Taking Stock of What Matters to Student Success

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INDIANA UNIVERSITY
Center for Postsecondary Research

College Outcomes Quiz

What percent of 1999-2000 college graduates attended two or more institutions?

(a) 14% (b) 26% (c) 33%
(d) 42% (e) 59%

e. *59%*

Student Success in College

➢ **Are you satisfied with your institution's graduation rates?**
➢ **To what extent does your institution challenge and support students in ways that foster their learning and personal development?**
➢ **How do you know?**
➢ **What might you do differently to improve student learning and persistence on your campus?**

What *Really* Matters in College: Student Engagement

Ernest T. Pascarella
Patrick T. Terenzini

HOW COLLEGE AFFECTS STUDENTS

Volume 2 · A Third Decade of Research

Because individual effort and involvement are the critical determinants of college impact, institutions should focus on the ways they can shape their academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular offerings to encourage student engagement.

Pascarella & Terenzini, *How College Affects Students*, 2005, p. 602

Lessons From the Research

➢ **What matters most is what students do, not who they are**
➢ **A key factor is the quality of effort students expend**
➢ **Educationally effective institutions channel student energy toward the right activities**

Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education
(Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005)

➢ **Student-faculty contact**
➢ **Active learning**
➢ **Prompt feedback**
➢ **Time on task**
➢ **High expectations**
➢ **Respect for diverse learning styles**
➢ **Cooperation among students**

National Survey of Student Engagement
(pronounced "nessie")

Community College Survey of Student Engagement
*(pronounced "sessie")*

College student surveys that assess the extent to which students engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development

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Inquiring Minds Want to Know:

➢ **What do strong-performing colleges and universities do to promote student success?**

➢ **What campus features -- policies, programs, and practices – are related to higher-than-predicted graduation rates and student engagement?**

Project DEEP

To discover, document, and describe what high performing institutions do to achieve their notable level of effectiveness.
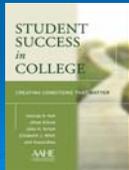
DEEP Selection Criteria

Controlling for student and institutional characteristics (i.e., selectivity, diversity, institutional type), DEEP schools have:

➢ **Higher-than-predicted graduation rates**
➢ **Higher-than-predicted NSSE scores**

Region and institutional type, special mission

Project DEEP Schools

Doctoral Extensives
 University of Kansas
 University of Michigan

Doctoral Intensives
George Mason University
Miami University (Ohio)
University of Texas El Paso

Master's Granting
 Fayetteville State University
 Gonzaga University
 Longwood University

Liberal Arts
 California State, Monterey Bay
 Macalester College
 Sweet Briar College
 The Evergreen State College
 Sewanee: University of the South
 Ursinus College
 Wabash College
 Wheaton College (MA)
 Wofford College

Baccalaureate General
 Alverno College
 University of Maine at Farmington
 Winston-Salem State University

Research Approach

➢ **Case study method**
 • **Team of 24 researchers review institutional documents and conduct multiple-day site visits**
 • **Observe individuals, classes, group meetings, activities, events**
  ◦ **2,700+ people, 60 classes, 30 events,**
 • **Discover and describe effective practices and programs, campus culture**

➢ **Roundtables conducted by AAHE to explore uses of NSSE data for improvement of student learning**

NSSE Clusters of Effective Educational Practices

- Level of Academic Challenge
- Active & Collaborative Learning
- Student Faculty Interaction
- Enriching Educational Experiences
- Supportive Campus Environment

Six Shared Conditions

1. "Living" Mission and "Lived" Educational Philosophy
2. Unshakeable Focus on Student Learning
3. Environments Adapted for Educational Enrichment
4. Clearly Marked Pathways to Student Success
5. Improvement-Oriented Ethos
6. Shared Responsibility for Educational Quality

Using DEEP Findings

- ☑ How well do our programs work and how do we know?
- ☑ How many students do our efforts reach in meaningful ways and how do we know?
- ☑ To what degree are our programs and practices complementary & synergistic?
- ☑ What are we doing that is *not* represented among the DEEP practices? Should we continue to do it?
- ☑ What are we *not doing* that we should?

Inventory for Student Engagement and Success

ISES

1. Guiding principles
2. Diagnostic queries
   - ✓ 6 DEEP conditions
   - ✓ 5 clusters of effective educational practices
3. Using ISES on campus

Are You Ready for ISES?

- ☑ Who is willing to commit time and energy to the process?
- ☑ Are key institutional leaders supportive?
- ☑ Is a critical mass of interest evident?
- ☑ What human/financial resources are needed and available?
- ☑ Who will lead the effort?
- ☑ Are people willing to tackle difficult issues?

"Ready, fire, aim."

Weick, 1995, p. 168

Guiding Principles

1. **Context is everything**
2. **The whole is greater than the sum of the parts**
3. **Evidence is essential; more is better**
4. **Test beliefs with data**
5. **Cast a wide net**
6. **Use outsiders to ask hard questions**
7. **Acknowledge the negative; accentuate the positive**
8. **Prepare to stay the course**

Guiding Principles

1. **Context is everything**
2. **The whole is greater than the sum of the parts**

   The greatest impact appears to stem from students' total level of campus engagement, particularly when academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular involvements are mutually reinforcing... (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 647)

Guiding Principles

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3. **Evidence is essential; more is better**

   Most college campuses are awash in data but thirsty for information (Seymour, 1995, p. 80).

Guiding Principles

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Testing beliefs

What you expect to see is what you see... Our interpretations hinge on our expectations, beliefs, and values . . . We manage to see what we expect and want . . . A better alternative is to think, to probe more deeply into what is really going on. (Bolman & Deal, 2003, pp. 32-33)

Guiding Principles

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   Assessment is no less a collective endeavor than a choir performance. Both require interaction, participation, direction, and the joining together of different voices in common song. (Banta et al., 1996, pp. 35-36)

Guiding Principles

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7. **Acknowledge the negative; accentuate the positive**
   Improvement is more of a function of learning to do the right thing in the setting where you work than it is of what you know when you start to do the work (Elmore as cited in Fullan, 2001, p. 125)

Guiding Principles

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Why stay the course

The good-to-great-transformations never happened in one fell swoop. There was no single defining action, no grand program, no one killer innovation, no solitary lucky break, no miracle moment. Sustainable transformations follow a predictable pattern of buildup and breakthrough... (Collins, 2001, p. 186)

4. Clear Pathways to Student Success

Acculturation

Teaching Students How to Succeed

➤ What messages do we send to prospective students about:
- expectations for their performance and outcomes,
- expectations that students assume a fair share of responsibility for their learning?

➤ Do we communicate high expectations to all students – stretching them beyond their perceived limits?

PROMOTING REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS

Miller, Bender, & Schuh (Eds.), 2005. Jossey-Bass & NASPA

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4. Clear Pathways to Student Success
Building Community

- Do all students feel a sense of 'specialness' about the institution? Or are feelings of 'specialness' limited to certain groups of students?
- What traditions and events introduce students to the values of the institution? To what extent are those traditions consistent and/or inconsistent with the espoused institutional values? What acculturation experiences should be added?


Socialization to academic expectations

Wofford first-year students read a common novel and write a short essay connecting it to their own lives. The eight best essays are published and distributed to all new students. In this way, the College confers celebrity status on strong academic performers.

Intentional acculturation

Rituals and traditions connect students to each other and the institution

KU's "Traditions Night." 3,000+ students gather in the football stadium to rehearse the Rock Chalk Chant, learn "I'm a Jayhawk", and hear stories intended to instill students' commitment to graduation

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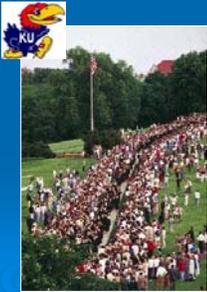
Intentional acculturation

At Longwood, peer mentors -- "students helping other students" -- are catalysts to promote student achievement and learning and introduce students' to volunteer and other educational opportunities through the Longwood Seminar, residence halls leadership roles, and the strong co-curricular program.

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4. Clear Pathways to Student Success
➢ **Alignment**
Mark the Pathways to Student Success

- To what extent are resources, structures, programs, policies, and practices consistent with the institution's mission and students' characteristics?
- Are forms of challenge and support consistent with the needs of students and with the institution's educational priorities? Do students who need extra support receive it?

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4. Clear Pathways to Student Success
Front-loading Resources

- To what extent are resources 'front-loaded' to foster academic and social success? Are these efforts integrated with, or tangential to, the curriculum? How might they be more effective?
- Can students find resources when they need them?
- What programs assist students who need additional skill preparation to succeed in college? Who uses them? Are they effective? How do you know?

4. Clear Pathways to Student Success
Early Warning Systems & Safety Nets

- What policies and practices identify students at risk? To what extent are they used, in what ways, and by whom? Are they effective?
- Are safety nets (programs, policies, practices) for students in difficulty available and used? Who uses them? Who does not?
- To what extent are these resources, programs, policies, practices, and structures effective, and for whom?

Redundant early warning systems

FSU's Early Alert program enables faculty to contact first-year student mentors and University College to alert them about students experiencing difficulty during the first two weeks of the semester. Mentors contact students to advise and refer as appropriate.

Redundant early warning systems: "Tag Teaming"

➤ Wheaton first-year student advising team includes faculty, student preceptors, librarians and administrative staff.

➤ At Ursinus, Miami, and Wheaton representatives from both academic affairs and student affairs serve as academic advisors.

4. Clear Pathways to Student Success
Integration of Initiatives

- Are our resources, programs, policies, practices and structures for student success redundant and responsive?
- In what ways do students' out-of-class lives facilitate or inhibit their learning and success?
- Who collects and disseminates information about students and their experiences?
- Who brings together various pictures of students and their experiences to create a holistic understanding of the quality of undergraduate programs?

Intentional acculturation

Miami's First Year Experience (FYE) brings coherence to the first-year by linking: (1) Miami Plan Foundation courses taught by full-time faculty; (2) optional first-year seminars; (3) community living options that emphasize leadership and service; and (4) cultural, intellectual, and arts events.

"It's All About the Culture"

Institutional Cultures

➤ What is distinctive about this institution: To students? To staff?
➤ How do these distinctive aspects of the institution affect the campus climate? Student success?
➤ In what ways do the institutional culture and dominant subcultures promote, or inhibit, student learning and success?

"It's All About the Culture"

Student Cultures

- How do students describe what they learn, how they learn, and from whom? In what ways are students' experiences consistent and inconsistent with those desired and/or claimed by the institution?
- How do the student culture and/or dominant student subcultures promote or inhibit student learning and success?
- What opportunities exist to celebrate students and their learning? Institutional values? Campus community?

Using ISES

Logistical issues

   a. Preparing to launch ISES

   b. Timeline and workscope

   c. Human and financial resources

Faculty Members   Administrators   Students

Using ISES

Applications

   a. Student affairs

   b. Academic administrators

   c. Admissions and orientation

   d. Staff development

   e. Assessment & IR

   f. Accreditation & self studies
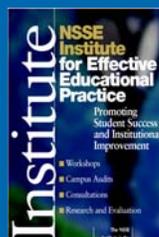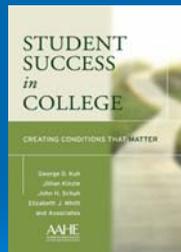
   g. Partnerships

   h. Governing boards

ISES

A work in progress…

Assessing Conditions to Enhance Educational Effectiveness: The Inventory for Student Engagement and Success

STUDENT SUCCESS in COLLEGE

CREATING CONDITIONS THAT MATTER

Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, forthcoming

Jossey-Bass

Questions & Discussion