Student Success & Transforming the Campus Culture

Appreciative Inquiry Teams Exploring “What Might Be”
“VCAA Atnip Will Be Retiring”
Retention & Persistence, or Student Success? Discovering a New Paradigm in the Literature


Student Success Paradigm

Kramer & Associates (2007) *Fostering Student Success in the Campus Community*

Emerging Message

Students thrive in a campus culture where

- Students are learning
- Students are engaged in their learning,
  &
- Students see themselves in what they learn

Habley, Bloom, & Robbins (2012)
The Problem of Retention is –
“It’s Not My Problem!!!”

A “Deficiency” Mindset

A Problem for Administrators
Appreciative Inquiry for Student Success?

Open-Ended Questions, Shared Stories & Discovery—to Accentuate the Positives

(Habler, Bloom & Robbins, 2012)
A New Way of Thinking

- Empowering the people of the institution
- Learning and acting together
- Bringing out the best in one another
- Changing “the dialogue . . . at the . . . watercooler”
The Positive Language of “Student Success”

Shared responsibility for educational quality and student success, with clearly articulated pathways and an environment aimed at educational enrichment (Kuh & Associates, 2005, 2010).
“Deep” Learning

- Emphasis on first-year experience
- High performance standards balancing academic challenge with student support, and
- Active learning, student collaboration, and out of class faculty contact

(Kuh & Associates, 2006)
“Peopling” The Student Success Action Team (SSAT)

- Faculty
  - Chairs of Faculty Senate Committees
    (Assessment, Faculty Affairs, & Recruitment & Retention)

- Directors of Academic Programs
  (Common Experience, First-Year Seminar, Honors Program)
Strategically Positioned Faculty

- Lower Level Mathematics Coordinator
- Writing Center Director
- Winner of Multiple Trustees’ Awards
- NACADA Faculty Advisor of the Year
Strategic Staff Selections

Financial Aid Director
Residence Life Director
Advising Program Director of ACES
IU Southeast Advising Council President
SSAT Charge(s)

- To reach out broadly to campus constituents to promote student success
- To assist those already working on or intending to work on student success projects
- To facilitate campus communication of these actions and share best practices
Creating Tasks

Feasibility,
Interest,
Relevance, & Need
Threading the Whole

Common Purpose: Building the Culture for Access, Quality, & Success

Common Method: Focusing on the Student as Person and Learner
SSAT First-Year Experience

- Organizing in Fall – Proposal, approval, invitee conferences & appointments
- Planning Session with smaller group
- Establishing task-teams and selecting projects
- Implementing studies in spring
The Road Mappers’ Inquiry

- How do program course offerings facilitate timely satisfaction of program requirements?

- How do school web sites facilitate students’ finding clear and accurate program information?
Data and Processes

Translated Class Schedules to Excel

Translated Program Requirements to Excel

Coded Courses as “Required or Elective” / “Major or General Education”

Developed observations and questions from findings for the use of program coordinators
May Outcomes

- Course frequency and capacity in relation to program requirements over the past 3 years and the projected schedule for the next 2 years as a tool to review for best practices of what might be.

- Ways to ensure that student information on their web sites are accessible and accurate
Next Steps

- Fulfill data & consultation requests by coordinators
- Develop and sub-group within the Road Mappers to establish a de facto task team of advisors and faculty to
  - Propose a method for campus programs to ensure alignment of key student information in the bulletin with the check sheets and Academic Advising Report (AAR)
High-Impact Seekers’ Inquiry

- Of what “high impact” potential is a common intellectual experience for early student success?

- What are best practices of a common experience in the literature & within campus practices at IU Southeast?

- What might the Common Experience become to be the best it can be of its kind?
Data and Processes

- Literature on High Impact Practices & Common Intellectual Experiences

- Interviews of the founders and subsequent chairs of the campus Common Experience, to compile a history
May Outcomes

- Proposed a structure for sustainable membership and continuity of the CE Committee

- Facilitated the 2013-2014 committee’s theme & book selection and purchase of books for new students at orientations
Next Steps

- Draft, revise, and propose an Institutional Memory of the Common Experience for posting and preservation

- Draft, revise and propose a Process Handbook to facilitate understanding and operations for the Common Experience Committee leaders and members
Trait Trackers’ Inquiry

- Who ARE our students?

- How Do they do as Freshmen?
  GPA first semester & first year
  Retention to 2^{nd} year

- What attributes significantly correlate to student success across the 1st to 2^{nd} year?
Data Sources

Student Information Systems, Financial Aid, & First-Year Seminar Pre/Post Surveys
Significant Predictors of Performance & Retention

1. HS GPA (.409)
2. Unmet financial need (-.205)
3. SAT (.14)
4. Age (.085)
5. Sex (.087)
6. First generation (-0.52)
7. Student agi (.041)
Next Steps

- Add in the 2012 cohort year and review
- Determine what happened to the students in the 1st and 2nd HS GPA quartiles and what might be done to serve their goals here
- Explore best practices to assist retained students associated with other variables to facilitate their progress
The Go-Gritters’ Inquiry

What noncognitive factors may impact student success?

How are they defined?

What is the nature of their influence?

How do students fare with these indicators and what are the implications for us as a campus?
Data and Processes

- Review of the Literature
- Selection of Survey Instruments
- Design and Implementation of Pilot Survey of spring First Year Seminar students
The Factor of “Grit”

- Perseverance and passion for long-term goals in face of challenges & setbacks (US Dept. Education, 2013)

- A compound trait of interest & effort measured by the 8-item Grit-S Scale (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009)
Grit S Scale Results in Spring FYS

On average, 81% of 184 responses (n 46 x 4 items) related respondents to 4 positive attributes as very or mostly:

- Hard working
- Diligent
- Finisher(s)
- Not discouraged by setbacks
Grit S Scale Results

On average, 70.48% of the respondents related to four negative attributes as “mostly” or “very unlike” themselves:

- Changing goals
- Distracted from old by new projects
- Losing focus on long-term projects
- Losing interest in a project after a brief obsession with it
Grit or No? So what?

Three facets of grit, tenacity, and perseverance have been “shown to be malleable and teachable” (US Dept. Ed. 2013):

- Academic mindsets about the learning environment
- Effort to direct attention to the long-term, despite hindrances
- Strategies for addressing hindrances
The Factor of “Hope”

Thinking about specific goals with the will to pursue them and multiple ways to achieve them (Snyder 2002).
A Case in Point

Using the 12-item *hope* scale, Snyder (2002) divided new freshmen by their high, medium, or low scores after a mass screening of 808 students comprising multiple introductory psychology classes at a public Midwestern university.
Findings

- Persons with higher measures of hope produced more ways to achieve goals

- Higher hope scores related reliably to
  - higher likelihood of graduating,
  - lower dismissal or dropout rates, &
  - higher GPAs
Conclusion

Hope theory affirms that high-hope students pursue learning goals to move toward mastery, while low-hope students tend toward performance goals based on the world around them and are more apt to feel helpless.
May Outcomes

A Qualtrics survey of 90 students in spring FYS accessed 4/12 thru 4/24.

Included the Grit Scale (8 items)
The Hope Scale (12 items) & the College Undergraduate Stress Survey

Rate of return was 46 students (50+%) 

Data are currently being analyzed & interpreted.
Next Steps

A fall 2013 survey of first year seminar students
Further literature review
Decision-making about data priorities in terms of student needs
Developing tools for faculty use
Informal SSAT Assessment

- Retention flows from students’ successful education (Tinto).
- Student success is a team opportunity, benefitting from faculty at center (Rouche)
- Campus culture will become what it might be as we proactively coach students to have productive mindsets, help them with better strategies, and clear their paths of unproductive barriers that lead them off track (U.S. Department of Education)
Student Success “Action Teams”

System Wide
- Blueprint for Student Attainment
- FACET Leadership Project(s)

Campus Wide
- VC/AVC Administrative – Task Force(s)
- Dean and Faculty – Action Group(s)
Opportunities for Deans & Administrators

- To join with the capable, caring persons around us and

- To carve out meaningful tasks to enrich our campus culture for student success
Why a Task Team?

What we “know,” “think we know,” or “believe” carries little weight: what matters is “what we do.” (Ruskins)

Whether for students or for leaders of student success, the point of action is not to set a goal but to have the will to pursue it to attainment. (Landry)
References


Tinto, V. 2004. “Student Retention & Graduation”: Facing the Truth, Living with the Consequences.” Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education

Contact Information

Annette Wyandotte

IU Southeast

awyandot@ius.edu