Fostering Student Success in College

Jillian Kinzie, Ph.D.

Indiana University
Center for Postsecondary Research
CIC Institute for Chief Academic Officers and Chief Financial Officers

November 3-6, 2007
Philadelphia, PA

PWPT: www.nsse.iub.edu

Overview

- What concerns do you have about student success?
- The “pipeline” problem
- Student success framework
- Taking Stock at your Institution
- Propositions and recommendations
- Reflection and Discussion


Student Success in College

Academic achievement, engagement in educationally purposeful activities, satisfaction, acquisition of desired knowledge, skills and competencies, persistence, attainment of educational objectives, and post-college performance

Student Success Quiz

1. What percent of first-year high school students complete college six years after high school graduation?
   (a) 18% (b) 27% (c) 40% (d) 68% (e) none of the above

2. What percent of high school seniors have college-level reading skills?
   (a) 51% (b) 59% (c) 68% (d) 77% (e) none of the above

Factors That Threaten Persistence and Graduation from College

- Academically underprepared for college-level work
- First-generation college student
- Gap between high school and college
- 30+ hours working per week
- Part-time enrollment
- Single parent
- Financially independent
- Children at home

21st Century Students and the College Experience

- College-going stakes higher today at any point in history
- 45% students in 2yr-colleges depart during their first year, & 1 of 4 leave from 4-yr schools
- About 1 in 6 first-year students are first-generation – and are likely disadvantaged in comparison to students whose parents had significant experience with the college or university setting
- Enrollment & persistence rates of historically underserved students lagging
What the Research Says about High School Student Engagement

Engagement is linked to:
- Persistence
- Integration into school culture and participation in extracurricular activities
- A school climate supportive of achieving educational goals
- Various desirable outcomes

What Do We Know about High School Engagement?

What percent of high school students spend less than 4 hours per week preparing for class?

- 9th – 30%
- 10th – 33%
- 11th – 34%
- 12th – 47%

Other Findings Pertaining to High School Engagement

- Seniors disengaged
- Average 1 hour of homework per night
- Passive learning dominates over active and collaborative learning

What Really Matters in College: Student Engagement

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


Student Engagement Trinity

- What students do -- time and energy devoted to educationally purposeful activities
- What institutions do -- using effective educational practices to induce students to do the right things
- Educationally effective institutions channel student energy toward the right activities
**Good Practices 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

---

**NSSE Findings: Grades, persistence, student satisfaction, and engagement go hand in hand**

- Does engagement affect FY GPA and chances of returning the next year?
- Does engagement have differential effects on GPA and persistence for historically under-represented students?

---

**NSSE Findings: Grades, persistence, student satisfaction, and engagement go hand in hand**

- Does engagement affect FY GPA and chances of returning the next year?
- Does engagement have differential effects on GPA and persistence for historically under-represented students?

---

**Scale of Educationally Purposeful Activities**

(NSSE Response Set = Very often, *Often*, *Sometimes*, Never)

Summative scale of 19 NSSE items measuring student interaction with faculty, experiences with diverse others, and their involvement in opportunities for active and collaborative learning.

- Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions
- Made a class presentation
- Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in
- Came to class without completing readings or assignments
- Worked with other students on projects during class
- Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments
- Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)
- Participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course
- Used electronic medium (list-serv, chat, Internet) to discuss/complete assignment
- Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor
- Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor
- Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor
- Discussed ideas from your readings/classes with others outside of class
- Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance (written or oral)
- Worked harder than you thought to meet an instructor's standards or expectations
- Worked with faculty on activities other than coursework (committees, student life, etc.)
- Discussed ideas from readings/classes with others outside of class (students, family, coworkers)
- Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own
- Had serious conversations with students who differ from you - religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values

---

**NSSE Connecting the Dots Finding: Compensatory Effect of Engagement**

- Student engagement positively related to FY and senior student grades and to persistence between the first and second year of college at the same institution for all students
- For underrepresented students, engagement has compensatory effect on FY grades and persistence to the second year of college

---

**Opportunity for Institutional Reflection**

A Closer Look at Engagement in Effective Educational Practice

- Faculty/Staff Contact with Students
- No Value
- Exhibiting Evidence

- Orientation programs for first-year and transfer students
- Faculty and staff are accessible to students
- Faculty and staff are accessible to students
- Internal student-faculty interactions are encouraged and valued

- Take stock of your college.
- Identify one strength and one concern to share at your table.

---

**Student Behaviors & Activities Associated with Student Success**

- Faculty-Student Contact (important for first-gen, racial-ethnically diverse students)
- Peer Interactions ("interaction with agents of socialization", peer teaching, tutoring)
- Experiences with Diversity
- Co-curricular Activities (important for persistence)
- Student Satisfaction (influences sense of belonging)
Faculty and Staff Contact

- Out-of-class contact appears to positively shape students’ perceptions of campus environment and positively influence educational aspiration and degree completion.
- To what degree does effective faculty and staff contact occur with your students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty/Staff Contact with Students</th>
<th>Yes – No</th>
<th>Exhibiting Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation programs for first-year and transfer students facilitate faculty and staff advising and outreach with new students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty and staff are accessible to students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal student-faculty interactions are encouraged and rewarded</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Peer Interactions & Co-Curricular Involvement

- Students are more likely to stay in school when they feel comfortable and connected to others who share similar interests and aspirations.
- Peer interaction around learning experiences support active engagement in learning.
- How often does this happen at your college?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer Interactions and Co-Curricular Involvement</th>
<th>Yes – No</th>
<th>Exhibiting Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation programs for first-year and transfer students introduce students to campus life and encourage participation in academic and extracurricular activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students contact with affinity groups that are achievement-oriented and reinforce a desire to graduate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students engage in activities that help them develop self-confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Experiences with Diversity

- These experiences can have substantial and positive effects for virtually all students and across a wide range of desirable college outcomes.
- How much does this happen for your students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiences with Diversity</th>
<th>Yes – No</th>
<th>Exhibiting Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your college encourages contact among students of different backgrounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students talk with others of different racial/ethnicities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduates interact with those who are very different in terms of their religious beliefs or personal values</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse perspectives are incorporated into class discussion or written work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Institutional Conditions that Support Student Success

- Fostering student success means providing stimulating classroom experiences that encourage students to devote more time and effort to their learning and help them develop good study habits (Kuh et al. 2005b; Volkwein et al. 2000).
- Student affairs and academic affairs work together to improve the learning climate in and outside the classroom.
- To what extent do these conditions support student success at your college?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Conditions that Support Student Success</th>
<th>Yes – No</th>
<th>Exhibiting Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A clear, focused institutional mission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High standards and expectations for student performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment and timely feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning centered culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement for students to explore human differences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on the first college year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familial involvement is encouraged among first-year students, particularly important to the psychological well-being of racially and ethnically diverse students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for diverse ways of knowing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of prior learning and experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic support programs are tailored to meet student needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing application of learned skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration among student and academic affairs, and students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment that emphasizes support for academic work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Principles of Good Practice for the First College Year: Recommendations

- Institutional commitment by leaders, faculty, staff, and governing boards
- Focus on student learning both inside and outside the classroom
- Encourage student affairs-academic affairs partnership
- Offer challenge and support
- Communicate high expectations
- Foster an inclusive and supportive campus climate
- Conduct systematic assessment
- Create an atmosphere of dignity and respect for first-year students
- Teach students strategies and skills to succeed
- Get faculty involved
- Encourage students to assume responsibility for their success

Table 1. Inventory of Programs for Student Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Inventory of Programs for Student Success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On Our Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-Year Seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Warning Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising Career Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship, Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-curricular Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math-Science Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service-Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Institutional Conditions for Student Success

- For institutional programs, practices to be effective they must...
  - Involve a significant proportion of students
  - Be of high quality, employ best practices, meet needs of your students & attend to campus culture
  - Be knit into students experience – be unavoidable
  - Be assessed, monitored, reviewed, improved

Propositions and Recommendations

1. The trajectory for academic success in college is established long before students matriculate.
   - Ensure that all students have rigorous, intensive pre-college academic preparation.
   - Align high school curricula with college performance standards.
   - Develop comprehensive college readiness strategies that address the educational needs of all students.
   - Instill in K-12 educators an assets-based talent development philosophy about teaching and learning.

2. Family and community support are indispensable.
   - Expand the scale and scope of demonstrably effective college encouragement and transition programs.
   - Ensure that students and families have accurate information about college, including real costs and aid availability.

3. The right amount and kind of money matters to student success.
   - Align financial aid and tuition policy so that financial assistance packages meet students’ need.
   - Create small pockets of emergency funds to meet student financial needs in “real” time.

Principles for Strengthening Pre-College Preparation

- Expect that all underserved students are capable of being prepared to enroll and succeed in college.
- Provide a range of high-quality college preparatory tools for underserved students and their families.
- Embrace social, cultural, and learning style differences in developing learning environments and activities for underserved students.
- Involve leaders at all levels in establishing policies, programs, and practices that facilitate student transitions.
- Provide sufficient financial and human resources to enable underserved students to prepare for, enroll, and succeed in college.
- Assess policy, program, practice, and institutional effectiveness regularly.

Propositions and Recommendations

4. At-risk students require early interventions and sustained attention at various transition points
   - Clarify institutional values and expectations early and often to prospective and matriculating students.
   - Provide multiple learning support networks, early warning systems, and safety nets. Ensure that all students have rigorous, intensive pre-college academic preparation.

Be Explicit About What it Takes…
“Introduce Students to Academic Citizenship”

Student success requires that professors explain more things to today’s students that we once took for granted –

“You must buy the book, you must read it and come to class, you must observe deadlines or make special arrangements when you miss one”
Prof. Richard Turner (1998, p.4)

Propositions and Recommendations

5. Students who connect with someone or something are more likely to persist.
   - Make the classroom the locus of community.
   - Structure ways for more commuter students to spend time with classmates.
   - Involve every student in a meaningful way with some activity or some positive role model in the college environment.
   - Encourage students to live on campus at least for the first year at institutions that have housing available.

Value of “Enriching High-Impact” Practices

Students who took part in one or more “high-impact” practice such as a learning community, research with faculty, study abroad, and culminating senior experience reported greater levels of deep learning and greater gains in learning and personal development.

Lessons from National Center for Academic Transformation

- If doing something is important, require it (first-year students don’t do ‘optional!’)
- Assign course points to the activity
- Monitor and intervene when necessary

http://www.thencat.org/Newsletters/Apr06.html#1

Propositions and Recommendations

6. Institutions that focus on student success are more likely to help their students succeed.
   - Use effective educational practices.
   - Use technology in educationally effective ways.
   - Conduct periodic examinations of the student experience, inside and outside the classroom.
   - Incentivize postsecondary institutions to identify and ameliorate debilitating cultural properties.
Ultimately, it's all about the culture...

a. Identify cultural properties that impede success
b. Expand the number of cultural practitioners on campus
c. Instill an ethic of positive restlessness

Propositions and Recommendations
7. Focus assessment and accountability efforts on what matters to student success.
- Incentivize postsecondary institutions to report and use information about the student experience to improve.
- Develop an efficient way for colleges and universities to report back to high schools their graduates’ college performance and use the information to improve.

Effective Education Practices Are Marked by 6 Conditions:
1) Demand students devote time and effort to purposeful tasks
2) Demand students interact with faculty and each other
3) Increase the likelihood that students will experience diversity and contact with people who are different from themselves
4) Provide frequent feedback about performance
5) Connect students with real world applications of what they are learning

If We Could Do One Thing...
Make it possible for every student to participate in at least two high impact activities
- One in First Year
  - FY seminars
  - Learning communities
  - Service learning
- One Later in Major
  - Study abroad
  - Student-faculty research
  - Field placement or internship
  - Capstone project

To Ponder
✓ Who is “charged” with maintaining an institutional focus on student success?
✓ What indicators are used to measure institutional performance in key areas and to determine that data inform policy and decision making?
✓ To what extent do you talk about student success and connect to Admissions, fundraising, budgeting?
✓ How do you leverage student success, and communicate via data and stories?

Last Word
A college or university cannot change the lineage of its students. Campus cultures do not change easily or willingly. But we can do far more to shape the way students approach college and what they do after they arrive.

Do we have the will to more consistently use promising policies and practices to increase the odds that more students “get ready,” “get in,” and “get through?”