Retention and Completion Task Force

Committee Recommendations, Fall 2018

Questions Before The Task Force

- How do we improve our retention and completion rates?
- How do we help students succeed at MxCC and prepare them for success in further education and the work force?
- What opportunities do we have, or can we create, for deeper student engagement on campus?

The Retention Problem – What We Know

- In fall 2017, **First Time, Full-Time, Degree Seeking Students** had a fall-to-fall retention rate of **57.6%** (6.3% enrolled elsewhere, 36.1% were not retained in Higher Ed).

- In fall 2017, **First Time, Part-Time, Degree Seeking Students** had a **46%** retention rate (6.8% enrolled elsewhere, 46.8% were not retained in Higher Ed).

- We know which students are **least likely to be retained**, but we don't do a great job of identifying at-risk students to the faculty and staff who serve them.

- As an institution, we know **our retention rates are in line with the national average and have been improving slightly**, although the practices that have led to these gains have not been determined.

- The committee has **3 basic recommendations.**

3 Basic Recommendations

1. Develop and implement proactive strategies for retaining at-risk students.

2. Develop and implement strategies that empower first semester students to take gradual responsibility for their college success.

3. Develop a plan for continuous improvement in student retention.

I. Develop and implement proactive strategies for retaining at-risk students

- Develop and implement a notification system that identifies "at-risk" students to their advisors and professors.
- Implement the findings of the Student Academic Risk Team.
- Continue to prioritize early alert and intervention systems.
- Fund, through a grant or through operating costs, a part-time, Advising and Retention Specialist to serve as a support person for those offices.
- If the state funds new academic advisors, position them directly in the academic buildings.

Example: A Model for Sharing At-Risk Students with Advisors and Faculty

- Dean England used a predictive model to identify at-risk students.
- This modeling identified several factors, including the student's need for remediation, their GPA, their age, their first generation status, their ethnicity, and their registration date.
- Faculty would receive a list of useful information on those advisees and students flagged as "at-risk" at the start of the new semester.
- Faculty could then, if they were able and interested, provide extra support to those at-risk students.
- One recommendation of our task-force is that a similar predictive modeling be rolled out to faculty and advisors at MxCC.

II. Develop and implement strategies that empower first semester students to take gradual responsibility for their college success.

- Require first semester students to meet with their academic advisors and develop advising resources for online students.
- Recommend that students identified as "at-risk" meet with their advisors more than once per semester.
- Develop formal and informal cohort programs, including linked classes between a student's program and their gen-ed requirements.
- Better acculturate students to college processes and procedures during their first semester.
- Provide an Academic Success Skills coaching guide to all advisors and new students.

Example: Possible Linked Courses Lurking in the Fall 2018 Schedule

- Linked classes/learning communities are identified by CCSSE as an effective retention strategy.
- It's possible to create linked courses for students from an advising perspective without making any curricular changes as long as we're attentive to an existing schedule.
- In Fall 2018, the following pairings were available:
  - ENG 101 M/W 9:30 with EVS 100, Com 101, or CJS 101 M/W at 11
  - ENG 101 M/W 5:10-6:35 with CST 120, W 6:35-9:05
  - ENG 101 M/W 8-9:15 with CST 201, M/W 9:30-10:45
  - ENG 101 T/R 9:30-10:45 with HSE 101, T/R 11-12:15
- This list could go on for a while and doesn't have to involve ENG 101. The point is, we already have informally paired courses as long as we're attentive as advisors (or if we have someone who can go through the schedule and highlight them for advisors).

III. Develop a Plan for Continuous Improvement in Student Retention

- Continue to gather retention data and refract all relevant data collection through the lens of retention.
- Identify retention-related shortcomings, via CCSSE and other data points, and set reasonable goals for improvement in those areas.
- Ensure that all retention practices are transparent, realistic, and clearly communicated to all stakeholders.
- Elevate the Retention Task Force to a Retention and Advising Task Force to implement, with campus stakeholders, the committee's recommendations.
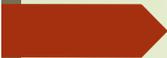
Example: Some Data Goals We Could Prioritize

- Increase full-time and part-time retention rates by 3 points.
- Improve the CCSSE benchmark "Support for Learners" from 48 points to 50 points.
  - Encourage/Require struggling students to take advantage of support services.
  - Reinforce support services as possible.
- Improve the CCSSE benchmark "Active and Collaborative Learning" from 45 to 48 points.
  - Encourage faculty to assign students to make a class presentation, to work with other students on projects during class, and/or participate in a community-based project.

Questions and Thanks!

- We'd be happy to answer your questions or hear your suggestions!
- The committee will be meeting again in January and we'd love to have you as part of the team.
- Thanks for making the space that enables these conversations.