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>Advising</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>Curriculum which include delivery mode-on line, etc</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>Instruction-all instructor related responsibilities like office hours, etc</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Rigor (Quality of education)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Support for special needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Welcoming climate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Identity group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Involved /connected</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bureaucratic</td>
<td>red tape</td>
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<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td>Outside of anyone’s control such as sick family, new job, Trauma, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>Atmosphere/feelings about NC State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City/Urban area</td>
<td>Raleigh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical environment</td>
<td>construction, ugly campus, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>inadequate such as technology, classrooms, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We don’t know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Five Themes

• Academic Major
• Institutional Relationship and Engagement
• Academic Instruction
• Psychological Dependency
• Financial Issues
Theme One: Academic Major

- Changed major and NC State did not have the major the student wanted
- Change of major unspecified
- Change of major and major program stronger elsewhere
- Better quality major elsewhere
- Other: not rigorous enough, too rigorous, better for less money, etc.
Theme Two: Institutional Relationship and Engagement

- Issues with general atmosphere (University culture, sense of community, too conservative, engineering focused, etc.)
- Lack of individual connections (not involved or connected, fit/niche, etc.)
- Identity group/diversity (environment for minorities, lack of diversity, etc.)
- Other: gender
Theme Three: Academic Instruction

- Poor quality of instruction – not skilled at teaching
- Professors do not care about students
- Difficulty understanding the instructor’s English
- Other: unspecified problems with instruction
Theme Four: Psychological Dependency

• Missing friends, family and significant others
Theme Five: Financial Issues

- Cost of tuition
- Other: work full time, lack of aid, etc.
Common Assumptions

The following were not themes in this data:

- Advising
- Bureaucracy/Policy
- Academic Performance

- There were 38 comments we could not code because we did not understand their responses
Next Steps: Feedback from ACCESS

• Determine how we can best use this information such as:
  • changes to programs, marketing retention information, etc.

• How might the subgroup proceed:
  • If it is useful, code 2006, 2007 and 2008 Graduating Senior Survey and 2008 Sophomore Survey responses to look for changes in the themes.
  • Review the data based on demographics
  • Consider other ways of collecting the data
The Policy and Practice Review Workgroup

Chair:
Carrie McLean

Team Members:
Cheryl Branker, Thomas Conway, Jen Foster, Lari Jackson, Michelle Johnson, Kim Outing, Tracey Ray
Charge:

• Identify policies/practices that impede student success
• Develop a review cycle and review alert process
Policies Identified as Critical Impact on Student Success

- Suspension
- Intra campus Transfer
- Progress Toward Degree
- Course Repeats
- Withdrawal
- Readmission
- Absences/Attendance
Committee Activities and Goals

- Review policies from DUAP/EMAS list
- Check website for policies currently under review
- Develop critical impact policy list and research past review cycles
- Recommend a review cycle for critical impact policies
- Recommend a campus-wide policy review process
- Recommend a policy review calendar
The Student Engagement Workgroup

Co-chairs:
Karrie Dixon, Susan Grant

Team Members:
Vonda Easterling, Barbara Kirby, Allison Mitchell, Tierza Watts, Gabe Wical, Brooklyn Winters, Wandra Hill, Tony Mitchell
Student Engagement Recommendations

1. Every student should participate in at least one of the following by graduation:
   - study abroad
   - internship
   - coop
   - service-learning experience/project, one service learning course/major
   - undergraduate research experience
Student Engagement Recommendations

2. Focus on branding the “Community of Scholars” concept

1. The University and colleges should send the same messages:
   a. Use the web calendar to post activities – create single portal of information; sub-calendars related to college specific events
   c. In new construction and renovations of buildings plan for more “common gathering areas” for students.
Student Engagement Recommendations

3. Articulate CLEAR expectations to introduce students to the campus culture

1. Explain what it means to be a good community member- involvement on campus, endless opportunities for engagement, academic integrity, diverse student body, etc.
   
   a. Start with recruiting process
   
   b. Reiterate in more detail at NSO, College Orientations, AA Symposium, Wolfpack Welcome Week, etc.
Student Engagement Recommendations

4. Encourage development of additional Living Learning Villages

5. Create buy-in among Deans to
   a. Develop a traditions-based event for first-year students with an emphasis on encouraging engagement within the college and also with other student service offices/events/activities.
   b. Re-instate the “Welcome to NC State” course as a pilot after reviewing content of current college intro classes.
Overall, Student Engagement/Connection is everyone’s responsibility.

- We MUST send the same messages and expectations to students to enhance their academic and social integration to NC State University.
- Vincent Tinto’s research suggests encouraging students to find a balance between both which will lead to retention and overall student success.
“Retention is an outcome of an institution doing its core business well.”

– Thomas Conway, Dean, Undergraduate Academic Programs
Questions and Discussion