The Changing Face of Higher Education: Four Perspectives from WCU

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Faculty Connections to Student Success

APAA
Faculty-policy, TPR, prof dev
*CFC, HR
Curriculum (outside LS)
Enhanced Opportunities
*IPS, *HBS, UGR – collab.

COLLECTIVE EFFORT
We regret to inform you that, yes, it's a new day.

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A Similar Story Nationwide

Flat Graduation Rates, Despite Significant Student Service Investments

Average Five-Year Graduation Rates\(^1\)
Public and Private US Universities

11%

Average growth in student services spending per student FTE AY 2001-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Graduation Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
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<td>52.0%</td>
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<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Data reflects share of first-time students who have received a bachelor's degree within 5 years.

Faculty at the Center of Student Success

Research on Retention and Long-Term Outcomes Confirms Critical Role

Contributing to Persistence

“In accordance with Braxton and Gamson, several researchers documented the strong association of both formal and informal faculty-student contact to enhanced student learning. These interactions influenced the degree to which students became engaged with faculty and were frequently the best predictors of student persistence (Braxton, Sullivan, & Johnson, 1997; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Pascarella & Terenzini; Stage & Hossler, 2000).”

Paul Umbach and Matthew Wawrzynski

“Faculty Do Matter: The Role of College Faculty in Student Learning and Engagement”

Contributing to Well-Being

“(1) graduates had a professor who cared about them as a person, made them excited about learning, and encouraged them to pursue their dreams, their odds of being engaged at work nearly doubled, as did their odds of thriving in their well-being... Feeling supported and having deep learning experiences means everything when it comes to long-term outcomes for college graduates ... Yet few college graduates achieve the winning combination. Only 14% of graduates strongly agree that they were supported by professors who cared, made them excited about learning and encouraged their dreams.”

Great Jobs, Great Lives

The 2014 Gallup-Purdue Index Report

Three Critical Questions

Overcoming the Silo Problem and Garnering Campus-Wide Support

1. What should I expect of units, committees, and faculty governance?
   “We administrators have a lot of ideas about how to fix graduation rates, but shared governance means that most of the important decisions about the student experience happen outside of central administration.”

2. What should I expect of individual faculty?
   “We talk about how everything we do supports students’ short- and long-term success, but that hasn’t changed anyone’s behavior when they get back to their desk.”

3. How do I hardwire changes into institutional culture?
   “It’s hard to keep one particular issue top of mind when all of our faculty and departments have competing priorities. We’ve started a lot of initiatives over the years, but few lasted beyond the pilot phase.”

Source: EAB Interviews and analysis.
Six Roles for Faculty in Student Success

1. **Remove Curricular Barriers to Completion**
   - Considering student success in each stage of curricular decision-making

2. **Redesign Academic Policies**
   - Garnering support for student-facing rule changes that promote persistence to degree

3. **Support Evolving Advising Models**
   - Building buy-in for, confidence in, and collaboration with central and professional advising staff

4. **Enhance the Learning Experience**
   - Evaluating and scaling high-impact learning innovations across courses and disciplines

5. **Flag Signs of Student Risk**
   - Equipping faculty with the right tools and techniques to maximize early warning systems

6. **Mentor Rising-Risk Student Groups**
   - Targeting faculty engagement efforts toward students lacking a strong connection to campus

**Need actionable data**

**Advising**

**Grades First Analytics Right-touch advising**

**Mentoring Student Success**

**Provost Office Faculty Senate Registrar Financial Aid**

**Sustaining Momentum Through Structured Accountability and Incentives**

Determining the right metrics, organizational structures, and incentives to encourage improvement among central administrators, deans, department chairs, and frontline faculty
Sustaining institutional change

Within your area:
How can you support faculty engagement?

What do you need from faculty?
Removing Barriers to Completion

Summary of Key Insights

1. Equip faculty and departmental leaders with user-friendly enrollment analysis tools to enable them to check their assumptions against historical trends when planning curricular changes.

2. Ensure that curricular decisions are made with full transparency into the effect(s) proposed changes would have on student success.

3. Campus-wide retention committees should employ interested faculty in the collection, analysis, and responses to student outcome data.

4. Use a structured project management framework with concrete roles and responsibilities to carry forward working group proposals through full implementation.
Supporting Evolving Advising Models

Summary of Key Insights

1. Faculty should meet and formally train new advising staff to acclimate them to curricular developments, degree maps, frequently-asked questions, and discipline-based career planning resources.

2. Limited upward career mobility is a significant barrier to the recruitment and retention of high-performing advisors. Institutions should build a managerial career path for advising staff that incentivizes hires to take ownership over their caseload’s long-term success.

3. Designate liaisons to coordinate professional development and standardized practices between central administration, academic units, and frontline advisors.

4. Assess each academic unit’s need for unique administrative support staff to address resource concerns related to centralizing advising roles.
Scaling Learning Innovations

From Early Adopters to Campus Wide

The Learning Innovations Adoption Curve

1. Harnessing Grassroots Activity
2. Reducing the Risk of Adoption
3. Channeling Efforts to Priorities
4. Coda: Sustaining What Works
Flagging Early Signs of Risk

Summary of Key Insights

1. Class attendance, early academic performance, and concerning behavioral cues are strong predictors of ultimate success, yet institutions struggle to attain the compliance needed among faculty to collect and act on these data.

2. Early warning systems should streamline the reporting process by using a single interface and referral point, and compliance efforts should focus on high-risk student groups in introductory courses.

3. Allow instructors to customize the design, timing, and remediation strategies linked to early warning systems (within a reasonable range).

4. Evaluate and regularly communicate the impact of early warning systems on support resource utilization, course grades, and GPA to overcome faculty skepticism.
Mentoring Rising-Risk Student Groups

Summary of Key Insights

1. Most institutions have abundant programming available for first-year students, but the majority of resources are aimed at either students in need of academic support or high flyer / honors students.

2. Target faculty mentoring programs at students who lack a strong connection to campus. While many unengaged students persist for one or two years, they frequently stop out or transfer later on in their career.

3. Ensure that mentors are equipped with background information about student mentees and guides on critical topics to address prior to meetings.

4. Evaluate students’ likelihood to transfer upon matriculation (proactively) and in the event of transcript requests (reactively), and connect them with faculty mentors to discuss co-curricular opportunities.
Engaging the Academy to Drive Change

Creating Support Infrastructure
- Milestone-based degree plans
- Early academic alerts

Guiding Student Choice
- Degree scenario planning tools
- Meta-majors and exploratory tracks

Changing the Culture
- Redesign high-failure courses
- Remove curricular barriers to completion

The Curriculum
- Integrated career advising
- First year experience programs

The Co-Curricular Experiences
- Co-curricular major maps
- Structured engagement policies

The Administrative Services
- Financial distress monitoring
- Retention policy committee

The Academic Support
- One-stop support portals
- Status alert notifications

Hardwiring Student Success

Promoting Student Self-Direction

Defining the Faculty Role
- Target mentoring at rising-risk students
- Promote best-fit major selection
- Revise academic policies
- Single-step referral process
- Support evolving advising models
- Utilize early warning systems