Spring ’06 Retention Retreat

JW Marriott Starr Ranch
Tucson, Arizona

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The Campus Audit:
Understanding Your Campus
Essential Questions

• What should we look for on campus?
  – Key Questions
• How do we measure success?
  – Definitions
• What data are important to collect?
  – Being selective
• Leveraging the knowledge
  – Mobilizing the campus
• Toward a meaningful plan
  – Beyond the ‘one-off’

What Should We Look For?

• Organizational Framework
  – Does policy, practice, process or structure improve or enhance student learning?
• Culture of Evidence
  – How do we know?
  – Data-driven decision making
• Barriers to Change
Policy Frameworks: J. Gardner

- Approaches the first year in ways that are intentional and based on a philosophy of the first year that informs relevant institutional practices.
- Creates organizational structures that provide a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated approach to the first year.
- Begins a process by which students gain an understanding of what it means to be an educated person according to institutional mission and values.
- Facilitates appropriate recruitment, admissions and student transitions through practices that are intentional and aligned with institutional mission.
- Elevates the first college year to a high priority with faculty.
- Serves all first year students according to their varied needs.
- Builds commitment of first year students to the institution through a clear articulation of its identity and ethos.

Other Typical Policies

- Academic managers are required to monitor and report retention rates on an annual basis
- Institution has student probationary policies that promote success
- Policy specifies collection of student feedback on learning experiences
- Highly effective faculty are assigned to first-year courses
- New faculty orientation program requires presentation on student characteristics and factors influencing success/retention
- Institution has set goals or benchmarks for student retention
- Policy specifies formal mid-term grade report
- Class attendance policy (e.g. students are penalized for unexcused class absences)
- Faculty office hours policy (e.g. faculty must schedule, post and observe office hours)
Practices & Processes

- Academic Advising
- Faculty Advising
- Career Counseling
- Personal Counseling
- Orientation
- Success Seminar
- Disabilities/Special Needs
- Minorities
- Gender program
- Mature Student
- Secondary School Liaison
- Campus Tours
- Course Placement
- New Faculty Orientation
- Faculty Development
- Peer Tutoring
- Peer Mentoring
- Math Services Centre
- Language Skills Services
- Learning Skills Services
- Housing Services
- Employment Centre
- Student for a Day
- Extracurricular Programs
- Residence Life
- Supplemental Instruction
- Early Alert Systems
- Health Services
- Service Learning of Learning

Structures

- Single person is responsible for coordinating retention efforts
- A separate budget is allocated for student success efforts
- A Student Success/Retention Committee is present on campus
Barriers

- **Financial** (e.g. unable to secure project financing)
- **Cultural** (e.g. institutional values do not support/encourage first year/student success efforts)
- **Structural** (organizational structure inhibits widespread adoption of new initiatives, e.g. multi-campus)

What Data are Important?

- **Sources of Information**
  - Research literature
  - Theoretical frameworks
- **Types of Information**
  - Student characteristics
  - Student experiences
  - Outcome profiles
  - Learning pathways/trajectories
**RESEARCH ON LEARNING**

- **Verbal, Quantitative and Subject Matter Competence**
  - Individualized instruction produces greater gains

- **Cognitive Skills and Intellectual Growth**
  - Growth directly related to student involvement in college academic and social life

- **Identity, Self-Concept and Self-Esteem**
  - Development influenced by student involvement in academic and social systems of college

- **Relating to Others and the External World**
  - Evidence for the importance of interaction with faculty & peers

- **Attitudes and Values**
  - Evidence that change is due to college experiences: Interpersonal associations students have with faculty and peers

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**Swail’s Model**

The Student Experience

Academic Rigor
Quality of Learning
Aptitude
Content Knowledge
Critical-Thinking Ability
Technology Ability
Study Skills
Learning Skills
Time Management
Academic-Related Extracurricular Activities

Financial Issues
Educational Legacy
Attitude Toward Learning
Religious Background
Maturity
Social Coping Skills
Communication Skills
Attitude Toward Others
Cultural Values
Expectations
Goal Commitment
Family Influence
Peer Influence
Social Lifestyle

Financial Aid
Recruitment & Admissions
Academic Services
Student Services
Curriculum & Instruction

TINTO’S THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Academic Sphere
Initial Commitments
- Background Characteristics
- Institutional Commitment

Integration
- Intellectual Development
- Faculty Interaction
- Peer Interaction

Grades

Contingent Commitments
- Goal Commitment
- Academic Integration
- Social Integration

Institutional Commitment

Departure Decision

The Research Program:
Longitudinal, Repeated Measures Design

Entry to College
- H.S. Grades
- Basic Skills
- Entry Questionnaire

Mid Term
- Mid-Term Grades
- Mid-Term Questionnaire

End of Term
- Final Grades, Enrolment
Student-Based Data: Focus on The First-Year Experience

- Student Profiles
  - Entry diversity: magnitude, dimensions
- First-Year Experience
  - Academic and social integration
- Outcome Profiles
  - Etiology of first-year outcomes
- Learning Pathways
  - Identifying barriers to learning
  - Identifying intervention strategies

THE FACE OF STUDENT DIVERSITY
LEARNER CHARACTERISTICS AT ENTRY: DIVERSITY

• Needs
  – Financial, learning skills, child care, career guidance etc.
• Abilities
  – Literacy, numeracy, computer skills
• Attitudes
  – Confidence, preference for f-t work, value of PSE
• Behaviours
  – Study habits
  – Class attendance habits
  – Homework completion habits
  – P-T work commitments
CAREER UNCERTAINTY

Distribution of Career Uncertainty by Cohort: Humber

CAREER UNCERTAINTY BY AGE

Career Uncertainty at Entry by Age: Humber College, '98-'03

FIT System 4.1 (n = 25,000)
### Outcomes Typology for the First-Year of College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Performance</th>
<th>Registration Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Successful Persister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Failed Persister</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mid-Term Attitudes by Outcome Group

Leveraging the Knowledge

- Promote Student Involvement/Engagement
- Staff Recruitment: Student Diversity
- New Staff Orientation, Pro Development
- Quality Assurance:
  - Barriers to Learning at the Program Level
- Institutional Culture
  - Learner/Learning centred
  - Evidence-based decision making
- Organizational Change
  - Placing learning first
Promote Student Involvement and Engagement

New Staff Recruitment Criteria: Type of Student Diversity

- Human Resources Recruiting Initiative
  - Look of advertisements for new staff
  - Location of staff recruitment advertisements in newspapers
New Staff Orientation & Professional Development

• Student Profiles
  – Needs, attitudes, values, behaviors
• Factors Influencing Student Engagement
  – Work hours
  – Instructional methods

Behaviour: Distribution of Work Hours by Cohort
Academics and Working While Studying

Influences on Student Engagement

• Instructional Method
  – “Sage on the stage vs guide on the side”

• Collaborative/Cooperative Learning
  – Questionnaire Item:
  “Most of my classes have encouraged student participation or involvement”
Classroom Involvement & Faculty Contact

Out-of-Class Faculty Contact by Student Classroom Involvement

Peer Study Group Frequency and Class Involvement

Study Group Frequency by Student Classroom Involvement
Quality Assurance: Barriers to Learning at the Program Level

Influence of Career Uncertainty

CAREER UNCERTAINTY & PROGRAM PERCEPTION

Mid-Term Perception of Program by Entry Career Uncertainty

Program Perception Scale

FIT System 4.1 (n = 15,105)
CAREER UNCERTAINTY & COLLEGE ACADEMIC BEHAVIOUR

Institutional Culture & Organizational Change

Placing Learning First & Creating a Culture of Evidence
DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEMS:
The Freshman Integration & Tracking System

• Measures Individual Student Characteristics
• Creates Individualized Learning Opportunities
• Targets Learning Support Services to Specific Learners
• Describes the Student First-Year Experience
• Identifies Barriers to Learning
• An Information System for Decision Making
• Creates an Outcomes-Focused Culture

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