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A Framework for Advising Reform

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Abstract

Under the Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) initiative, 45 two- and four-year colleges have undertaken reforms that aim to provide students with seamless, holistic advising experiences that lead to improved academic outcomes. Colleges participating in iPASS have adopted a data-oriented approach to select and integrate new technologies into their advising practices to facilitate better interactions between students, faculty, advisors, and other student services staff. Based on research on iPASS and other advising redesign efforts, the Community College Research Center (CCRC) developed an evidence-based framework for advising redesign called SSIPP, which emphasizes a *sustained, strategic, integrated, proactive,* and *personalized* approach to advising. This paper describes the key principles of the SSIPP framework and illustrates how these principles have been adopted in reforms. The information and recommendations shared here are derived primarily from qualitative research conducted when iPASS reforms were being developed. The focus is on examples of practice and lessons learned.

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1. Introduction

College advising and related student supports are intended to help students navigate their way to credential completion and beyond, yet resources for deploying these services, especially at community colleges, have typically been constrained. In addition, traditional advising systems do not seem to adequately address the needs of many of today's students, a fact brought into relief when considering that graduation rates continue to be low—only 39 percent of students who entered two-year public colleges in the fall of 2012 completed a degree or certificate within six years (Shapiro et al., 2018).

While advising reform is often embedded in institution-wide efforts to improve student success,[1] perhaps the most comprehensive approach for reforming advising services at broad-access colleges has been developed through the Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) initiative, supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. In 2012 and 2015, the foundation awarded grants to a combined total of 45 colleges to support the launch and use of advising technologies and to strengthen advising practice. Beginning in 2015, the initiative also engaged technical assistance partners, including Achieving the Dream[2] and Educause.[3]

iPASS was developed to transform how colleges and universities approach student advising. The goal of iPASS is to provide students with a more seamless, holistic advising experience that leads to improved student outcomes. Under iPASS, institutions select new technologies and learn how to use them, collect new data, help faculty and advisors integrate the data and technologies into their practice, and ultimately change the way they interact with students. To accomplish this, each college participating in the first round of the initiative received a grant totaling approximately $100,000 over two years, and each college participating in the second round received a grant of up to $225,000 over three years. Additionally, each college participating in the second round of the

[1] Many colleges undertake these efforts using the "guided pathways" institutional reform approach, which focuses on establishing clear program pathways for students and helping them develop and follow plans that take them through programs of study to graduation and careers.
[2] Achieving the Dream is a nongovernmental organization that provides coaching and other resources to over 220 colleges in 41 states (www.achieving thedream.org).
[3] EDUCAUSE is a nonprofit organization that supports implementation of information technologies at member institutions (www.educause.edu).

initiative received assistance in change management, in rethinking their advising and other student support strategies, and in selecting and deploying appropriate technologies.

The Community College Research Center (CCRC) has been examining the implementation and outcomes of a number of recent advising redesign efforts, including iPASS (see Klempin & Karp, 2018; Karp, Kalamkarian, Klempin, & Fletcher, 2016; Kalamkarian & Karp, 2015; Jaggars & Karp, 2016; Fletcher, Grant, Ramos, & Karp, 2016; Kalamkarian, Boynton, & Lopez, 2018). As a research partner in the iPASS initiative, CCRC conducted qualitative implementation studies at six iPASS institutions from the 2012 cohort of grantees (Karp et al., 2016). Following a second round of funding in 2015, CCRC undertook qualitative implementation studies at an additional 12 iPASS grantee institutions, as well as descriptive analyses of key performance (student outcome) indicators at all 26 of the 2015 cohort colleges. In partnership with MDRC, CCRC is also currently engaged in an experimental evaluation of an enhanced approach to iPASS at three of these institutions.

Based on some of this research as well as a review of the literature, CCRC developed an evidence-based framework for advising redesign (Karp et al., 2016). This paper presents the key tenets of this framework and shows how it may be of use to colleges considering a redesign of their advising practice. The paper begins by defining the key principles of an ideal advising experience for students based on theoretical and empirical literature. The remainder of the paper describes how these principles, incorporated in the framework, may be implemented. The information and recommendations shared here are derived primarily from qualitative research conducted during the years when iPASS reforms were being developed. The focus is on lessons learned and examples of practice in the participating colleges.

2. Envisioning an Ideal Advising Experience

Advising reforms are efforts to implement high-quality, effective practices that support students as they work toward completion of a credential. As part of the iPASS approach described above, the SSIPP framework was developed to articulate a set of principles that have the potential to create an ideal advising experience (Kalamkarian et al., 2018). SSIPP refers to a *sustained, strategic, integrated, proactive,* and *personalized* approach to advising. This conceptualization assumes that advising should not be a one-time or a purely transactional experience; rather, advisor engagement throughout the complete student experience at the institution is encouraged, along with interactions with other student support staff. While the iPASS model emphasizes the use of technology to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of advising practices, the SSIPP framework can be implemented, at least to some extent, without extensive use of new technologies.

The SSIPP framework is largely derived from a review of the literature on institutional services and interventions, including academic advising, that aim to help students navigate college and take into account academic and nonacademic aspects of the student experience. The literature examined comprised 128 reports, articles, and books, including both empirical studies and seminal theoretical contributions (Karp & Stacey, 2013; Karp, 2011).

Principles of the SSIPP Advising Framework
Sustained support is offered to students throughout their tenure at the college. **Strategic** deployment of advising resources is achieved by creating systems that differentiate support for students depending on their needs and interests. **Integration** of advising with other student supports as well as other aspects of the college experience is likely to serve students more effectively. **Proactive** advising is needed to make sure that all students are reached; students who most need support may not come and ask for it. **Personalized** advising is achieved when advising is offered by someone who knows a student well and is attuned to their needs and interests. (Karp & Stacey, 2013; Kalamkarian et al., 2018).

3. Facilitating Organizational Change

In practice, advising systems at open- and broad-access colleges[4] face resource limitations that make it challenging to achieve the principles outlined in the SSIPP framework. At these institutions, caseloads for advisors can exceed 700 advisees. Advisors may not have sufficient time in a semester to meet with all of the students in their caseload (Jaggars & Fletcher, 2014; Karp, 2013). Moreover, advising systems often function independently from other student service departments and offices, including career counseling. These conditions make it challenging to offer students the coherent support experience proposed under the SSIPP framework (Karp, 2013).

However, by using strategies developed by colleges associated with the iPASS initiative, some colleges have been able to move closer to the ideal. Importantly, this requires much more than adopting new technologies. Adriana Kezar's seminal work on organizational change offers a theoretical foundation for understanding the nature of the change necessary to achieve a substantially improved advising experience. Kezar (2013) defines *structures*, *processes*, and *attitudes* as three areas of focus that are required to enact substantive change. *Structures* include organizational policies, systems, and staff hierarchies. *Processes* are defined as the ways that an organization enacts plans and policies. *Attitudes* are the assumptions or perspectives of key individuals that are upheld by the organization.

CCRC research findings lend support to the importance of Kezar's three dimensions of change in the context of advising redesign. To achieve a system of advising that is consistent with most or all of the tenets of the SSIPP framework, institutions need to attend to (1) structures that facilitate implementation of each of the five SSIPP principles at scale, (2) processes for enacting the high-quality support envisioned by the framework, and (3) attitudes that view advising as primarily focused on guiding students toward the fulfillment of their education and career goals (Karp et al., 2016).

[4] *Broad-access colleges* are defined as two- or four-year institutions that accept a majority of applicants.

4. Implementing the Five Principles of the SSIPP Framework

While there are numerous ways that institutions may choose to enact the SSIPP framework, in what follows practices are highlighted undertaken by colleges exemplifying each of the five principles of SSIPP as a way for readers to gain insights into how it can be implemented. In doing so, references are made to Kezar's three dimensions of change; pitfalls are also considered that can occur while undertaking this important but challenging work.

4.1 Sustained Support: Regular Touch Points

Colleges typically offer a range of advising supports for incoming students, such as new student orientations, individual career planning and advising sessions, and freshman seminars (Karp, 2013). Yet evaluations of these one-time supports generally find that, while they may be useful in the short term, they do not lead to improved long-term student success (Karp & Stacey, 2013; O'Gara, Karp, & Hughes, 2009). Orienting students to college and providing them with information and guidance about potential academic pathways at the start of their student experience is simply not enough to ensure that students will stay on track to completion. Alternatively, a design for sustained advising aims to engage students in supportive activities throughout their tenure at the college.

One example of sustained support involves establishing a range of communication platforms (email, phone, in-person, or virtual meeting) and hiring an increased number of institutional staff (advisors, counselors, peer mentors, and other supplementary staff) to regularly communicate with enrolled students. Regular touch points such as these, if meaningful to the student, can help guide students at various junctures in their college pathway and, when needed, create the opportunity for more intensive intervention.

Structural dimension. Sustained engagement with students requires institutions to establish a clear plan and timeline for touch points that can include both cohort-wide and more targeted and even personalized messages. For example, as part of their advising redesign, North Central Community College[5] outlined a set of informational communications for different kinds of students. Informational messages to the full student population are sent out biweekly and provide details on institutional resources,

[5] Pseudonyms are used for the names of the colleges throughout this chapter.

including childcare and transportation options. A subset of students identified as more likely to struggle are sent additional messages providing guidance and encouragement. The college also offers extra communications early in the semester for students with self-reported challenges or those who appear to be experiencing distress based on academic performance or other data.

This kind of regular engagement with students requires both personnel resources and structural changes. Given their resource constraints, institutions are thinking creatively about how to bolster the capacity of the advising staff. Technology tools can enable advisors to carry out a wider range of communications in a limited amount of time. At both Western State and Southern University, advisors use communication technologies that allow them to create email messaging campaigns that include an embedded link that recipients can use to schedule advising appointments. These tools also make it easier for advisors to target communications to subsets of their advisees and to quickly follow up with those who do not act to schedule an appointment.

Well-crafted and efficient communication with students is facilitated by the creation of templates for phone or email messages. Advisors and other support staff at colleges involved with iPASS report that, while they want to be able to customize messages, some standardized language serves as a useful and potentially time-saving starting point. Moreover, templates can encourage a type of engagement that an advisor or support provider had not previously used or considered. And messaging can be customized. For example, at Southern University, advisors felt strongly that communications that carried their names needed to sound like them; consequently, as the institution implemented its communication plan for continuing students, advisors maintained the ability to customize these messages as they saw fit.

Process dimension. Even with structures that facilitate regular engagement with students, implementation of an outreach plan is dependent on advisors' and other support staff's time and capacity. Changes to advising practice may require advisors and other support staff to make changes in their norms and processes. For example, at institutions with technology tools that make it easier to reach out to students, advisors and support staff need to shift from using manual or traditional email platforms in day-to-day activities to the newer technology platform, a process that can require training and perseverance.

Attitudinal dimension. Enacting an advising model that involves sustained student engagement may require a shift in institutional culture and perceptions. Advisors, other support providers, and administrators interviewed at iPASS colleges expressed a range of views on the purpose of advising and student supports. A number of them felt that advising and student supports were intended almost exclusively to intervene if and when students exhibit academic or nonacademic risk. At these institutions, implementing a sustained advising experience for students required getting advisors, support providers, and administrators to reflect on ways that students' circumstances may change over time, making it necessary to maintain some engagement with students to monitor and respond to their needs.

Potential pitfalls. There is a fine line between sustained communication and inundating students with endless messages and requirements for too much face time. Colleges should use caution in reaching out to students to avoid getting tuned out entirely. Additionally, not all students need the same level of support. While it is recommended that colleges have a plan for communications and advising sessions, it may also be prudent to give advisors flexibility in how they implement the plan and encourage them to use their best judgment on how to support students, particularly as they get to know them over time.

4.2 Strategic Support: Advising Redesign in a Guided Pathways Context

Guided pathways is a good example of how colleges are taking a strategic approach to improving student support and advising as a key part of institution-wide reforms. About 250 community colleges across the country have undertaken the work of guided pathways as part of a national reform movement that is framed as enabling colleges to "fundamentally redesign their programs and support services in ways that create clearer, more educationally coherent pathways to credentials" (Jenkins, Lahr, Fink, & Ganga, 2018, p. 1). This multifaceted reform approach is growing in popularity as community colleges seek to help students reach their educational goals in a timely manner with little to no excess credits.

Though the work of guided pathways is complex and iterative, taking at least several years to fully implement, the principles are simple: (1) Provide students with coherently conceived programs of study; (2) help students choose a program and develop

an individualized academic plan; (3) keep students on the path; and (4) ensure that students are learning (Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015). Academic advising is a critical component of guided pathways implementation, with many colleges facilitating collaboration between academic and student services departments to refine programs and develop strong student supports. Key activities include creating maps that chart out well-conceived course sequences through programs of study, investing in technology and additional student support personnel to improve capacity, and restructuring systems and procedures to support students from the time they consider applying to college to the time they graduate or transfer (Jenkins, Lahr, & Fink, 2017).

Structural dimension. One of the early steps that colleges take in implementing guided pathways is developing meta-majors, which are broad categories of disciplines that serve as organizing "buckets" for programs at the college.[6] While many colleges and states require students to declare a major or program of study on their application, some colleges allow students to enter a meta-major before formally deciding on a program or major. In either case, colleges can leverage meta-majors as a way to help students develop an academic and professional identity through onboarding, program exploration opportunities, and campus events.

Many guided pathways colleges organize onboarding activities and/or first-year experience courses by meta-major, enabling students to learn about a limited number of related programs (versus the consideration of hundreds of programs) and offering students an early opportunity to develop a support network of peers, faculty, and advisors, all of whom are affiliated with a specific meta-major. Within this structure, advisors and faculty are collaborators in supporting students, ideally establishing systems that allow them to communicate regularly about student goals and progress within each student's broad area of interest. Advisors and faculty may meet regularly to ensure consistency in their interactions with students and/or stay in touch through the use of technology platforms. The use of meta-majors can increase the opportunities for students to receive coherent guidance and support from knowledgeable, trusted individuals and, in turn, develop confidence and agency in navigating their educational journey.

[6] For example, the meta-major of Business and Public Services Technology may include programs in accounting, culinary arts, and criminal justice.

Process dimension. In addition to onboarding and early support, advisors in a guided pathways context closely monitor students' progress and intervene when students need help. To facilitate this, many guided pathways colleges (as well as others) use technology to alert advisors when students are veering off their educational pathway, such as when they attempt to take courses outside of their plan. When an advisor is alerted that a student is deviating from her pathway, the advisor can reach out to that student and offer help. Some advisors use an advising syllabus that outlines advising learning outcomes or provides a set of guiding questions to foster critical thinking during advising sessions. This may help students overcome hurdles to progress along their chosen pathway or even change their education and career direction.

Attitudinal dimension. Strategic advising in a guided pathways context may require changes in norms and perspectives among advisors, faculty, and other college personnel about who is responsible for student support at what moments. While the roles of faculty and professional advisors[7] differ by college, a common understanding of how to best guide students along a pathway is needed. Structured collaboration between advisors and faculty enables both groups to build knowledge of each other's roles, develop a common language for student support, and establish norms around working as a team.

Potential pitfalls. Though considered a critical step in guided pathways development, advising redesign in this context is challenging. Some colleges may assume that only faculty or only advisors should be involved in advising redesign, a situation that can create confusion and, in some instances, foster resentment among groups at the college. Another common misstep is trying to rush a reform by applying a "quick fix" technology or hiring new employees without clarifying the strategic intention of those decisions. However, decisions that must later be amended can be costly, cause delays, and negatively impact buy-in across stakeholder groups.

[7] "Professional advisors," unlike "faculty advisors," are typically full-time, dedicated advisors who are not considered full-time faculty. Faculty advisors are full-time faculty members who also serve in a formal advising role. Many colleges use a "split" advising model where professional advisors work with students for a period of time before they are transitioned to a faculty advisor. There may also be variation across disciplines; programs may use only professional advisors, only faculty advisors, or a split model.

Undertaking Guided Pathways Advising Reform at Midwest Community College[8]

Before embarking on advising redesign as part of its guided pathways work, Midwest Community College (MCC) had four professional advisors for over 7,000 students. Students were not assigned to advisors, and appointments were available on a walk-in basis only. The wait times for students were long, and because there was no case assignment, students were often asked to repeat themselves and were sometimes receiving inconsistent information. Because of those challenges, many students registered and planned for courses on their own, only to find themselves in trouble later with excess, nontransferrable credits and needless student loan debt. Since beginning its guided pathways work, the college has hired 10 professional academic advisors and four financial aid advisors to support students. With the advisor-to-student ratio down considerably, MCC implemented structures and processes that enable advisors to be strategic in their roles and provide students (and even prospective students) with substantial support and information when needed.

Although MCC advisors were originally trained as generalists, they are now assigned to one of the six divisions (corresponding to MCC's meta-majors) at the college and operate as specialists. Additionally, MCC advisors have been trained as certified career counselors so they can provide early and ongoing career exploration and preparation opportunities. Because advising is structured by division, division faculty and advisors have developed strong working relationships, attending each other's meetings and contacting one another with student-related questions or concerns. In order to monitor students' progress, advisors meet with every student prior to registration every semester and are expected to interact with students several times over the course of a semester. If students want to change their educational plans, they are required to meet with an advisor to facilitate a smooth transition and ensure that excess credits are avoided or kept to a minimum.

In terms of onboarding, the college has implemented strategies to retain students from application to enrollment and provide them with tools and resources that help them to be successful early on. After a prospective student applies to the college, an advisor

[8] Midwest Community College was not an iPASS college.

reaches out to welcome him to MCC and confirm or help him explore a direction. The college has also changed from using a group orientation to an individual orientation, with students meeting with their academic advisor and financial aid advisor separately, one-on-one and face-to-face. While this structure keeps all advisors very busy in the early days of the semester, MCC faculty, staff, and administrators contend that students are far better equipped to "hit the ground running" than they have been in the past.

The first-year experience course at the college, while facilitated by a faculty member or advisor, is a collaborative effort between faculty and advisors. As part of the course, faculty and advisors from each division host an event where all faculty and advisors within that division set up exhibits, give presentations, and talk with students about the programs and career opportunities that are available. Students build their full educational plan (to graduation) with their advisor during the course.

The early and ongoing opportunities for faculty and advisors to work together to support students have been helpful to MCC. Prior to its guided pathways work, faculty and advisors operated more or less autonomously. Both groups recognized early on that increased collaboration would support their own work as well as offer more seamless and personalized support for students. They also saw improvements in earned credits during the first year and felt that students were responding positively to intensive and customized advising services.

4.3 Integrated Support: Collaborating Across the College

The SSIPP framework calls for advising that is integrated within and across both the academic and student support domains of the college. In many colleges, both faculty and professional advisors share advising responsibilities but may work in "silos," which limits communication and the potential for collaborative relationships. In these cases, close coordination of the work can make sure that the right support options are available to students at each point in their journey through college. In addition, coordination among student support providers of various types (e.g. advising, financial aid, career counseling) can result in better aligned services.

Structural dimension. Effectively achieving integration of support services depends to a considerable degree on the leadership structure of an institution. Colleges

that undertake advising reform typically have leaders that clearly and frequently articulate their vision and are adept at bringing together autonomous units within the institution to support student success in a cooperative and meaningful way. In addition, revisions to policies (for example, guidelines for working with students, the monitoring of student progress, and record-keeping procedures) are often required to recalibrate operations and better coordinate services.

As one might expect, colleges may rely heavily on technology for integrating student supports, as software systems are designed to enable stakeholders across the college to communicate with one another and with students effectively and efficiently. While adopting new technology is among the most difficult challenges for colleges undertaking advising redesign, it can be vitally important when there is a need to bring together information from disparate sources and share it with multiple stakeholders.

Process dimension. With the implementation of structural change to provide integrated student supports comes the need to put processes in place to operate within the new structure. Colleges need to consider the ways in which faculty, staff, and college leaders will interact with one another (meetings, emails, case notes) and topics for discussion (reviews of data, discussions of individual student progress) and how this affects responsibilities and work flow. Stakeholders also need training on how to use new technology and how to optimize its functionality to achieve good collaboration.

Attitudinal dimension. In colleges that have made considerable progress in the integration of advising and other student services, college leaders communicate effectively with stakeholders about the need for reform and provide a compelling vision for the future. At the same time, there are typically many opportunities for faculty and advisors to take ownership of specific changes that are required. With broad participation in structuring the reform, revised practices are more likely to fit well with other ongoing processes, and buy-in among stakeholders may be higher.

Potential pitfalls. Integrating advising, especially when employing new technology, takes considerable time; the work can lose momentum if leaders and key personnel scale back communications or fail to address resistance. When different groups at a college are accustomed to functioning independently of one another, it can be particularly difficult to set up and maintain systems for regular communication, with or without technology.

It is worth emphasizing that incorporating new technology to accommodate integration is often extremely challenging, and a number of colleges have experienced disappointments. Advising-related technologies are expensive, and colleges may not have the resources to purchase all of the functionalities of a system that could potentially make integration easier. Further, the information technology departments at community colleges are sometimes small, leaving colleges to rely on vendors for support. If a college cannot afford to pay for that support or does not receive the support it expects, successful adoption of the tool may never happen.

Integrating Student Supports at Great Lakes Community College

Great Lakes Community College (GLCC) is a small community college serving 2,500 students. Prior to participating in the iPASS initiative, GLCC's student support systems were uneven, with students accessing advising on an as-needed basis and receiving faculty advising services as a "handoff" from professional advisors well into the students' tenure at the college. In an effort to reach students more intentionally, the college implemented a case management system in which professional advisors interact with students who exhibit risk factors. It also restructured the faculty advising model so that students and faculty engage with one another from the time of first enrollment. These changes required that faculty and advisors work closely together to ensure that students are connected with the right supports at the right time to address their needs at each stage of their education.

In terms of technology, GLCC purchased tools from a vendor to assist with education planning, identifying students at risk through predictive analytics, and sending early alerts. Ideally, these tools would work seamlessly with the college's existing technology and enable professional advisors and faculty advisors to provide consistent support. Unfortunately, after more than two years of effort to solve problems, GLCC decided to cancel its contract with the vendor and reexamine its technology strategy. This was a costly and frustrating experience for the college and serves as a cautionary tale about working with external entities to introduce or combine complex technology systems.

Despite this, the efforts to integrate student supports by professional and faculty advisors were viewed as a success. In the process of working to incorporate technology tools, both groups came to understand more about each other's cultures and roles, and they developed clearer ideas on how to complement each other. They came to think of themselves as a "unified front" in supporting students early and often. The widespread buy-in was in large part attributable to the college administrative team who successfully transmitted the goals and vision of the project, and to the mid-level leaders who supported faculty and staff on the front lines with ongoing and consistent communication and helpful professional development opportunities. Today the college is working with its older technology products and talking with new vendors about potential options.

4.4 Proactive Support: Early Alerts

Access to advising and other student supports is often either dependent upon students taking the initiative to seek out services or reserved for students who have failed to meet certain benchmarks. A proactive approach to advising, on the other hand, seeks to shift the impetus for engagement from students to advisors and faculty members. Rather than waiting for students to seek help, an effort is made to reach out to students at key moments in their college tenure and particularly when they appear to be struggling.

Technology-based early alert systems can enable proactive advising. They are designed to provide an efficient means of flagging and supporting students who show signs that they may be struggling and to provide encouragement to students who are doing well by recognizing their successes. Alerts can be triggered in two ways. Some early alert systems can automatically mine institutional data pertaining to students' performance. More commonly, individual faculty members and other staff manually raise an alert by flagging a student in the early alert system. In either case, once an alert has been triggered, the system generates an automatic message to the student and the student's advisor or other student support staff. The advisor and others then follow up with the student to offer assistance while also documenting their actions as well as the student's response.

Structural dimension. Before launching an early alert tool, colleges need to make a series of decisions about what data should be used to trigger alerts, what

categories or types of alerts should be available (e.g., poor attendance, low grades, high grades, missing an assignment, behavioral concerns), how to frame the content and tone of the messages that are sent to students and advisors or other support staff after an alert has been triggered, and the degree to which these messages should be personalized. (Experience shows that even factors such as the wording of the subject line or how the sender of the email is identified may influence whether students read it.)

Further, colleges need to decide who will be raising manual alerts (only faculty members, or also advisors and other student services staff), and when alerts will be raised (at predetermined points each semester and/or anytime as needed). Colleges also need to establish technical protocols related to raising alerts, such as whether the system should consolidate multiple alerts raised by multiple individuals for the same student into a single message. Finally, colleges should clearly specify to faculty and staff whether raising alerts is an expectation or is voluntary.

Equally important are well-defined guidelines outlining the appropriate type and level of response for different alerts. For example, a single alert related to a late assignment probably represents a relatively low level of concern that could be addressed through a standardized email reminding the student about the assignment and the impact on her grade of not completing it, while multiple alerts indicating a student might be in danger of failing one or more classes might warrant a more high touch and personal response, such as a text message or phone call.

Other needed guidelines for responding to alerts include identifying which individuals are responsible for following up with which students and establishing criteria for closing alerts by deciding what constitutes successful follow-up. Additionally, the technology tool used to generate alerts should permit advisors to document the actions taken in response to alerts and to determine which college personnel will have access to that information.

Further, to understand whether early alerts are being used as intended, it is helpful to develop a system for tracking information such as numbers of alerts raised and successfully closed and student usage of support services after receiving an alert. This information can then be compared to course-level outcomes and student persistence data to examine the relationship between early alerts and student success.

Harbor University's experience with implementing early alerts offers a good example of the importance of taking the time to invest in the development of clear guidelines. The college realized early on that setting up an early alert tool would require reevaluation of the existing inconsistent system for assigning students to advisors in order to ensure that every student had a designated advisor to whom alerts could be sent. Additionally, the college had to rapidly develop a protocol for triaging alert responses after the number of alerts raised during the first semester the tool was launched—17,000 alerts for 4,000 students—far exceeded the initial expectation of 2,000 alerts (Klempin & Karp, 2018).

Process dimension. Guidelines and protocols create a system for using early alerts, but in order for the approach to be effective, faculty members, advisors, and student services staff must commit to using them as intended. This can be aided by communicating clear expectations and norms. For example, at Bluffview Community College, faculty are asked to raise alerts within the first few weeks of the semester, informed by short assignments that do not have a large impact on students' grades but still provide useful information about students' progress.

At the same time as faculty members are engaging in new processes such as scheduling when and how they assess student work, advisors and other student services staff should be monitoring alerts and responding to them, engaging in targeted outreach, and sharing case notes which faculty members can then review to see what came of the alerts they raised. Together these actions can establish systems that foster the development of a coordinated network of support for students.

Attitudinal dimension. To fully commit to engaging in the use of early alert systems, college faculty and staff must believe that their actions can have a positive impact on student success. Further, they must embrace responsibility for proactively identifying and supporting students who may be struggling. Without attention to underlying attitudes and concerns, it is easy for misperceptions about the purpose of early alerts to flourish. For example, at Oceanview Community College, faculty members were concerned that raising too many alerts would reflect poorly on their abilities as instructors. At Bluffview Community College, faculty members were initially reluctant to adopt early alerts because it felt like tattling on students. To address this, Bluffview gave

two faculty members release time to serve as early alert coordinators who facilitated dialogue between faculty and the early alert implementation team.

Potential pitfalls. While an early alert tool can provide a powerful means for promoting proactive support, neglecting to consider structural, process, and attitudinal dimensions runs the risk of overemphasizing technology as the solution without attending to the human side of the intervention. To avoid this problem, Oceanview Community College developed a training program to help faculty members recognize what kinds of issues are best addressed personally with students, and which should be elevated to an advisor or other student services staff member via an alert.

Finally, early alert messages are meaningless if students never read or respond to them, and they could even do harm if students are discouraged by them. Thus, it is crucial to understand students' perspective on early alerts. To avoid the risk of unintended consequences and to ensure that students perceive the messages as authentic and supportive, research should be conducted on students' opinions about using an early alert system and on their interpretations of messages.

4.5 Personalized Support: Case Management

Personalized support is fundamentally about tailoring student services to students' unique interests, motivations, and needs to ensure that they receive the resources that will help them succeed. Not all students will require the same type or level of support at the same time. Thus, personalized support requires developing an understanding of students as individuals.

One strategy for personalizing support is to use a case management model that leverages technology to enable a more individualized approach to student support. In a personalized case management model, advisors are assigned to work with the same students over time and given access to a comprehensive record not only of students' academic standing but also of any existing case notes or results of nonacademic assessments (e.g., results from surveys about career interests or from questionnaires about interests in student services).

As opposed to a system of drop-in advising where all advisors serve as generalists and primarily focus on immediate requests for assistance from students, a personalized case management model calls for getting to know students and following the same students'

progress over time. Using this approach, advisors have the opportunity to address not just short-term needs such as course registration for the following semester, but also longer term goals. Sessions may involve, for example, helping students understand the connections between their coursework and career interests, working with students to develop time management strategies, or discussing challenges with finding child care.

Structural dimension. Creating the structures to establish a personalized case management model first involves implementing guidelines for assigning students to advisors. Students may be assigned to advisors based on any number of factors. They may be assigned randomly (e.g., alphabetically by last name), by the broad program area or meta-major (e.g. liberal arts, health sciences) in which the student is enrolled, by the student's major (e.g., history), or by the student's involvement in particular activities or background (e.g., athletes, veterans). Encouraging advisors to specialize in a small number of programs of study or a single meta-major may allow them to develop expertise in areas that are most relevant to their students, making it more likely that students will intentionally seek out meetings with their assigned advisor. Additionally, assigning students to advisors should include consideration of caseload size. Inevitably, larger caseloads will make it harder for advisors to deliver personalized support.

There should also be consideration of expectations for the frequency of contact with students. Colleges should carefully weigh the pros and cons of various advising policies, such as placing holds that do not permit students to register before receiving advising or requiring an advising appointment as an assignment for a first-year experience course. Students may benefit from more contact with advisors; they also may be harmed if they are unable to register for courses in a timely way while waiting for an advising appointment. It is also important to embed regular advising touch points when case managers will reach out to students. For example, advisors may conduct targeted outreach to those students who have reached critical progression milestones, such as being a certain number of credits away from completion (Karp & Stacey, 2013).

To ensure that advisors have the capacity and skills they need to capitalize on a case management model, colleges may want to build advisor schedules that allow them to set aside blocks of time for scheduled appointments with students. As noted above, colleges may also want to use a technology tool that gives advisors easy access to

pertinent student information such as education plans, course grades, alerts raised by faculty members, and shared case notes.

Process dimension. Using a case management approach can often mean that advisors need additional preparation for advising sessions to make sure they are familiar with each advisee's interests and issues. They must be familiar with the technology required to review students' academic standing and to maintain good advising records. Ideally, advisors should prepare for sessions by reviewing multiple data sources as well as their own case notes to identify where students may be struggling and what types of guidance or resources might be most appropriate. After the session, advisors typically use technology to document the main issues discussed, make referrals to other student services, and follow up on whether students use the services.

Attitudinal dimension. Implementing a personalized case management model requires advisors to consider aspects of mentoring and counseling as a core part of their role, in addition to the provision of academic guidance. Colleges implementing the model should thus foster an institutional culture that prioritizes individualized student support as a key mechanism for promoting student success.

Potential pitfalls. Establishing a case management model through which all students receive personalized support is by no means an easy task. Budget constraints, large advising caseloads, and other challenges related to assigning students to advisors can all pose structural barriers to personalized case management. In particular, ensuring that advisors have the time they need to provide personalized support often presents a significant challenge. What is more, students may not understand the personalized case management approach or may find it uncomfortable or intrusive. Thus, it is important to communicate the purpose of this model to students and encourage them to engage in this more comprehensive and sustained advising process.

Implementing Personalized Case Management at Southwestern Community College[9]

The case management advising model at Southwestern Community College (SCC) was intentionally designed to complement the college's adoption of guided pathways reforms. Advisors are assigned to work with students within a meta-major or a specific program of study. SCC established 17 discrete "touch point" periods during which advisors reach out to students. Examples of these include directly following placement testing to discuss students' scores and options for course pathways, when students are making financial aid appeals, and when students wish to drop a course. Advising is also required and enforced with a registration hold after students have completed 15, 30, and 45 credit hours.

To monitor students' academic progress, the college adopted an education planning tool that advisors can use with students to create individual success plans, including all the courses needed to complete a credential in the chosen program of study. In addition, the college provides numerous professional development opportunities for advisors to ensure that they have the technical knowledge and skills they need, as well as a grounding in counseling techniques.

The director of advising at the college—who believes that "with relationships comes greater success"—describes its advising model as one that encourages advisors to be intentional in reaching out to and keeping track of students. Advisors appreciate the fact that their role on campus is highly valued and that they have been allowed to become experts in specific program areas. In addition, surveys have shown that students' satisfaction with advising has significantly increased since the college adopted the model.

[9] Southwestern Community College was not an iPASS college.

5. Final Thoughts

The SSIPP framework provides a foundation for reflecting on existing advising and student support systems in a college in order to consider reforms that improve student experiences and outcomes. The path to implementing change may vary from college to college, and there may be variation in the specific reforms made. However, it can be helpful to know what other institutions have accomplished and what challenges they have faced. In this paper, there are summary descriptions of ways that each of the SSIPP elements have been implemented in colleges studied by CCRC staff; these may inform others wishing to improve local practice. In addition, colleges may want to consider structure, processes, and attitudes when planning for change. Attending to these dimensions can improve the likelihood of high-quality implementation.

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ADVISING SUCCESS NETWORK

Academic Advising as a Tool for Student Success and Educational Equity

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Chelsea Fountain, Editor
National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition
University of South Carolina

in partnership with the
Advising Success Network

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About the Advising Success Network

The Advising Success Network is a partnership among higher education organizations and leaders who believe advising is the bright star in a constellation of student support services. The Advising Success Network is facilitated by NASPA and comprised of Achieving the Dream (ATD), the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), EDUCAUSE, NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising, and the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition. The Advising Success Network provides thought leadership, resources, and services to advance academic advising as a tool for helping institutions pursue equity and excellence in their support of students.

About the Publisher

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition was born out of the success of the University of South Carolina's much-honored University 101 course and a series of annual conferences focused on the First Year experience. The momentum created by the educators attending these early conferences paved the way for the development of the National Resource Center, which was established at the University of South Carolina in 1986. As the National Resource Center broadened its focus to include other significant student transitions in higher education, it underwent several name changes, adopting the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition in 1998.

Today, the Center collaborates with its institutional partner, University 101 Programs, in pursuit of its mission to advance and support efforts to improve student learning and transitions into and through higher education. We achieve this mission by providing opportunities for the exchange of practical and scholarly information as well as the discussion of trends and issues in our field through convening conferences and other professional development events such as institutes, workshops, and online learning opportunities; publishing scholarly practice books, research reports, a peer-reviewed journal, electronic newsletters, and guides; generating, supporting, and disseminating research and scholarship; hosting visiting scholars; and maintaining several online channels for resource sharing and communication, including a dynamic website, listservs, and social media outlets.

The National Resource Center serves as the trusted expert, internationally recognized leader, and clearinghouse for scholarship, policy, and best practice for all postsecondary student transitions.

Institutional Home

The National Resource Center is located at the University of South Carolina's (UofSC) flagship campus in Columbia. Chartered in 1801, UofSC Columbia's mission is twofold: to establish and maintain excellence in its student population, faculty, academic programs, living and learning environment, technological infrastructure, library resources, research and scholarship, public and private support and endowment; and to enhance the industrial, economic, and cultural potential of the state. The Columbia campus offers 324 degree programs through its 15 degree-granting colleges and schools. In the 2020 fiscal year, faculty generated $279 million in funding for research, outreach, and training programs. South Carolina is one of only 32 public universities receiving both Research and Community Engagement designations from the Carnegie Foundation.

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About the Editor

Chelsea Fountain is Program Coordinator for the Advising Success Network, a grant-funded project advancing equity in holistic advising redesign throughout higher education. In 2019, Chelsea earned a Master of Education from UofSC's Higher Education and Student Affairs program. She was previously a graduate assistant in the Office of Sustainability and an intern for the National Resource Center. Chelsea's passion is advocating on behalf of marginalized populations, which grew from her experiences abroad in Spain and Nicaragua and through her work as a college advisor at West Bladen High School. As part of the NC State College Advising Corps, Chelsea worked primarily with low-income, first-generation college students to advance enrollment and postsecondary success. Her research interests include access to education for the incarcerated and Latinx students and understanding the barriers which prevent students from postsecondary education.

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Foreword

Omari Burnside, Assistant Vice President for Strategy and Practice, NASPA
Amelia Parnell, Vice President for Research and Policy, NASPA

The higher education community has committed to providing students a high-quality education that enables them to achieve their academic, personal, and career goals, regardless of their starting point, race, income level, or any other social identity. As a result, institutions are working to improve traditional structures, policies, and practices that may have impeded students along their path toward a degree. In this pursuit to become more student-centered, one approach institutions have used is to create a more holistic and integrated suite of support services designed to better address students' diverse needs.

Advising is a critical component to this holistic approach and, if implemented correctly, can be an excellent tool to help more students see the success higher education promises. This notion of student success through holistic advising can be achieved by developing an advising structure that effectively integrates academic, career, financial, and basic needs counseling and encourages strong advisor-advisee relationships, in which students have developmental conversations with advisors throughout their tenure at the institution. Holistic advising also includes nonacademic supports, such as student success courses and one-on-one time with faculty and staff. By implementing these foundational aspects, institutions are more equipped to proactively identify student needs and to provide a more tailored and seamless experience.

This is especially important because, at every juncture of a student's college experience, there is an opportunity to make a decision. Such decisions are often critical and complex. In addition to seeking guidance on how to balance college and other competing priorities, students may look to staff and faculty to guide them through several unfamiliar situations and decisions. For example, a student may explore their options for selecting a major with the intent to understand how a career in that field might lead to certain earnings upon completing a credential. In a similar example, some students may start their decision-making process about whether to apply for a loan to cover college expenses by considering if job prospects after graduation will make repayment feasible. As students navigate these and other multifaceted decisions, high-quality and holistic advising is more vital to their progress than ever.

Klempin, et al. (2019) states that coordination among student support providers of various types can result in better-aligned services. To recognize the full benefit holistic advising can have on the student experience, institutions need to understand the current state of their advising program, establish greater coordination among student support offerings, and provide the necessary resources for campus staff to effectively perform their roles and responsibilities. This type of holistic advising effort works well when systems and processes are in place that ensure professionals have the technology, training, and knowledge to appropriately advise students across domains. Holistic approaches also require ongoing communication and a consistent feedback cycle from students, faculty, and administrators to address emerging needs. Institutions that commit to providing high-quality advising services will need to invest significant time and resources. However, the return on that investment is worth it, as the efforts will ultimately prepare students to make important college decisions.

Throughout the years, institutions have made progress at achieving this ideal of holistic advising. Now as institutions reaffirm their commitment and continue in their pursuit to provide a high-quality education, there is an opportunity to accelerate this progress by focusing more on the advising experience. Investing in holistic advising will bring clarity and alignment between advising and other relevant student supports and facilitate a more student-centered institution where all students have a clear path to success.

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Introduction

Chelsea Fountain

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition is pleased to be a core partner in the Advising Success Network (the network), a grant-funded initiative aimed to elevate advising as a priority, improve advising practice, and ensure success for all students, particularly racially minoritized students. As a part of our thought leadership on this grant, the National Resource Center took charge in collecting high-quality, assessed advising programs and initiatives that aim to support the success of all students but with a particular emphasis on African American, Black, Latinx, American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, and otherwise historically marginalized populations on their campuses. Educational equity is central to the network's mission and vision and is a concept grounded in the principles of justice, "do no harm," and the acknowledgement of and commitment to rectify historical injustice toward minoritized populations. As a result, the goal of this collection is to help the field at large better understand the needs of students from a wide range of backgrounds and identities and support their learning, development, and success through advising.

Context

The American postsecondary education system is the most complex in the world and features colleges and universities with considerable diversity in their control, foci, degree offerings, and students served. At the same time, the higher education landscape in the United States—reflective of volatile social, cultural, and political forces—has seen considerable upheaval since the global financial crisis of 2007 (Joslin, 2018). The original social contract in higher education—as White (2015) names it—is in disarray:

> The current contract, which depends upon having faith that students will learn as they engage in higher education, that employment postgraduation will be readily available in environments where newly learned skills can be used, and that society as a whole considers the portion of taxes that supports students in higher education well spent, has been seriously compromised. (p. 269)

At the same time, campus administrators and student affairs officers are facing budget cuts, COVID-19, and reinventing themselves daily to meet the pressing academic, physical, emotional, and financial needs of students. Historically, academic advising has served a primary role in setting students up for success in their coursework while managing a diverse range of responsibilities—from orientation, degree planning, course selection, personal development, and career decisions to directing students to important resources and special opportunities. In the current pandemic climate, academic advisors hold significant value as they are often gatekeepers for students transitioning into the campus community. If a student's initial transition to college is aided by an advising or orientation program, they are more likely to make the immediate and positive connections needed to remain on campus (Nutt, 2008). Furthermore, advisors assist students in investigating resources available throughout the campus and support students in the pursuit of their interests and the exploration of their identities. And, advising is a fundamental component of first-generation student support. Regular contact with a knowledgeable, caring professional who provides guidance and encouragement is one of the most powerful tools that enhance student success programs (Whitley et al., 2018).

Now, amidst two national pandemics—one viral and one situated in longstanding racial injustice—the position or social contract of higher education is called into question by its students, parents, alumni, state legislatures, government, and investors. It is evident that higher education practitioners demonstrate innovation, visionary leadership, and forge partnerships with advisors to support student success. The key to success in delivering on the postsecondary promise is bringing equity more intentionally into daily and strategic decisions so higher education institutions can ensure they are designed to support students in achieving their goals, regardless of how societal structural bias

has historically impacted their access to opportunity (Ream et al., 2017). The result? Not only will students benefit from a more equitable experience, but institutions will witness improved student outcomes through holistic advising redesign.

Academic Advising for Student Success and Equity

National data indicate that academic advising is the most commonly used initiative in first-year experience programs and the second most frequently cited support targeted to sophomores (Young, 2019; Young et al., 2014). In addition, academic advising is embedded in a host of high-impact practices and educational initiatives that extend beyond the first few years of college, including transfer, internships and supervised practice, capstone experiences, study abroad, career exploration, and undergraduate research. Furthermore, academic advising is a critical support structure that is effective when targeted toward student identities such as first-generation students, academically underprepared students, students in academic recovery programs, veterans, international students, and students with learning differences, ADHD, and Autism Spectrum Disorder (DiRamio, 2017; Fox & Martin, 2017; Shea et al., 2019). Finally, academic advising can provide a safe space within higher education where student voices can be heard, personal stories can be shared, and campus climate issues can be unearthed, particularly for students from historically underrepresented, marginalized, and hidden identity groups in higher education (Harper, 2020).

In practice, redesigning academic advising so that equity is central requires more than piece-meal enhancements. Rather, institutions must pursue transformative change, which requires organizational growth and development along with changes to structures, processes, and attitudes (Karp, 2015) through both individual and systemic equity actions (Golom, 2018). Equity should become the primary lens through which all student success efforts are viewed (Lawton, 2018). In addition, institutions should give thought to how ongoing academic advising structures and processes will address equity for current and future generations as student needs and life experiences evolve. Creating holistic student supports through academic advising incorporates continuous-improvement mechanisms that enable the institution and advisors to be responsive to a changing environment while maintaining a stable core that anchors advising to its mission. According to Lawton (2018), only when individual and systemic actions are pursued in tandem as part of an overarching strategy will the student experience of academic advising be transformed to support equality of opportunity at scale. In conclusion, Lawton (2018) put forth several recommendations to promote promising practice in advising, including the following:

- placing culturally responsive academic advising prominently in the institution's strategic plan and accreditation priorities;
- developing an academic advising curriculum;
- providing robust, ongoing professional development opportunities focused on culturally responsive pedagogy;
- creating protocols, structures, and technologies that make it standard practice for different functional areas to work collaboratively so academic advising becomes one of many entry points to other services offered;
- equipping advisors to develop meaningful relationships with their students through a case management approach and encouraging them to dedicate more time to students with a higher need for academic advising support;
- placing primary role advisors in feeder schools or colleges that have the least resources or a lower college-going rate to target support to more historically underserved students; and
- gathering information from every incoming or applying student on factors known to be common obstacles to success.

Its prevalence on campus makes academic advising a bright star in the constellation of student supports, highlights the advisor-advisee relationship as crucial support to students as they identify and attain their academic, career, and personal goals; and underscores its value as an area of ongoing examination and study. Advising is more than course selection and academic planning. It is a student-centered process that assists students in making intentional connections, creating coherence out of the disparate parts of the curriculum, and reflecting on the similarities and differences among ways of knowing and how they complement each other. Effective advisors build trusting relationships with advisees to help them recognize and accept responsibility as active participants in their educational journeys (Fox & Martin, 2017). The network defines holistic advising

redesign as the process of identifying, implementing, and refining high-quality, effective institutional practices that support students as they work toward achieving their personal, academic, and career goals. Recognizing that changes in advising will impact other areas of an institution, this type of redesign typically requires cross-functional collaboration and a focus on people, processes and technology. Successful holistic advising redesign promotes an institutional culture of being student-ready. The best advising system is the one that reflects the campus culture, meets institutional and student learning outcomes, and is supported by campus personnel, resources, and infrastructure to the fullest extent (Joslin, 2018).

About This Collection

The purpose of this case study collection is to demonstrate innovation and institutional transformation around academic advising and is focused on identifying initiatives that advance equity. Advisors serve as cultural navigators, support students' transition to college, provide resources and connections to campus, and support overall academic and student success (Nutt, C., 2008). As partners in the Advising Success Network, we recognize that the amount of time and effort students put into their coursework is as important as the ways institutions allocate resources and organize learning opportunities and services to induce students to participate in and benefit from such activities (Kuh et al, 2010). Further, academic advising is often the only structured activity on campus in which all students have the opportunity for one-on-one interaction with a concerned representative of the institution (Habley, 1994). Advisors and advising administrators must lead the campus community to value advising as much more than scheduling by continually connecting advising to the teaching and learning mission of the institution (Nutt et al, 2017).

Another key component of this collection is raising the standard for equity as a deliberate and intentional basis for supporting students. The equity mission of this project required institutions to meet certain criteria such as enrolling 40% Pell-grant receiving students and/or a 25% or higher underrepresented student minority population (IPEDS, 2020). In addition, cases were intentionally sought in order to represent a variety of institutional types (e.g., public and private; two-year and four-year; liberal arts, HBCU, Tribal, HSI, etc.) and a range of advising structures (e.g., orientation, academic, faculty, professional, hybrid, etc.). Due to the magnitude of the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts to recruit cases were challenged, but we are very pleased with the diversity of approaches to advising we collected and thus have presented in this volume. As a result, our collection of 12 case studies is organized alphabetically and without preference to the institutional type or case content. Consequently, three consistent themes arose from the collection: technology-enabled advising (advising programs that have implemented technology as a critical tool in improving the student advising experience), scalable advising solutions (a diverse set of institutional programs and initiatives which either currently, or in the future, show promise for campus-wide adoption), and differentiated advising support (specialized programs that are designed to meet the needs of a specific major, living-learning community, or marginalized student populations). We hope this collection serves as a catalyst for considering academic advising as a transformed landscape for student success and educational equity.

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Glossary of Terms

Student success: The outcome of a personal, rigorous, and enriching learning experience that culminates in the achievement of a student's academic goals in a timely manner and fully prepares them to realize their career aspirations (Lawton, 2018).

Educational equity: The Advising Success Network defines racial and socioeconomic equity as centering the lived experiences, talents, and aspirations of students from low-income backgrounds, as well as Black, Latinx, Native American, and Asian/Pacific Islander students. The network seeks to raise awareness from an institutional perspective, focusing on how the institution's design systems, policies, and processes either build healthy inclusive cultures or perpetuate systemic inequities. Moreover, the network seeks to change the institution's understanding of how legacy practices and policies affect student performance, and impact student economic mobility and personal, academic, and career success—to address systems of power, privilege, and race through analysis of advising policies and procedures.

Minortized students hold identities that were not considered when the system and institutions of higher education in the United States were originally designed. Examples include but are not limited to: first-generation; low-income; adult students; students of color; marginalized orientations, gender identities, and intersex students; students with second-language backgrounds; undocumented students; veterans; students with disabilities; students with dependents; foster care youth; formerly and currently incarcerated students (Lawton, 2018).

Intrusive Advising involves proactive interactions with students, with the intention of connecting with them before a situation occurs that cannot be fixed (Varney, 2007).

Proactive Advising: Earl (1988) describes Proactive Advising as a deliberate, structured student intervention at the first indication of academic difficulty in order to motivate the student to seek help. Proactive Advising uses the good qualities of prescriptive advising (experience, awareness of student needs and structured programs) and of developmental advising (relationship to a student's total needs).

1 Albany State University Academic Advising as a Tool for Student Success and Educational Equity

Angela W. Peters and Kenyatta Johnson

Institutional Profile

Located in Albany, GA, Albany State University (ASU) is the largest public Historically Black College and University (HBCU) in the state. ASU is home to 6,509 students (FTE 5,676) and is a proud member institution of the University System of Georgia. The University's mission focuses on access, equality, and diversity, ensuring all students have an opportunity to pursue a degree. For example, more than 23% of students are first-generation college students (i.e., neither parent completed a four-year college or university degree), while more than 80% receive some form of financial aid with 55% receiving the Pell Grant. Approximately 28% of the student population reside on campus, and the remainder (72%) are commuters. Undergraduate students account for 94% of the enrollment, and graduate students account for 6%. The University's demographic make-up includes 72% female, 27% male, and 17% over 25 years of age. Regarding race and ethnicity, 77% of students are Black or African American; 11.4% are White; 6.1% are Hispanic/Latino; 2.4% are multiracial; 2.9% are undeclared; and less than 1% are American Indian, Alaska Native, or Asian. First-year students (i.e., those with 0-29 earned hours) account for 40% of the total enrollment, and sophomore students (i.e., those with 30-59 earned hours) account for 24% of the total enrollment.

Technology-Enabled Advising

In 2017, ASU merged with the local junior college, Darton State, to form the new ASU, which combines the strengths of both institutions to fulfill the access mission while offering workforce-related degrees. The consolidation of the two institutions has demanded more rigorous academic advising geared toward supporting and ensuring each student's opportunity to graduate. The University offers a broad array of graduate, baccalaureate, associate, and certificate programs at its main campuses in Albany as well as strategically placed branch sites and online instruction. For the past three years, ASU has invested time and resources into establishing a quality advising system that is consistent across campuses and provides appropriate training and evaluation of students and faculty.

Because of ASU's varied student population, including first-generation, commuter, and minority students, as well as those of diverse ages, ethnicities, abilities, and socioeconomic backgrounds, our success in advising is attributed to the use of the case management approach and intrusive advising. According to the NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising (NACADA), case management is a collaborative process of assessment, planning, and advocacy for services that benefit students, and intrusive advising involves personal contact with students to develop a caring relationship aimed at intervention (Pierce, 2016). Based on the model described by Richardson (2008), ASU's advising practices include the following:

- reliance on detailed advising notes and student records;
- use of requirements of academic programs of study;
- intentional referrals to other departments and services;
- advocacy for policies that promote student success;
- evaluation of the advising process, and
- consistent direct contact with the faculty regarding the progress of students.

The advising model at ASU is a combination of centralized and decentralized services. For example, incoming students use the Academic Advising and Retention Center (AARC). With a focus on effectively transitioning students to college academics, the AARC success coaches (i.e., professional advisors) are the first point of contact for students with fewer than 60 earned hours (i.e., first-year and sophomore students). Therefore, the AARC is the first academic home for 100% of each year's incoming class. This includes students who have decided on a major, those who are undecided or exploring, and those who have not yet met the entrance requirements for specialized programs of study. Finally, students are required to meet with their advisors at least twice a semester and are encouraged to visit or conference with them whenever they feel it is necessary.

For the past three years, the AARC has supported students in their progress toward graduation. The responsibilities of the success coaches include the following:

- develop plans of study with clear pathways to achieve academic goals;
- facilitate connections with faculty and academic support services;
- facilitate connections with the University's resources, including disability services/counseling, career services, and student affairs' organizations;
- review or monitor students' academic performance and send them emails with observations or questions about their academic record; and
- provide workshops as well as individual and group training sessions covering a range of topics to ensure a successful academic and social transition to university life.

The success coaches use various methods of outreach such as the EAB platform, which sends messages to the student's university email account, and the learning management systems email. Text campaigns are generated through the university artificial intelligence chatbot named Goldie. Also, the majority of the advising contacts are scheduled appointments with very few walk-in appointments. Regardless of the approach—case management and/or intrusive advising—the goal is to build a strong and structured advisor-advisee relationship to support the success of the student at ASU.

A Cross-Functional Approach to Advising

At ASU, the 60-hour mark includes the completion of all general education courses and entrance into the core content

curriculum. Once students earn more than 60 hours, they are assigned faculty/program advisors within their department with whom they meet to follow their program of study until the completion of their program. This group of juniors and seniors are not able to enroll in their classes without consultation with their faculty advisor. The hand-off at 60+ hours is seamless because of the effective communication and work done on the front end to build a meaningful student experience between the success coaches and the faculty advisors.

The AARC is housed in Enrollment Management and Student Success; however, faculty advisors are located in Academic Affairs. Both divisions have seen early and sustainable success with advisement by collaborating, communicating, and interacting frequently on matters, including, but not limited to, policies and standard operating procedures, which promote student success and the integration of academic support services. For example, the Center for Faculty Excellence provides advising workshops and training sessions regularly, in which success coaches and faculty advisors attend. The director of advisement meets with department chairs during their monthly meetings with the provost, and interestingly many of the meetings include the registrar, who is a former faculty advisor.

Department Advisors

The faculty advisors play a critical role in student development relative to students' career goals and their particular program of study. Before this advising transition, the success coaches and the faculty advisors communicate frequently not only to share information and check on students' progress but more importantly to review potential roadblocks or situations that could hinder a student's progression toward degree completion. For example, advisors manage early alert progress report cases to ensure the student has received the appropriate interventions to be successful in the course(s). This initiative is part of the University's strategic plan to increase student retention and academic success. The progress reporting system provides outreach and support to students who are struggling academically early enough in the semester to help them find the resources they need to be successful at ASU.

Research has shown that quality interactions between students and faculty, peers, and staff increased retention (Drake, 2011). At ASU, the success coaches and faculty advisors promote an advising relationship with students that supports academic success. We are confident that the success we have in advising is because of the knowledgeable and informed faculty and staff who demonstrate care and respect in helping students navigate through the university experience. Moreover, the cross-functional home of advising provides opportunities for collaboration, creating clear goals, setting priorities, effective communication, and cross-training.

Assessment Methods and Design

ASU uses enrollment management software for advising students with 60 or fewer earned credit hours. The EAB Student Success Collaborative-Navigate is a web-based retention and advising platform used to schedule advising appointments, communicate with students, issue alerts for students who might be in academic danger and refer students to tutoring and other academic support services. In this quantitative case study, data were collected from digital appointments using the advising platform, comparing students registered at ASU who had some form of advising interaction documented for them, typically an in-person appointment (Population A), to the overall population of first-year, sophomore, and junior students (Population B). The data represent distinct students who have interacted with an advisor for registration purposes. The assessment focused on the number of students who registered in Fall 2019 and again in Fall 2020.

Assessment Findings

When comparing fall-to-fall (2019-2020) registration, there was a 5.1% improvement for Population A students (Table 1.1). Underperforming students with GPAs less than 2.39 who interacted with an advisor through the Navigate scheduling system had a 1.4% higher retention rate than ASUs student population overall with GPAs below 2.39 (Table 2.1). In addition, this same group of students showed significant academic improvement over a one-year period, raising their average cumulative GPA from 1.88 to 2.23 (an 18.6% increase). We took the data one step further to predict degree attainment for the underperforming students. By raising a student's cumulative GPA 18.6%, we also increased the likelihood they would graduate from 20.8% to 37% (see Figure 1.1). Based on ASU's historical 6-year graduation rates, improving a student's GPA historically shows an improvement of

20.8% to 37%. At ASU, academic advising is a major factor for the successful transition of first-year students. The data indicated an increase in retention from fall-to-fall for students who interacted with an advisor. These students were retained at higher rates. We have also seen an increase in persistence rates due to registering students for at least 15 hours per semester. The advising system at ASU aligns with student success outcomes such as increasing the fall-to-fall retention rates, increasing persistence rates to align with retention rates, and increasing the four-year and six-year graduation rates. The advising model at ASU has strengthened the following initiatives to improve retention, persistence, and graduation:

- including intrusive advising and outreach for students with low GPA and intentional intervention for returning previously suspended students within the advising model;
- establishing priority and early registration for first-time first-year students;
- expanding collaboration between advising/coaching and tutoring and increasing tutoring options, including online on-demand tutoring;
- increasing the completion of Momentum Year courses, such as core English and mathematics during the first year; and
- achieving on-time degree completion by enrolling in at least 15 hours each semester of enrollment.

Research has shown that frequent advising interactions can positively affect student retention (Bland et al, 2012). It is evident that the student–advisor interaction at ASU has the potential not only to increase retention, but to also help students persist to degree attainment. The student's decision to remain

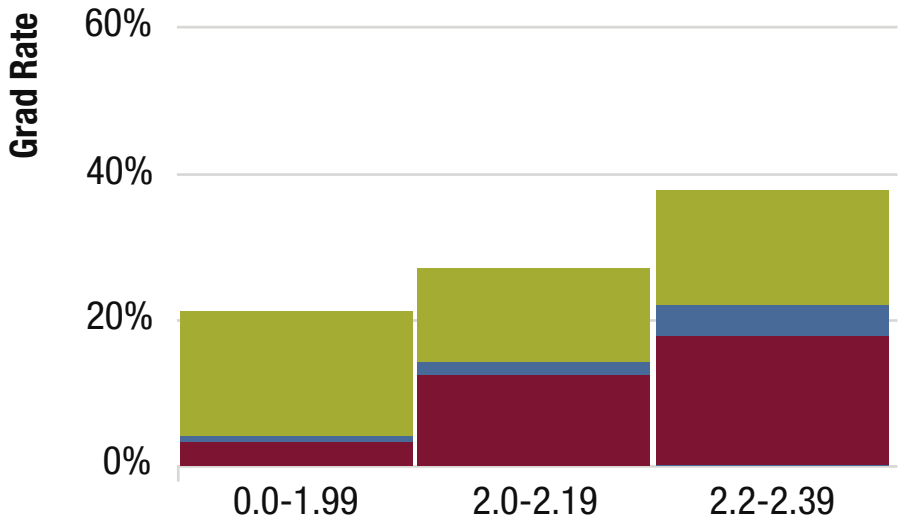
Table 1.1 *Students with Appointments (A) versus ASU Overall (B), Fall 2020 Registration Freshmen, Sophomores, and Juniors*

Enrollment summary	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Percent retained
A: Enrolled	2,236	1,536	68.7%
B: Enrolled	4,463	2,840	63.6%

Table 1.2 *Students with Cumulative GPA between 0.1 and 2.39*

Enrollment summary	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Percent retained
A: Enrolled	521	360	69.1%
B: Enrolled	623	422	67.7%

Figure 1.1 Degree Attainment for Underperforming Students



at ASU is strongly influenced by personalized engagement with a faculty and staff advisor, a peer, or even an alumnus at the University, such as a faculty and staff advisor, a peer, or even an alumnus.

Implications for Practice

We are combining multiple strategies at ASU to create a comprehensive program that addresses academic, social, and cultural factors of student success, retention, persistence, and completion. This includes key areas that must work collaboratively at an optimal level in order to ensure student success. These areas align with the University's strategic plan and include the following: academic advising, financial aid, technology, early warning and progress reports, and co-curricular activities/experiential learning.

A large component of student success at ASU focuses on lowering student debt and ensuring that students do not have an unreasonable debt load when they graduate. Because a large percentage of our students come from modest backgrounds and receive financial aid, we are cognizant of the reality that some students will reach their maximum grant or loan prior to completing their degree programs. Examples like this help us identify challenges that could impede a student's academic progression. At ASU, students who experience academic difficulties or under-preparedness respond well to case management/intrusive approaches to advising. We do a great job identifying problem areas early that could hinder progress towards degree attainment and providing deliberate opportunities for academic and non-academic support. This structured approach to program completion and strategic emphasis on enhancing the student experience makes ASU unique.

Success and degree attainment at ASU depend on students receiving continued support, not only in their first-year, but also throughout the college career. At ASU, we pride ourselves on personalizing and customizing the undergraduate experience. Advisors make early contact with students during the pre-advising sessions/early registration days. They closely monitor student progress, and they meet with students several times per semester. The advisors work hand-in-hand with academic support services, student affairs, and counseling services to evaluate the whole student to ensure academic success, social integration, and wellness. The competent and caring success coaches and faculty advisors at ASU have created a supportive environment that has resulted in students being retained beyond the first-year.

For the past three years, post-merger, enrollment has increased, including transfers, for programs that lead to certifications and/or licensures, specifically nursing and teacher education. This influx has increased the need for higher-level transcript evaluations and course substitutions. Therefore, going forward we will capitalize on the success of the advising model by adding embedded advisors within certain departments. These staff members will report directly to the department chair. All other departments at ASU will continue to follow the success coach/faculty advisor model. Lastly, the implications of the advising model at ASU have far-reaching contributions to cross-campus collaborations in support of student success.

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2 Boston University Time to BU

Laura Johnson and Elizabeth Loizeaux

Institutional Profile

Boston University is a highly selective, private, four-year, Research I institution located in Boston, MA. Its undergraduate student body is composed of 17,404 full-time students, of whom approximately 75% live on campus. Demographics of the undergraduate population include gender (60% female, 40% male), percentage of students over age 25 (7%), racial/ethnic background – Asian (15%), Black or African American (4%), Hispanic/Latino (11%), White (37%), two or more races (4%), unknown (8%), and nonresident alien (21%). In addition, approximately 17% of students identified as first-generation, which BU defines as neither of the student's parents completing a bachelor's degree. Also, 17% of students are Pell Grant recipients.

Unlike many institutions, BU does not see significant gaps in retention (94%) and graduation rates (88%) based on race, income, or first-generation status. NSSE data have shown, however, inequitable engagement in the high-impact practices known to promote deep learning and educational satisfaction. For instance, the 2018 NSSE data showed that while 81% of our responding White seniors engaged in an internship or field experience, only 71% of Black or African American students did the same. Of White seniors, 51% participated in study abroad and 37% participated in research with a faculty member, whereas of Black or African American seniors, 38% participated in study abroad and 28% in research with a faculty member (see Figure 2.1). Similarly, the 2016 NSSE data showed that first-generation and low-income (FGLI) seniors had lower rates of completing an internship (74%) or studying abroad (38%) than the non-FGLI seniors (82% and 48%, respectively; see Figure 2.2). FGLI seniors also expressed less satisfaction with their overall educational experience at BU than their peers.

Figure 2.1 Senior engagement in high-impact practices by race

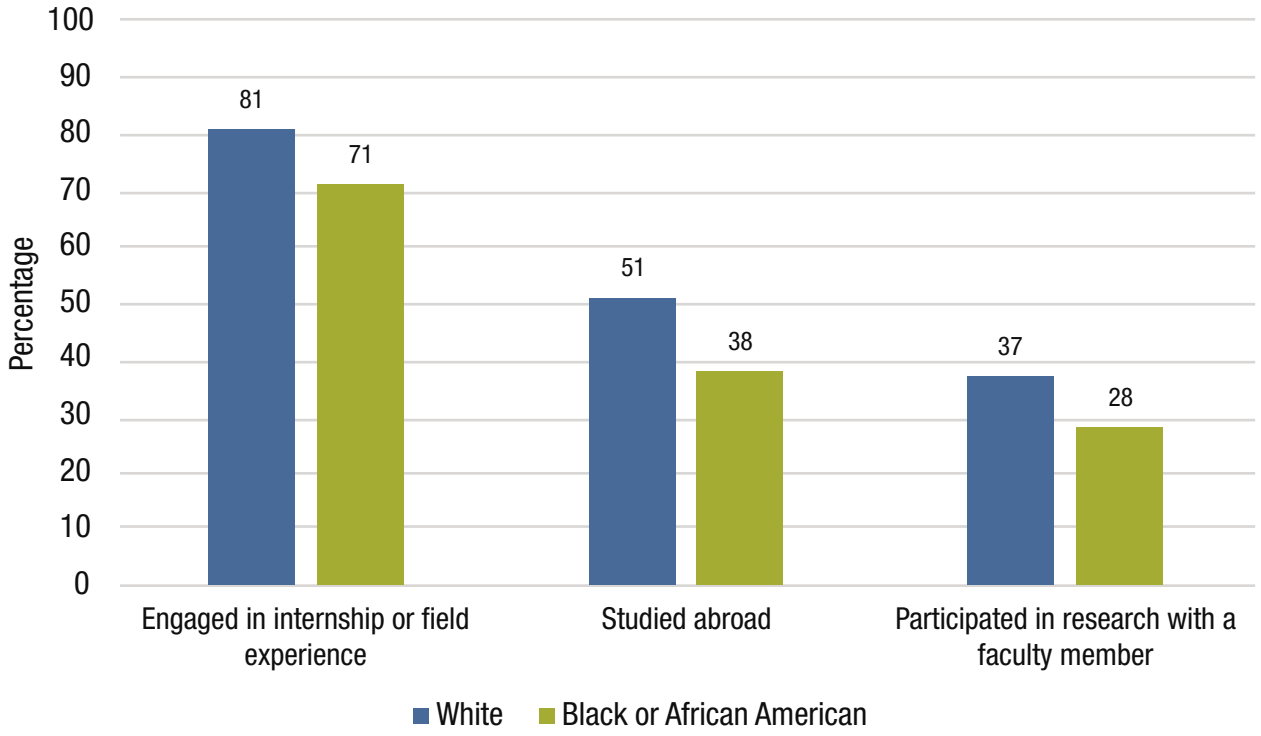
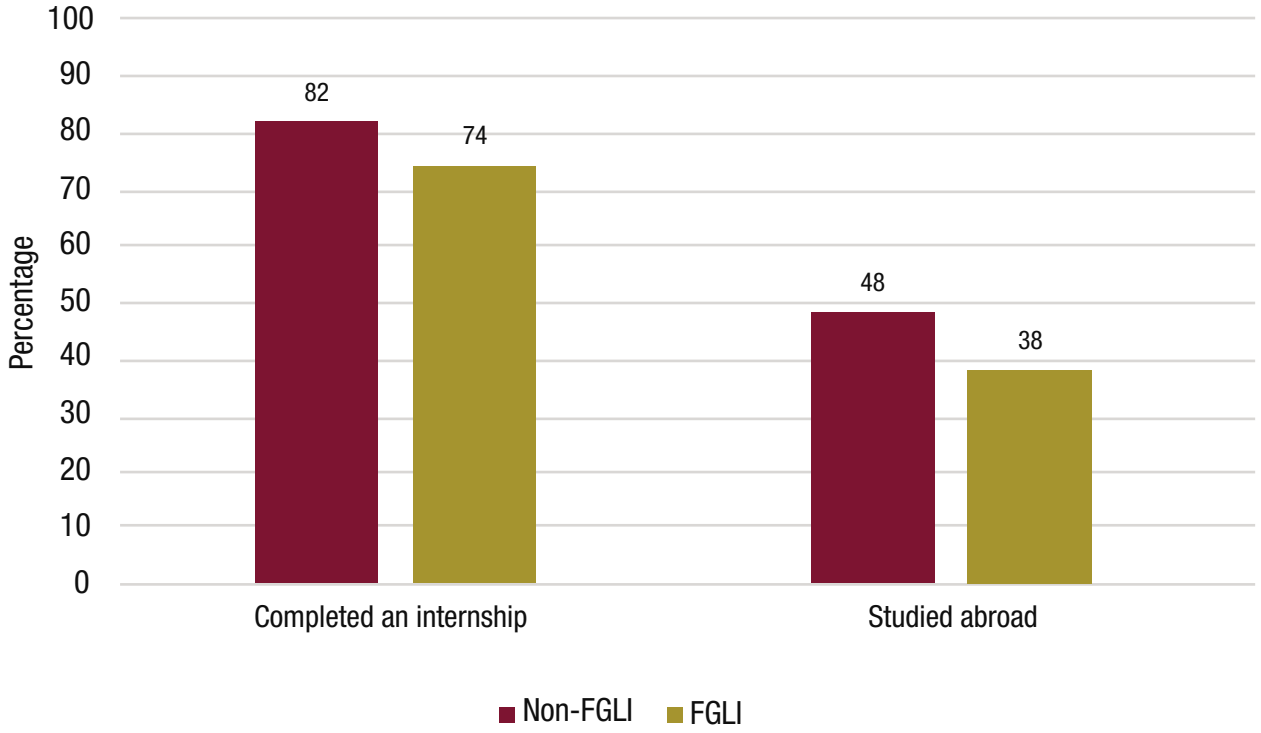


Figure 2.2 Senior engagement in high-impact practices by first-generation/low-income status



BU Advising Strategy, Equity, and Educational Quality

Time to BU is an orientation program for incoming first-year and transfer students. It serves as a launching pad for rich academic advising conversations and as a moment of social norming when incoming students hear from successful continuing students about the ups and downs they faced transitioning to college. The program lies at the convergence of two university initiatives aimed at improving the undergraduate educational experience.

The academic advising initiative, launched in 2016 with the adoption of a university-wide academic advising mission statement and learning outcomes, is shifting academic advising in BU's 10 undergraduate schools and colleges from a transactional model to a developmental and holistic model. That work has been significantly advanced with the hiring of a campus-wide advising leader in 2017, the development of detailed plans for reaching academic advising goals in each school and college, new professional advisor positions funded by the Office of the Provost, the launch of a central advising website (bu.edu/advising) with resources for both students and professional and faculty advisors, and the first BU-specific, university-wide undergraduate advising survey. This advising initiative aims to assist students in creating educational plans that help them discover and fulfill their personal interests and goals, to further improve further BU's graduation rate, and to ensure that all students fully experience the meaningful, high-impact educational opportunities BU offers.

The second, related initiative is improving the undergraduate experience for low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students. Three important parts of this initiative have recently launched. First, BU has substantially increased need-based aid. In Fall 2018, BU was able to begin meeting full need without loans for all Pell recipients. With the Fall 2020 incoming class, BU committed to meeting the full needs of all domestic students. Second, in 2019, BU expanded its Howard Thurman Center for the Common Ground, with increased staff and programming, into a large, newly renovated space at the center of campus. Founded in 1986 and named for the first Black Dean of the Chapel and Martin Luther King's mentor at BU, the Center is dedicated to the search for belonging and purpose through the exploration of difference and the pursuit of common ground. Third, a new Center for First Generation Students is currently hiring its founding director and will be located in another newly renovated space in the center of campus.

The Time to BU Experience

Time to BU speaks to the institutional values these major initiatives declare. It is expressly designed to engage students in discussions about academic exploration, the purpose of higher education, the meaning one attributes to one's own educational plan, and the complex relationships individuals have with the diverse communities in which they participate.

During Time to BU, well-trained peer leaders facilitate activities and conversations that explore questions of individual values, belonging, and purpose. Modeled in part on the Reflecting On Your Life program developed by Richard Light, Howard Gardner, and colleagues at Harvard University, Time to BU also draws on research showing that light-touch interventions that allow under-represented students to affirm their values and to view belonging as a challenge for all students can raise their average GPA, close racial equity gaps, and have lasting effects on their career satisfaction and success, psychological wellbeing, and community involvement (Brady et al., 2020; Cohen et al., 2009; Cook et al., 2012; Walton et al., 2011).

First offered in 2016, the program evolved significantly in its first two years and settled into its current shape in 2018. For the first four years, it was offered as an optional three-hour pre-orientation program for incoming students. In Summer 2019, 911 of BU's incoming students (first-year and transfer) registered for the program. Because of the program's success, it was scheduled to be folded into the required orientation in Summer 2020. That plan was modified due to Covid-19, and for Summer 2020 the program was offered as an optional 75-minute virtual program, using Zoom. The program originated in the Office of Student Programs and Leadership in the College of Arts & Sciences. It is currently coordinated by the Office of the Provost and offered in collaboration with the Dean of Students Office.

When run on campus, small-group conversations are supplemented by a few large-group activities. When run virtually, the whole program is done in small groups. We experimented with staff-led conversations but found that on their first day on campus, incoming students were more likely to be relaxed and open enough to engage in reflection with peer facilitators. After experimenting with group size, we found that 8 to 14 participants, including one or two peer facilitators, is optimal.

Exploring values and belonging. Students begin the program's carefully sequenced activities and discussions with a "suitcase" activity that explicitly addresses the transition from high school to college (or from one institution to another for transfer students). Students reflect on what characteristics and habits they would like to bring with them to BU and which they would like to leave behind. Engaging next in the Center for Ethical Leadership's Core Values exercise leads into a discussion about students' core values, how those values relate to those held by their families and friends, and what might be exciting and what might be challenging about moving into a diverse community where they will live and learn with individuals who have different values.

The discussion about participating in a diverse community leads to a series of reflections about belonging. Incoming students hear briefly about the psychological and academic benefits of experiencing a sense of belonging, and a peer facilitator shares their own story of finding a sense of belonging at BU, including a description of early challenges and feelings of being lost or isolated. Listening to an excerpt from Brené Brown's *The Gifts of Imperfection* (2010) that describes the difference between "belonging" and "fitting in" leads students into a discussion of their past experiences with various communities and a conversation about how they might start to build community at BU.

Why college? The Why College? activity asks students to step back and consider underlying motivations for joining a college community. They are led to probe the goals and assumptions of people around them – their families, their communities, their peers – and finally to articulate their own personal motivation. Why College? concludes with a discussion of the wide variety of reasons students attend college and a recognition that those reasons can change over time. A peer facilitator notes the relationship between the purpose of education and the quest to lead "a good life," which leads to the Good Life activity. Students read two provocative parables and talk about which one resonates more with them and why.

Time to BU concludes with the students watching a video in which graduating BU seniors open and read aloud from letters they wrote to themselves four years earlier as part of a first-year experience course. The letters normalize feelings of insecurity and anxiety about first-year social life, academics, and finding a passion or sense of purpose, and the video itself illustrates the ability to navigate these feelings and achieve different versions of success. The program concludes by asking the incoming students to visualize themselves as future letter readers.

The goals of Time to BU, then, are twofold. The program encourages students to start asking the exploratory, generative questions about the purpose of education that can lay the foundation for productive academic advising conversations. Through shared exploration, the program itself also fosters the sense of belonging that research shows contributes positively to all students' psychological wellbeing and academic success and is particularly important to the persistence and academic success of underrepresented students.

Assessment Methods and Design

BU now employs several measures to assess the efficacy of Time to BU. A short, program-specific survey is administered at the conclusion of each session. In 2018, we surveyed 274 participants and in 2019, we surveyed 639 participants, and we performed mixed-methods analysis on the data. In addition, we examined first- to second-year retention rates and first-year GPA for students registered for the program, compared them to non-registrants, and broke the data down by race, gender, income, and first-generation status. In Fall 2020, we will do a similar analysis for the 2019 participants, once we have final retention numbers in October.

Assessment Findings

Survey questions were designed to elicit students' feelings of comfort within their diverse Time to BU group and to discern whether students felt they had been able to engage in rich conversations about values, belonging, and purpose. In both 2018 and 2019, 95% of respondents ($n = 274$ and $n = 637$) felt *very comfortable* or *comfortable* sharing their thoughts in their group. Similarly, most of the 2018 and 2019 respondents felt they had engaged in "meaningful, substantive conversation" within their Time to BU group (99%, $n = 269$, and 94.3%, $n = 635$, respectively). Student comments emphasized feelings of acceptance and a recognition that they were not alone in their worries and hopes. One student wrote, "It felt like a safe space where I could share my thoughts honestly and openly," and another student noted, "I've never felt so safe to express myself!" Another student explained, "I learned one important thing the most… that I'm not alone

in this." Students also shared that they had explored valuable questions about identity and purpose. One student wrote: "In a time of discovering my identity, Time to BU has given me a new perspective of being a student at BU." Another student said: "I learned a lot about BU and I gained a deeper sense of self." These themes have been echoed in the responses to the shorter, virtual experience offered in Summer 2020: "it showed me I was not alone," and "the questions [the facilitators] asked were very deep and meaningful and really made me think about my values and why I'm going to college."

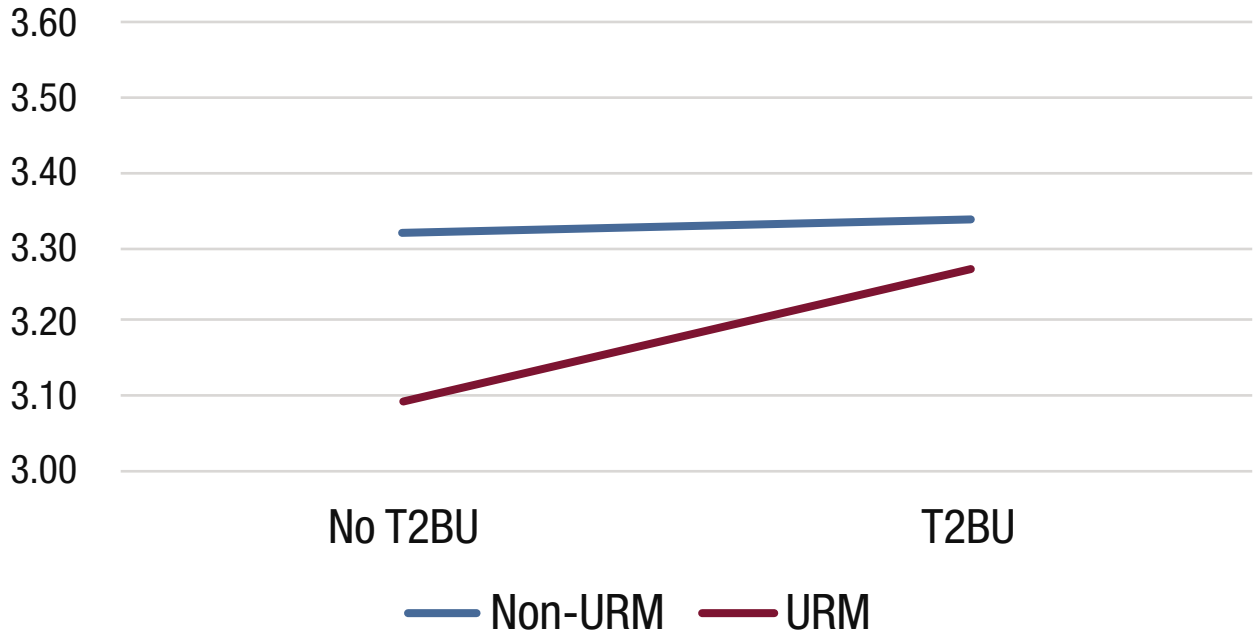
Using logistic regression analyses, we found that Time to BU was related to slightly lower attrition rates in all subgroups, but no statistically significant difference. We look forward to seeing what the larger set of 2019 data will show. There is, however, a statistically significant difference in the 2018 group in the first-year GPA for underrepresented minority (URM) students compared to their non-URM peers when controlling for high school GPA. In fact, the Time to BU URM participants had a first-year GPA approaching the GPA of their peers. While we do not yet have longitudinal data, these findings are in line with other research about the positive impact of social-belonging interventions on underrepresented college students' academic achievement (Brady et al., 2020; Cook et al., 2012; Walton et al., 2011).

Implications for Practice

The early data on Time to BU are promising. Especially encouraging are both the quantitative and qualitative data on students' sense of the openness, depth, and significance of the conversations they had during Time to BU. We will continue to assess the program itself and to use our NSSE data and our advising survey data to gather information about participants' involvement in high-impact practices, their engagement with advising, and their satisfaction with their overall college experience. We hope to learn that the habit of exploration and reflection fostered by Time to BU sets the stage for rich, substantive advising conversations that result in increased rates of participation in high-impact practices, enhanced academic performance, and greater satisfaction with the college experience for our low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented minority students.

Finally, the student response to Time to BU has led us to develop additional programming that builds on this orientation experience. In 2019, student facilitators asked us to provide continuing opportunities for BU students to engage in meaningful conversations about values, belonging, and purpose in college. In Summer 2020, we offered the first section of a semester-long co-curricular experience, "Belonging on Campus," that fulfills one of our general education requirements. Demand was strong, and in Fall 2020, we are running three sections of this 0-credit, seminar-style experience.

Figure 2.3 First-year GPA by underrepresented minority (URM) status



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3 California State University, Dominguez Hills Destination to Graduation Program

María E. Grandoné and Alma Melena

Institutional Profile

The California State University System (CSU) has 23 campuses including California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH). CSUDH is a comprehensive public university in Los Angeles County. According to CSUDH's internal Institutional Report, it qualifies as a minority-majority campus and designated Minority-Serving Institution[1]. This designation indicates at least 50% enrolled minorities at a campus. As a Hispanic Serving Institution, 25% or more of the total undergraduate population at CSUDH is Hispanic[2].

More than 95% of students commute to campus and nearly one-third are 25 years or older. The student population has a large percentage of first-generation students (students who are the first in their families to go to college, 48%) and those who are low income as determined by Pell Grant eligibility (65%). The majority of CSUDH students who face obstacles to graduation are first-generation, low-income students or students from under-resourced school districts.

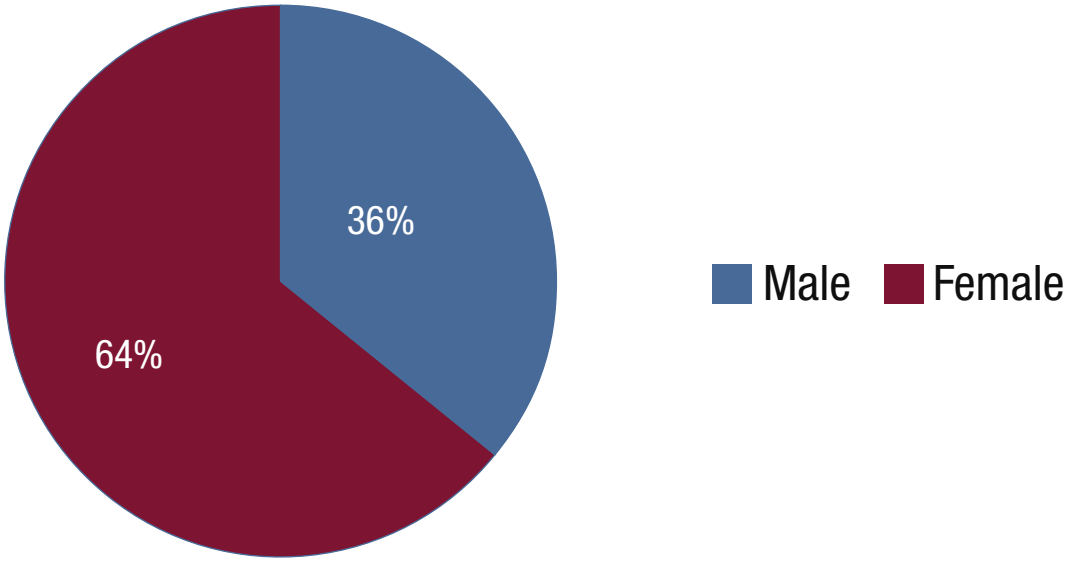
[1] MSIs refers to total headcounts (i.e., without converting part-time enrollment to its full-time-equivalent) of both undergraduate and graduate enrollment).

[2] Hispanic/Latino (A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race)

Table 3.1 *CSUDH Fall 2020 Undergraduate Enrollment*

Undergraduate Enrollment	Total (including graduate students)	White	Black/African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other Race OR Ethnicity
15,224 FTE	17,027	7%	11%	64%	8%	11%

Figure 3.1 CSUDH Enrollment by Gender Fall 2019



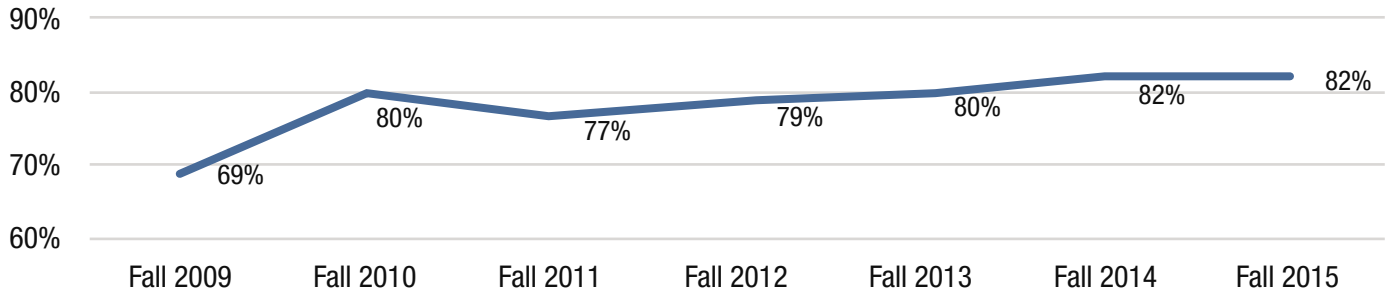
Destination Graduation Program

CSUDH's First-Year Student Experience emphasizes equity, access, and inclusion for all students. We are constantly evaluating the gaps in achievement, providing opportunities to meet the demands of qualified students, and increasing the quality of learning.

The 2014-2020 Strategic Plan was launched after receiving input from multiple stakeholders of the campus community. Goal 2 focused on student success by promoting "student graduation and success through effective recruitment, transition, and retention of our diverse student population." The objectives were to increase the six-year, first-time freshman (FTF) graduation rate to 60% and raise the three-year transfer graduation rate by 10%. To meet these objectives, the program implemented strategies such as the National Model of Student Success (proactive advising that helps students achieve goals), assessing, enhancing, and coordinating campus academic support units, applying previous recommendations from the University Advising Task Force, and increasing student engagement in community and service-learning.

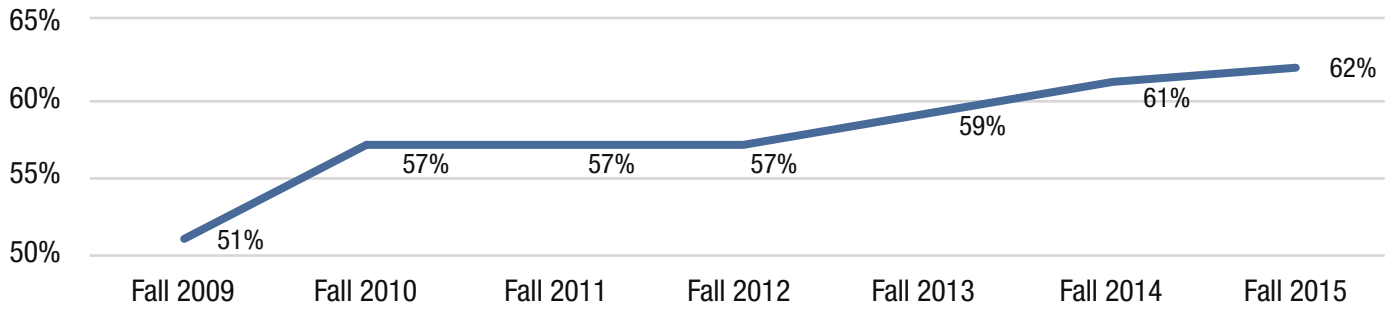
In 2015, CSUDH launched the DH First-Year Experience to Destination Graduation Program (DHFYE-DGP). With a large commuting student body, the campus successfully established intentional interventions for a sense of connection and belonging through proactive advising. The program includes holistic/proactive advising, peer academic coaching, supplemental instruction, writing tutoring, a first-year seminar, convocation, a progress report system (offering timely interventions to struggling students to support their success in their college courses and programs of study), and a first-year STEM undergraduate experience. Additionally, all first-year students engaged in weekly meaningful interactions with faculty and peers. Since the implementation of proactive advising interventions, first–to second–year (see Figure 3.2) and third–to fourth–year (see Figure 3.3) persistence rates have increased. This high-impact program proved efficient in building community while maximizing limited resources in support of student success and equity at scale.

Figure 3.2 First-year persistence for full-time first-year students, 2009-2015



Note. Data obtained from: https://csusuccess.dashboards.calstate.edu/public/dashboard-index

Figure 3.3 Third- to fourth-year persistence for full-time first-year students, 2009-2015



Note. Data obtained from: https://csusuccess.dashboards.calstate.edu/public/dashboard-in

In 2015, 1,294 first-time, first-year students joined the program. Assessment data indicated a positive effect on this cohort's overall success and academic persistence. With intensive investment in efforts through expanded First-Year Experience and Graduation Initiative 2025, we increased the graduation rate from 29% in 2014 (Cohort 2007) to 32% in 2015 (Cohort 2008). Supporting the student experience from connection through completion requires intentional student-centered interventions that are integrated, collaborative, and holistic. In addition, the CSUDH 2014-2020 Strategic Plan Steering Committee invested in the early buy-in of cross-divisional collaboration partners, such as Admissions and Records, Student Financial Services, professional and faculty advisors, University Advisement Center, academic administrators (i.e., deans, associate deans, department chairs); Extended and International education; Supplemental Instruction; and Student Affairs.

As part of the process, the steering committee members identified several best practices for implementation, such as consistent leadership, collaboration and communication across academic and student affairs, tailoring specific recommendations efforts, and understanding and communicating to all stakeholders about the return on investment on student success and transformational advising. Additional best practices included proactive advising, appropriate technology; and providing data analytics to be better informed about the progress of student success initiatives.

Plans include tracking student data from initial inquiry to graduation and training academic advisers to engage in proactive and developmental advising through:

- Toro Success Collaborative (an EAB tool);
- participating in CA Promise Programs, Finish in Four and Through in Two;
- redesigning the first year of the college experience for all students to create sustainable change for student success through participation in AASCU's Re-Imagining the First-Year Experience;

- implementing targeted, asset-based support services for low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students;
- deploying academic support initiatives, such as supplemental instruction, tutoring, and study groups;
- collecting and analyzing Graduation Initiative 2025 Data;
- training for future faculty advisors through the Faculty Fellows Program; and
- identifying and adopting appropriate advising tracking tools.

As a result of the CSUDH Strategic Plan and the CSU system Graduation Initiative (GI) 2025 to increase graduation rates for all CSU students while eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps, the campus launched the Graduation Innovation Team (GIT). GIT is a cross-divisional team of faculty, staff, students, and administrators charged with increasing our graduation rates and eliminating achievement gaps while sustaining high-quality degree programs. In support of this initiative, the campus developed ambitious goals for graduation rates, which include increasing the FTF 4-Year rate to 31%, the FTF 6-Year rate to 55%, the transfer 2-year rate to 40%, and the transfer 4-year rate to 75%.

The CSUDH 2025 GIT has redoubled efforts to advance large-scale programs that have proven effective. In 2015, GIT conducted an analysis of graduation denials, which were issued to students who did not complete degree requirements by the end of the semester. The GIT identified institutional barriers to graduation and offered evidence-based recommendations to improve student support (Student Success Report, 2017-2018). Recommendations included the development of a degree checkout process and a procedure to track and support graduation denials. Moreover, the analysis helped create the Charge On To Graduation initiative (COTG). This initiative offers required workshops for all students who have earned 74-89 units. Students get timely and practical information about graduation, applying for graduation, requirements, and timelines. The Pay It Forward (PIF) award, a grant available to candidates for graduation who encounter financial challenges during their final term, is also available to students after reviewing the data. Working in collaboration with campus partners, the strategic plan also featured new and ambitious initiatives and analytics to permanently increase the institution's capacity to dramatically shift four-year graduation rates for first-time first-year students and two-year graduation rates for transfers.

Assessment Methods & Design

To assess the effectiveness of intervention strategies such as COTG, GIT implemented of pre-and post-participation surveys. The Charge On To Graduation workshop initiative analyzes the achievement of a set of specific learning outcomes. In addition, data collected for the PIF grant includes demographic information and degree checkout status. Analysis of graduation denial data identifies trends and roadblocks to student success. Graduation rate information is obtained from Institutional Research Student Success dashboards.

Charge on to Graduation Learning Objectives

Data collected is used to measure workshop effectiveness based on established learning outcomes. The workshop learning outcomes are:

- using the Academic Requirements Report to track progress toward degree completion;
- recognizing the Smart Planner as a tool for planning degree completion;
- understanding the difference between graduation and commencement;
- recognizing the 6 requirements for graduation;
- identifying resources to plan for career and post-graduate goals.

Pay It Forward

Students who receive the PIF grant are tracked to ensure completion of their degree. In addition, demographic information for these students is collected from institutional reports which include data such as parental educational level, Pell Grant eligibility, and race/ethnicity. Data is used to understand the population of students who receive the PIF grant for use in future funding proposals.

Graduation Denials

The University Advisement Center analyzed 263 cases of students who had been denied graduation in Spring 2015, finding that:

- 100% of the roadblocks experienced could have been mitigated with academic advisement;
- 18% of students faced graduation deferment due to missing course substitutions for major or general education, pending incomplete coursework, and/or late submission of grade changes;
- no protocol existed to support students who had been denied;
- based on finding, recommendations were made to improve policy and procedures to better support students.

Data to track graduation denials is obtained from institutional cohort reports indicating degree checkout status. The student information is provided to major departments for assessment of missing courses and interventions needed. Data collected include reasons why students are denied, interventions needed to move from denied to cleared status, and the number of students moved from denied to cleared status after interventions. Information obtained is used to improve best practices and make recommendations to reduce graduation denials.

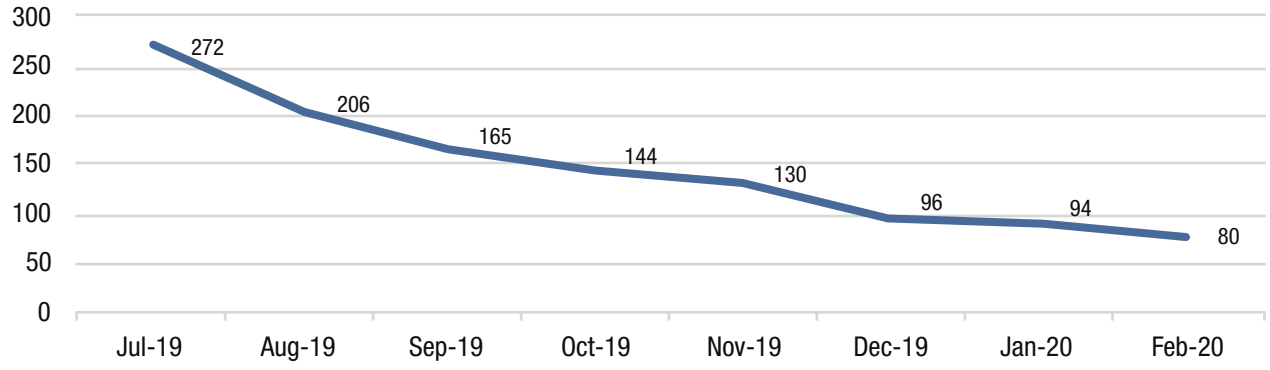
Assessment Findings

Students participating in the COTG workshop have demonstrated growth in learning as measured by the pre-and post-surveys. In Spring 2020, 92% of students understood the Smart Planner as a tool to develop a degree completion plan (an increase of 18% following the intervention). Similar learning took place when students were asked to identify the difference between commencement and graduation, jumping from 72% to 87%.

Since 2017, the PIF grant has helped 425 students overcome financial barriers to degree completion. In 2019, 79% of the 141 students supported were Pell-eligible students, and 70% were identified as first-generation college students.

To prevent graduation denials, proactive interventions are taken by tracking students who apply for graduation. If students are denied, a protocol to support these students has been implemented which includes outreach by the graduation unit, major advisors, and the University Advisement Center graduation specialist. The number of cases of graduation denials has significantly decreased after interventions were provided. For example, students denied graduation in Spring 2019 decreased from 272 to 80 between July 2019 and February 2020 (see Figure 3.4). Outreach to these students was done at various intervals, including registration periods. Students who were at

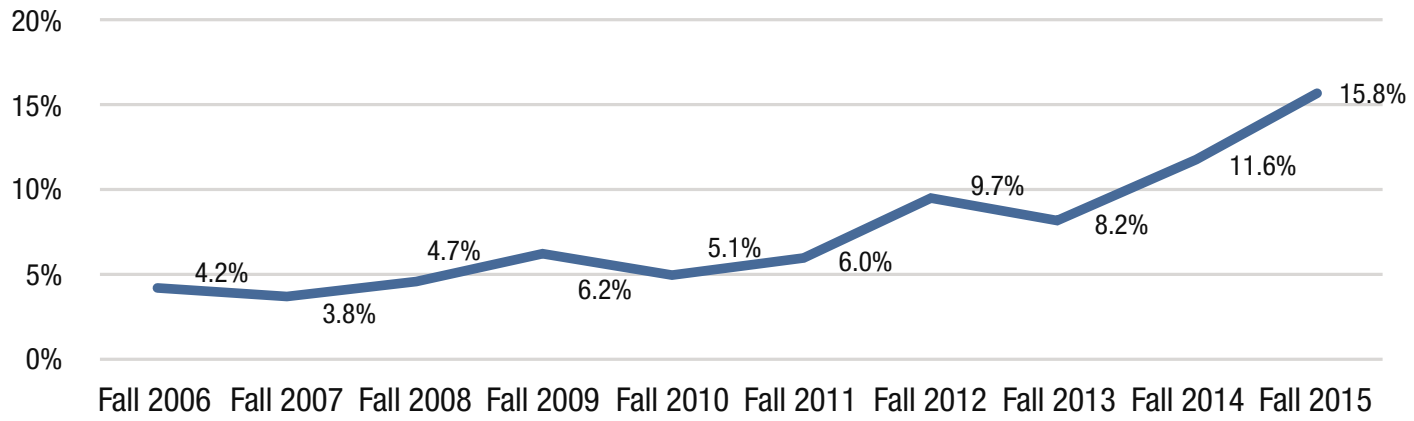
Figure 3.4 Number of Spring 2019 Denials Cleared



risk for missing more than two semesters of continuous enrollment were also contacted to help them maintain their enrollment status.

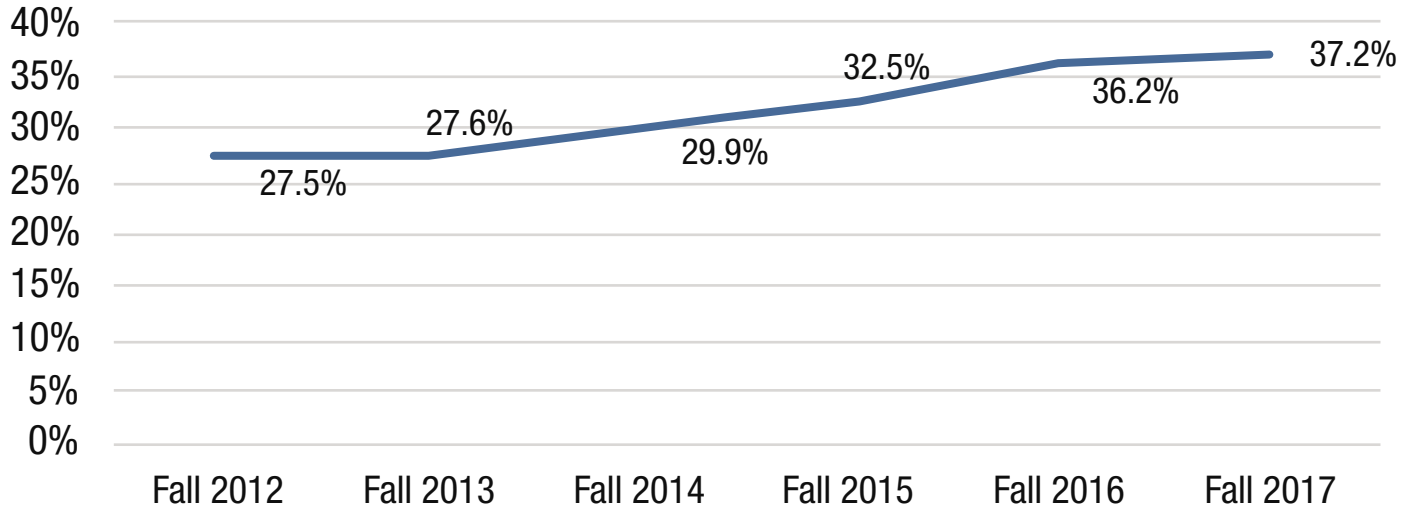
The Graduation Initiative Team has contributed to the increase in FTF four- and six-year graduation rates and two- and four-year transfer graduation rates. Significant findings include a nearly 50% increase in the FTF 4-year graduation rate, increasing from 8% for the Fall 2013 cohort to 16% for the Fall 2015 cohort (see Figure 3.5). This achievement also marked the highest FTF four-year graduation rate in the last 10 years. The graduation rates for transfer students continue to increase with a preliminary two-year rate of 37% in Summer 2020 (see Figures 3.6 and 3.7). This is an important milestone since it would meet the CSUDH Graduation Initiative 2025 two-year transfer graduation rate goal of 40%.

Figure 3.5 Four-year graduation rate for full-time first-year students, Fall 2006 to Fall 2015 cohorts



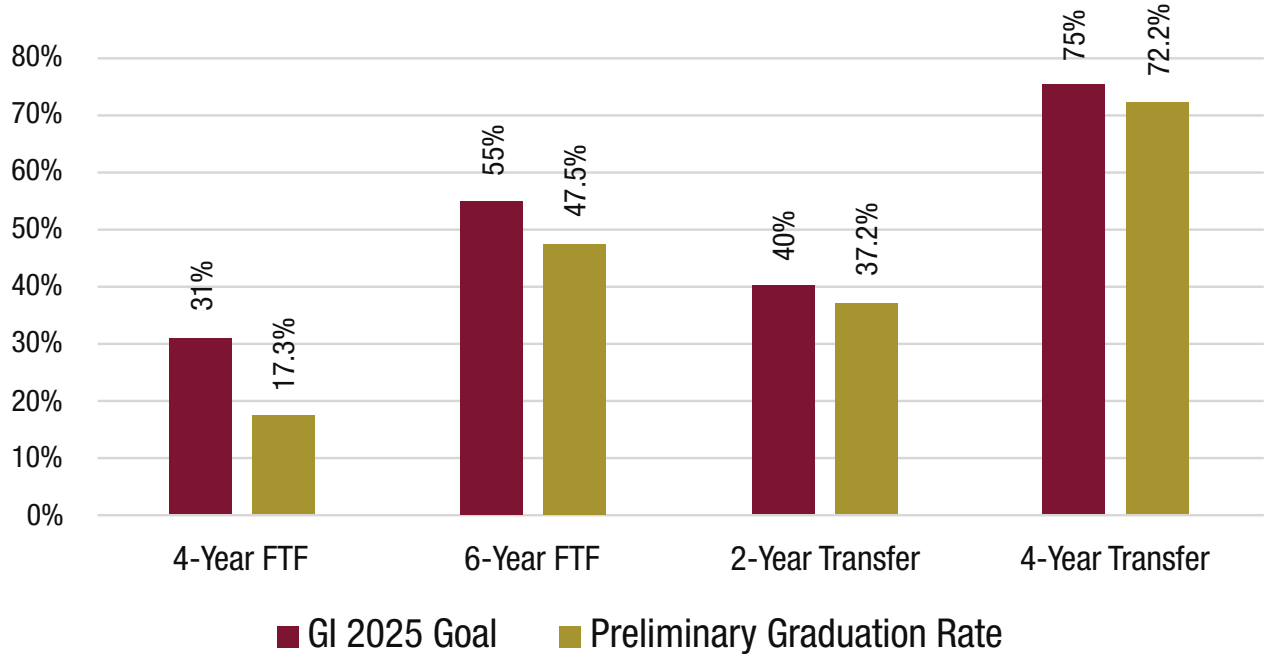
Note. Data obtained from: https://csusuccess.dashboards.calstate.edu/public/gi-goal-trajectories

Figure 3.6 Two-year transfer graduation rates, Fall 2012 to Fall 2017 cohorts



Note. Data obtained from: https://csusuccess.dashboards.calstate.edu/public/gi-goal-trajectories

Figure 3.7 Preliminary graduation rates for full-time first-year students and transfers, 2020



Note. Data obtained from: https://csusuccess.dashboards.calstate.edu/public/gi-goal-trajectories

Implications for Practice

The 2014-2020 CSUDH Strategic Plan built on institutional initiatives to achieve equity and enhance academic advising, such as the DHFYE to Destination Graduation program. The DHFYE to Destination Graduation Program serves as a foundation for success for first-year and sophomore students by providing academic support and opportunities for engagement and connection. Cross-collaborations, such as the Graduation Innovation Teams, continue to support students in their junior and senior years to ensure degree completion and success. In addition, GIT oversees the Retention and Persistence subcommittee to continue to advance GI 2025 goals. Through analysis of retention and persistence trends, this committee has provided recommendations to improve student success. The conclusion of the 2014-2020 Strategic Plan is approaching. As the new strategic plan is developed, data collected through the interventions are available to the new Strategic Plan Steering Committee to continue established best practices and develop new initiatives to build on that success.

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4 LaGuardia Community College Advising in the First Year Seminar for Business

Andrea Francis and Ellen Quish

Institutional Profile

LaGuardia Community College-CUNY (LaGuardia) is a public two-year commuter school located in Queens, New York. LaGuardia serves a diverse student body of more than 15,000 degree-seeking students with 13,000 full-time equivalent students. Approximately 58% of students are female and 42% male, with 59% of all students foreign-born from 150 different countries, and 32% older than 25. Table 4.1 shows the racial and ethnic composition of the student body, faculty, and staff. LaGuardia offers more than 50 majors, ranging from business administration to computer science. Approximately 53% of entering students place into either basic skills reading, writing, or mathematics courses with 72% of full-time students receiving financial aid and 71% of first-time full-time first-year students awarded Pell grants (LaGuardia Community College, 2019). The percentage of first-generation students, defined here as students where neither parent graduated college, is reported collectively with other CUNY community colleges at 65.7% (CUNY OIRA, 2018).

Academic Advising Initiative

LaGuardia's first-year seminar (FYS) was designed to improve student retention and completion. Launched in Spring 2014, it has engaged more than 31,000 LaGuardia students, many of whom are at high risk. In response to the FYS student experience, LaGuardia's 2018 strategic planning process identified two institutional priorities: (a) building student access and success and (b) building an inclusive community, both of which pursue equity for students and are integral to the FYS course. The discipline-specific seminar helps students transition to college by providing

Table 4.1 *Racial/Ethnic Composition*

Racial/ethnic makeup	Percentage of student body	Percentage of faculty and staff
Asian	22%	16%
Black	17%	23%
Hispanic	48%	24%
White	11%	36%
Other Ethnic Origin	1%	1%
Unknown	1%	0%

an introduction to their selected major, college success content, and comprehensive advising support. In developing a path to graduation, FYS students learn to take ownership of their academic and career plans, using key digital advising tools and practices that support integrated advisement and promote self-knowledge available to students throughout their time at LaGuardia.

LaGuardia has invested significant resources in FYS development and implementation. Such resource allocation has supported comprehensive professional development for faculty and peer mentors preparing to teach the course as well as the intentional integration and program-specific introduction to FYS students of the newest high-impact practice: the ePortfolio (AACU, 2019). The meta-major FYS courses vary from 0 to 3 credits, according to availability in each program curriculum, and are divided into two integrated components: the faculty hour and the studio hour.

The FYS encourages students to engage in a transformative journey of self-exploration. Course content is delivered by a faculty member from the discipline during the faculty hour and built upon under the guidance of a peer mentor known as a Student Success Mentor (SSM) during the affiliated lab session, or studio hour. Common performance objectives include identifying education and career goals; developing a degree plan in the major; engaging with college life through active curricular, advising, and co-curricular participation; locating and using support resources; and practicing academic success strategies.

In recognizing the need to help students feel a sense of belonging in their new college environment, FYS students are supported by relationships with faculty and SSMs. Reciprocal in nature, these relationships help students feel connected to LaGuardia by offering academic and social support, introducing models of success, and providing a student-driven rationale for developing help-seeking behaviors. Faculty and SSMs learn about students and their varied experiences, enabling them to better engage students and address their needs.

Advising in the FYS is strengthened by the faculty-student relationship, in which the instructor serves as a resource to the student. Using a learner-centered approach, faculty guide students in understanding "the logic of the curriculum," while cultivating agency and enhancing students' education (Lowenstein, 2005).

The First Year Seminar for Business (BTF101) is the College's earliest FYS course and is taken by students in LaGuardia's highest enrolling program. It has been used as a model for advising at LaGuardia and thus has been selected by the authors for further examination of advising in the FYS (LaGuardia Community College, 2019).

Advising in the First Year Seminar for Business

BTF 101 is a mandatory, two-credit course, intentionally designed without prerequisites to provide access to a discipline-specific course to students completing developmental and non-credit courses. Advising is integrated throughout the curriculum in a scaffolded, iterative, and intentional way over the 12-week semester. The advising effort takes a holistic approach incorporating both developmental advising and course selection.

Advising is enhanced by relationships between faculty and students and between students and SSMs. Faculty and SSMs go through rigorous professional development about the first-year student at LaGuardia and techniques to engage students, build relationships, and design a curriculum that advances equity. During the first three weeks of the course, students complete assignments related to their mindset about college, the discipline, analysis of their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT), and write reflections to share with faculty and SSMs. These

activities are aimed at fostering relationships within the course and setting a firm foundation for further advising activities.

Students also explore campus resources with the goal of enhancing their knowledge, access, and self-advocacy. Subsequently, students contextualize their findings while researching careers, transfer schools, and majors. Through this scaffolded process, they critically think about their plans and develop inquiry and problem-solving skills. Faculty then explain all course requirements for graduating, and once students are more comfortable with the logic of the curriculum, they are tasked with mapping their course selections to graduation. Students often find this activity daunting as they must use multiple sources of information to create feasible schedules. However, faculty provide support throughout the process understanding that this element of self-advising is critical to students developing confidence and independent decision-making skills, thus agency.

Advising leverages supporting technology and other tools that help students to engage in reflection, information gathering and analysis, decision-making, and documentation of their work using platforms accessible to them in the present and future (e.g., ePortfolio, Degree Maps, and the LaGuardia Mobile App). After participating in discussion and research during the faculty hour, students use the relevant areas of the Core ePortfolio to reflect, document, and curate their work during the studio hour. Degree Maps provide a roadmap for course selection for both students and faculty, and faculty help students to demystify career options through career tools like the Bureau of Labor Statistics website and LaGuardia's Center for Career and Professional Development. The LaGuardia Mobile App was designed with advisement as a central focus so students have advisement-related resources at their fingertips, and during the course, faculty and SSMs provide training on functions and use-cases. In short, there is a concerted effort to eliminate barriers to untapped resources and develop advisement-seeking behaviors.

LaGuardia students are predominantly first-generation and historically, often need additional support to achieve academic success. Crucial to advancing equity, the student is the central focus of the design and delivery of the BTF 101 course, thus facilitating inclusivity and cultural sensitivity. Furthermore, faculty and SSMs guide students in the development of agency, advocacy, and advisement-seeking behaviors to promote retention and completion.

Assessment Methods & Design

Three separate and independently conducted assessments were performed by the Office of Institutional Research, the Center for Teaching and Learning, and the Academic Affairs Division at LaGuardia, respectively. The assessments have independent objectives, which include (a) sharing the comparison of outcomes between students who take the FYS in the first semester with those who take it in subsequent semesters; (b) reporting survey findings on the student experience; and (c) demonstrating the course's impact on advisement-seeking behaviors. The FYS is a graduation requirement at LaGuardia, thus all students are mandated to take the FYS for their discipline, and new student registration prioritizes placing students into the course by following each department's degree map, which sequences the FYS into the first semester. However, not all students are able to take the course in their first semester based on scheduling and/or capacity constraints and, therefore, may take the course in a later semester.

Since 2014, the Office of Institutional Research has conducted an assessment of next semester retention and GPA for students enrolled in an FYS in their first semester compared to those who were not enrolled in their first semester using data from institutional databases. The objective of the assessment is to compare outcomes across these populations. The sample sizes for the assessment have varied from 2014 to 2018 as the initiative was brought to scale but for Fall 2016, 2017, and 2018, sample sizes were 4,162, 4,008, and 3,694, respectively.

In keeping with its commitment to strengthening the new student transition, the Center for Teaching and Learning gauges course effectiveness by surveying the student experiences. The sample sizes have varied over time, but for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 academic years, sample sizes were 3,582 and 3,552, respectively. The survey provides anonymous feedback about the course, and data are then aggregated to help inform the design and delivery of the course.

The Division of Academic Affairs, as part of an ongoing advising initiative, also conducted an assessment of advisement-seeking behaviors in students. The objective of the assessment was to determine whether initiatives to promote advisement-seeking behaviors resulted in students being advised. Data were

collected from faculty, professional advisors, and peer advisors and aggregated by department. Our findings focus on the Business department, and the most recent data from Fall 2018 has a sample size of 1,314 students.

Assessment Findings

Findings are discussed based on the three separate and independently conducted assessments of this initiative.

LaGuardia Institutional Research Assessment

Institutional data include GPA and next semester retention for students who were enrolled in an FYS during their first semester, compared to those who were not, for first-year and transfer students. All outcomes are significant at the 99% confidence level. As can be seen from Table 4.2, GPAs of both first-year and transfer students are higher for those who took an FYS than those who did not. Although the GPA data are encouraging, they are not the focus of this case. As previously mentioned, the FYS was created to strengthen student retention. Prior to the FYS, on average, 37% of students dropped out by their second semester resulting in a retention rate of, on average, 63% (LaGuardia Community College, 2014). The impact on retention can be seen in Table 4.3, which shows consistently higher retention for both first-year and transfer FYS students than non-FYS students. Moreover, the retention rate for first-year and transfer students is well over the 63% average retention rate prior to FYS implementation.

LaGuardia Center for Teaching and Learning FYS Core Survey

Select data for the core survey administered to FYS students are shown for the two most recent years of available data. Data will be discussed in terms of the normalized ratings on the scale of 1 to 5 in order to focus on student responses to questions related to the themes of relationship, agency, and supporting tools, thus conclusions about the statistical significance of responses between cohorts are not drawn. As can be seen from the responses, students leave the FYS with a better understanding of themselves, their strengths, and their weaknesses. Students also feel strongly that they have developed concrete educational, transfer, and career plans and that they are able to solve complex problems that may arise related to these areas. They also indicate a strong understanding of the requirements of their major and how they will structure their schedules to fulfill those requirements, which provides insight into the work of faculty to explain the logic of the curriculum, the strength of supporting tools related to the major, and course selection, and ultimately the development of agency

Table 4.2 *First semester GPA by FYS Participation*

	First-year students			Transfer students		
Semester	**FYS**	**Non-FYS**	**Difference**	**FYS**	**Non-FYS**	**Difference**
Fall 2016	2.27	1.66	0.61	2.76	2.44	0.32
Fall 2017	2.58	2.28	0.30	2.99	2.69	0.30
Fall 2018	2.43	2.21	0.22	2.88	2.61	0.27

$p < .001$

Table 4.3 *Next Semester Retention by FYS Seminar Participation*

	First-year students			Transfer students		
Semester	**FYS**	**Non-FYS**	**Difference**	**FYS**	**Non-FYS**	**Difference**
Fall 2016	82.54%	61.42%	21.12%	82.63%	68.06%	14.57%
Fall 2017	78.92%	67.57%	11.35%	77.54%	64.11%	13.43%
Fall 2018	76.81%	64.05%	12.76%	76.67%	66.44%	10.23%

$p < .001$

in students. Further highlighting the importance of thoughtful integration of supporting tools, students also positively rate their experience with ePortfolio as a technological tool to reflect, explore career and transfer plans, and make their academic plans visible. The impact of the SSM (FYS Peer Mentor) also garners strong responses with respect to helping students understand course requirements and how to be successful in college.

Division of Academic Affairs Assessment

For the Business & Technology department, in Fall 2018, 87% of students returned to LaGuardia when advised by faculty, professional advisors, or peer advisors, using the Student Success Plan, an advisement tool, which mirrors the components of the FYS curriculum (e.g., goals, career options, transfer plans, resource needs); 62% of students who had not been advised returned to the campus the following semester, which represents a 25 percentage point difference in retention in the two populations.

Implications for Practice

Advising is an institutional priority at LaGuardia that supports and deepens the student experience from enrollment to completion. This case study suggests that advising has the potential to be more effective when it is fully integrated into a culturally responsive, student-centered curriculum and builds on institutional objectives of inclusion and access. The curriculum invites the student to start with who they are—allowing for their identity to be at the core of the process—and to then engage in self-assessment and reflection thereby being prompted to better understand themselves and to use that knowledge in developing their academic and career goals. The relationships students form with both faculty and peer mentors in the first semester offer academic and social support and are leveraged to develop agency and advance equity.

Table 4.4 *FYS Core Survey Responses*

	Weighted mean[a]			
Survey item	**Fall 2017 (*n* = 2,124)**	**Spring 2018 (*n* = 1,458)**	**Fall 2018 (*n* = 2,296)**	**Spring 2019 (n = 1,256)**
1. In this class, I examined my own strengths and weaknesses.	4.17	4.18	4.19	4.29
2. This course helped me feel more confident as a student.	4.11	4.15	4.11	4.22
3. This class helped me study what successful college students do.	4.20	4.24	4.22	4.27
4. My FYS Peer Mentor helped me to understand what I needed to do in this course.	4.26	4.32	4.33	4.36
5. My FYS Peer Mentor helped me to understand what it takes to be a successful college student.	4.23	4.27	4.27	4.29
6. I choose courses that fulfill the requirements of my major.	4.41	4.47	4.44	4.45
7. I know which semesters I will take my courses to get my degree.	4.27	4.32	4.34	4.35
8. How much has your experience in this course contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in understanding yourself?	4.04	4.09	4.06	4.13
9. How much did this course contribute to your ability to explore and solve complex, real-world problems, such as those you might face in your life, including your career?	4.01	4.00	3.98	4.08
Based on what you know or what you were told, the goal for using ePortfolio in this course was:				
10. To help me develop my own educational goals and plans.	4.29	4.33	4.31	4.31
11. To help me develop my career plans.	4.29	4.32	4.33	4.31
12. To help me develop my plans to transfer or apply to another college or university.	4.24	4.26	4.22	4.25

Note. Question 9 is drawn from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and does not have a comparable question on the CCSSE.

[a] Responses on normalized ratings scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being *strongly agree* and 1 being *strongly disagree*.

A unique and impactful component of the FYS course is the peer-led studio hour where students engage weekly with an academically successful SSM who helps them transition to the college environment. Having been an FYS student just a short time ago, SSMs share their own academic experiences with empathy and a first-hand appreciation for the varied needs of LaGuardia students. While this relationship helps students develop a sense of belonging at the College, it also aims to motivate students to tap into their capacities, strengths, and potential.

The early introduction of supportive advising tools assists students in learning how to navigate the advising process as well as to independently access and use important college resources. Connecting students to these tools and encouraging self-advocacy behaviors are keystones of advising in the FYS that bolster academic success from the first semester to graduation.

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5 Montana Technological University Freshmen Engineering Advising

Akua B. Oppong-Anane and Amanda Shaw

Institutional Profile

Montana Technological University (Montana Tech) is a public institution located in the historical rural mining town of Butte, Montana. It was established in 1900 to educate the children of miners and others in the surrounding areas to advance educational equity in Montana, and this tradition has continued. Some students reside in rural and low population density towns and counties like Roberts (population 295) and Golden Valley (population 821; United States Census Bureau, 2018). Many students go home every weekend to help on their parents' ranches and farms. In addition, workers in Montana generally earn a lower income than in other states. The Montana median household income of $52,328, which is lower than the U.S. median income of $61,937 (DATAUSA, 2020).

Montana Tech offers certificate, associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from the School of Mines and Engineering; School of Nursing; College of Letters, Sciences and Professional Studies; Highlands College; or the Graduate School. It was voted the #1 Best Value engineering school in the United States in 2020 (Stone, 2020). Our 2,421-student population has the following demographics: 12% are students of color, 8% race unknown, and 81% are White (Montana Technological University, 2019). In addition, 72.1% of the students are Montana residents, 19.4% are non-residents, and 8.5% are Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) students (Montana University System, 2020a). While all incoming first-year students are required to live on campus, only 17% of the student population resides on campus (M. Kump, personal communication, August 7, 2020).

At Montana Tech, low-income students are defined as those receiving Pell grants and/or other federal grants. In the 2018-2019 academic year, 86% of the admitted first-year students received financial assistance in the form of federal grants and scholarships. In addition, more than one-third of the first-year student population were considered low-income with 33% receiving Federal grants (including Pell grants) and another 10 % receiving other federal grants (Montana

Technological University, 2020). Additionally, first-generation students are identified as those whose parents do not have a college degree. In Fall 2017, 34% of students indicated neither parent completed a college degree (M. Kump, personal communication, August 7, 2020). Due to the demographics of our student population and their low-income or first-generation status, Montana Tech employs intrusive advising with first-year engineering students.

The Freshmen Engineering Advising Framework

Advising is a proven aid in increasing student engagement and retention (Fares, 2020). Intrusive advising involves the advisor intentionally making the initial contact with their advisees and then maintaining contact with students through multiple advising sessions with the goal of establishing an advisor-student relationship (Varney, 2007). Intrusive advising is used to help students cope with the high school-to-college transition which can be daunting for many first-year students, especially those who may also be low-income and first-generation. Students are introduced to academic policies and resources that can help them to succeed academically, which is especially helpful since most of these are unknown to students.

Decentralized advising is practiced at Montana Tech by faculty advisors. In the School of Mines and Engineering, sophomore and upper-class students are advised solely by faculty advisors. Many students leave engineering majors in the first-year because it is perceived as being too difficult. Other students may make multiple major changes. To decrease the likelihood of first-year engineering students changing majors multiple times, or worse, deciding not to pursue engineering during their junior year or later, first-year engineering students are exposed to an intentional model of professional and faculty advising coupled with introductory classes. The Freshman Engineering Program, now Freshman Engineering Advising, was started in the Fall 2014 semester with the aim of improving the advising process and increasing retention rates of first-year engineering students. All first-year engineering students upon admission are assigned a professional advisor or a faculty advisor based on their SAT, ACT, or AP math placement.

Students are assigned to a professional advisor if their math placement is in Pre-calculus or lower; students are assigned a faculty advisor if their math placement is in Calculus 1, which results in a higher caseload for the professional advisor. Both advisors offer the same services and work in tandem through the Freshman Engineering Advising group. In addition, since the faculty advisor also has all the first-year engineering students in their classes, they can serve as an additional touchpoint for in-classroom advising. The faculty advisor also serves as a faculty role model for students and the constant interaction helps the students feel comfortable meeting with their advisors.

The high touch and intrusive advising practiced by the advisors requires first-year engineering students to attend at least four advising sessions during the semester. Advising announcements are sent by email and are also made through the classes taught by the faculty advisor since most of the first-year engineering students take these classes. Announcements are made a week prior to each advising session. The first advising session is an introductory meeting to help the advisor and student get to know each other and to talk about the advising process and requirements. Prior to the advising session, students complete a questionnaire. During the session, the advisor reviews the responses to learn more about the student and to offer help where appropriate. If a student is identified as a first-generation student, they are sent for a follow-up meeting with the staff from the Institute for Educational Opportunities, the Federal TRIO program at Montana Tech, which has additional services for students from minoritized backgrounds.

To decrease attrition, Montana Tech implements an early-alert system using 20th and 40th day grade checks for all first-year students. These serve as the second and third advising sessions, respectively. Students are required to meet with their advisors to go over their grades. The advisors use these sessions to introduce students to intervention methods like tutoring if their grades are dropping. The offices of the two first-year engineering advisors are in the Student Success Center where other student services including Enrollment Services, Financial Aid Services, and the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) for tutoring are located. The advisors are thus able to walk the student over to ACE to set up a tutoring appointment or to the Financial Aid office if the student needs additional help. The fourth advising session occurs at the end of the semester and focuses on registration for the next semester or transfer to a faculty advisor in their engineering department. The metric used to transfer a student from a first-year engineering advisor to a major advisor occurs when a student successfully passes their Calculus 1 class at the end of their first or

second semester. Undecided students will remain with a first-year advisor to explore engineering majors for an additional semester if that is needed.

Another approach Montana Tech has adopted within its first-year advising, is the practice of forming cross-functional partnerships with career services. Career counseling integrated with academic advising has been proven to show an increase in graduation rates. For example, the University of South Carolina (UofSC) recorded a 3.7 % increase in graduation (Aisen, 2019) for students served by an integrated approach. Montana Tech has a high career outcome (or job placement) rate of 93.23% because of the multiple efforts done across campus. Career counseling and other services offered by our Career Services department are emphasized in all of the classes taught by the first-year faculty advisor from the first week of college and onwards (Montana Technological University, 2018). The Director of Career Services introduces the Career Services department and career resources to the first-year engineering students through the first-year seminar class and conducts laboratory class sessions to go over the Career Services website and services. This is done through the Introduction to Engineering Calculations and Problem-Solving class. In addition, the first-year engineering students are required through the seminar class to talk to recruiters at the Career Fair to get a view of what is required of students seeking internships or jobs after graduation. Professors who teach sophomore and higher engineering classes then continue this initiative by having the Director of Career Services visit their classes and help students with their résumés. The institutional culture that all faculty advisors place on our students using the Career Services and attending the Career Fair has greatly helped our career rate. Most students at Montana Technological University go on to have at least one internship, and many get jobs after graduation. This helps to bridge poverty and opportunity gaps, leading to better socio-economic lives for themselves and their families.

Assessment Methods and Design

Montana Tech's first-year student retention data, which measures the number of first-time students who began their studies in the previous fall semester and returned to school the following fall semester, are collected from Enrollment Services student records and analyzed by the Institutional Research office each academic year. Data is also reported to the Montana University System, the Montana higher education repository database. Advising Satisfaction Surveys are completed by advisees at each semester's end. Data are collected on the number of advising sessions scheduled and attended. Satisfaction is measured by the tallied responses of agree and strongly agree on questions about advisors and advising meetings. Major changes are asked but not strongly tracked. The results of retention data and surveys are analyzed by our program each year, and changes are made to improve student services.

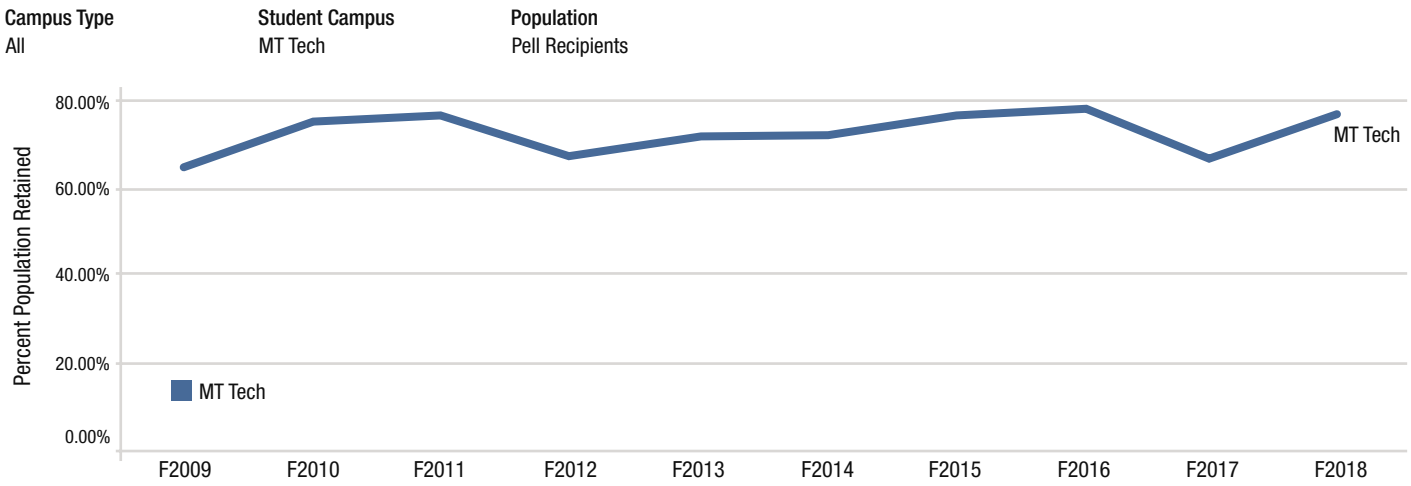
Assessment Findings

The high touch and intrusive advising of first-year engineering students at Montana Tech has yielded positive results regarding advising satisfaction and retention. Pell recipient interventions have yielded more than a 70% retention rate as shown in Figure 5.1 (MSU, 2020b). The overall first-ear retention rate has increased to 81% as shown in Figure 5.2 (MSU, 2020c). The first-year engineering retention data is not separated from the overall first-year retention data. Satisfaction Surveys completed by students in the 2018-2019 academic year indicated an above 90% advising satisfaction rate among first-year engineering students.

Implications for Practice

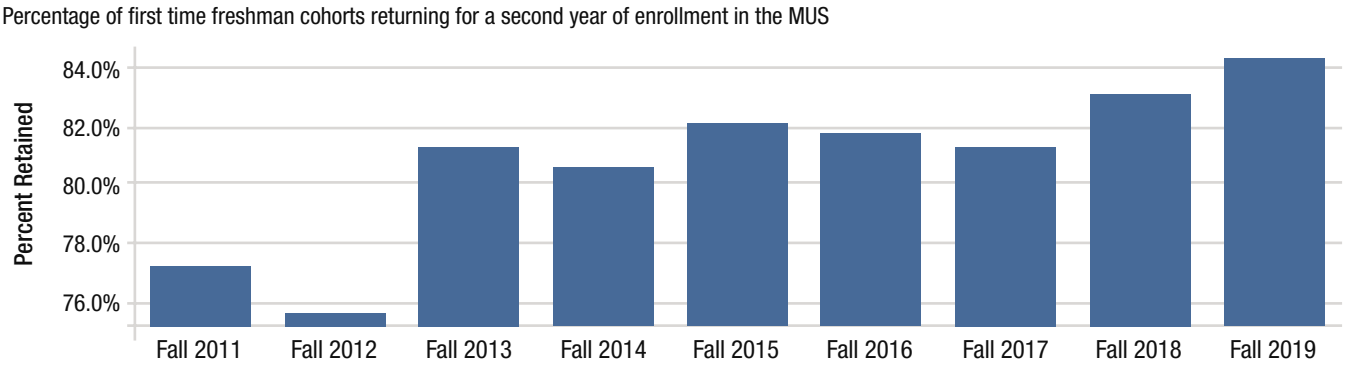
Based on our assessment data, the most significant contributions to our program's success are the multiple advising sessions and the availability of the advisors. As a result of the data, the first-year engineering advisors will continue to provide quality and accessible advising to our students by offering these services. We will monitor our introductory classes and track major changes to determine if our program assists students in determining if engineering is the correct educational path for them. We continue to strive to reach our goal – to provide first-year engineering students with immediate and intentional support through advising. We hope that our approach can be modeled and scaled by peer institutions to promote growth and transparency for the field.

Figure 5.1 Pell Recipient Retention Rate at Montana Technological University



Note. Reprinted from the Montana University System Data & Reports website. https://www.mus.edu/data/performancefunding/dashboards/index.html

Figure 5.2 Percentage of Montana Tech First-Time Freshman Retained



Note. Reprinted from the Montana University System Data & Reports website. https://www.mus.edu/data/dashboards/first-time-freshmen.html

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6 North Carolina Central University BAM! Merits of a Blended Advising Model for Removing Barriers and Encouraging Successs

Christina Garrett and T. Leon Lassiter

Institutional Profile

North Carolina Central University (NCCU), a state-supported liberal arts institution, is a public, historically black university in Durham, North Carolina. Founded in 1910, it became a member of the University of North Carolina System in 1971. Total enrollment is more than 8,000 learners with 85% of learners arriving from within NC. NCCU offers a liberal arts education culminating in majors spanning sciences, arts, and business, among other disciplines. In 2018, the first-year retention rate was 76% and the six-year graduation rate was 46% for the 2012 cohort. Graduate and professional degree offerings continue to expand. Biomedical research programs at NCCU have been particularly successful in pushing the frontiers of life science as highlighted by the awarding of more than $33 million in extramural funding during 2018. NCCU is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and identified as a Community Engaged Institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. NCCU is invested in delivering the transformative power of a college education to students from lower-income backgrounds as well as students from rural parts of NC. Our successes in higher education have been consistently recognized and distinguish our campus as a preeminent higher education destination in the Southeast.

Prior to presenting the blended advising model, it is helpful to detail salient demographic data describing NCCU and the Cheatham-White Scholarship Program (CWSP). (see Table 6.1 for a composite impression). CWSP parallels the larger NCCU enrollment in important ways. Notably, the representation of African American learners is the same (78%). Also, the educational history of CWSP is comparable to the entire student body. At NCCU, a first-generation student is recognized as a student whose parents (both) did not complete a bachelor's degree, or in the case of a student living with and supported by only one parent, a student whose only such parent did not complete a bachelor's degree. CWSP has 28% first-generation students and similarly, the total NCCU campus is 32%. One difference to highlight is the higher percentage of CWSP learners classified as sophomores. Scholars served in the blended advising model arrive with more college credits, and this translates to a larger population of second-year learners (53% CWSP versus 16% total enrollment).

Blended Advising Model

Answering the call for access and affordability to higher education in the state, the Cheatham-White Scholarship Program at NCCU was developed in 2017 in partnership with the University of North Carolina General Administration and the state legislature to attract the highest performing and most academically prepared learners in North Carolina. The mission of CWSP is to prepare students to become exceptional scholars and global citizens proficient in the arts and sciences, and actively engaged in the community. The program provides a remarkable education for students who are well-rounded individuals with a broad range of interests by delivering a fully funded scholastic experience and intellectually challenging enrichment opportunities. Our goals are as follows:

1. Sustain the success of Cheatham-White Scholars through a supportive and highly structured academic environment.

Table 6.1 *Essential Demographics Describing Learners at North Carolina Central University, Fall 2018*

	North Carolina Central University		Cheatham-White Scholars	
	Value	Percentage	Value	Percentage
Full-time Undergraduate Enrollment	5,328	100%	36	100%
male enrollment	1,739	33%	9	25%
female enrollment	3,589	67%	27	75%
Ethnocultural Diversity				
Hispanic/Latino	405	6%	0	0%
Black or African-American	4,998	78%	28	78%
White	408	6%	4	11%
American Indian or Alaska Native	28	0.4%	0	0%
Asian	70	1%	0	0%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	4	<0.0%	0	0%
two or more races	338	5%	4	11%
race and / or ethnicity unknown	170	3%	0	0%
nonresident alien	13	0.2%	0	0%
Age Diversity (> 25 years of age)	997	19%	0	0%
Living Off-campus / Commuting	3,552	66%	0	0%
Sophomore (earned / transferred 30-59 credits)	1,338	16%	19	53%
First-Generation Learner	2,067	32%	10	28%
Pell Grant Eligible	3,674	57%	12	33%

2. Promote a diverse community of highly motivated scholars through enriching, intellectual opportunities aligned with personal and professional experiences.
3. Prepare Cheatham-White Scholars for substantive contributions to North Carolina, the nation, and the world through a culture of leadership in public service.

Building upon high performing students' qualities of scholarship, leadership, integrity, and service, CWSP blends academic preparation and accessible advisor relationships to develop intro/extrospective purveyors of change in an evolving, global community. In alignment with the University Strategic Plan 2019-2024, the current practices of CWSP create a campus-wide Student Success Plan which integrates students' overall campus engagement to increase degree attainment. More specifically, the program supports the following integrated goals and strategies of the University:

- increase access for underserved student populations through expansion to at least two new remote markets, with emphasis on Tier 1 and 2 counties;
- develop a robust scholarship program to support the enrollment of low-income and rural students;
- graduate 25% more students from low-income backgrounds.

High-performing students create change and growth opportunities in the classroom, as their contributions challenge peers and faculty alike to rise to meet these talented students. Fostering academic rigor and reputation benefits the retention of all students by increasing the valuation of the day-to-day college experience and burnishing the significance of earning a degree at NCCU.

At its core, the blended advising model of CWSP delivers an experience unique and intentional to counsel learners holistically during their undergraduate experience. When considering the swift implementation and mandated requisites outlined by legislative initiators of the program, it was evident the scholars would require quality support if their exceptional success were to continue. For the Cheatham-White Scholarship Program, rather than fashioning a supplementary model based upon a paradigm or strategy, less attention was paid to the transactional process of formal academic advising sessions. More consideration was given to long-term relationships and their impact on the student experience. Having recognized the strengths and talents of specific staff members who were working in a shared space, the idea was created to form an advisory team that would fully support the scholars in achieving their heightened academic expectations.

Being so, Cheatham-White Scholars participate in a tripartite advising approach such that student learning and satisfaction are maximized while exceeding advising learning outcomes. Each student has three advisors: an academic advisor, a program advisor, and an academic coach. It is important to note that each student is advised by the same group of advisors each semester, so ongoing familiarity with group dynamics and overall program expectations has become a critical component of success. The role of each team member is substantial as their combined services provide comprehensive, continuous support guiding the scholars' advancement through the term (see Figure 6.1). Together, the team has identified three areas of focus for each scholar: academic matriculation, program development and compliance, and personal growth and awareness.

An academic advisor meets each scholar a minimum of three times per semester: pre-advising, course registration, and a routine check-in. Through evaluation of high school AP/IB credits and university double majors and dual degree programs, these meetings are used to catalog anything curricular from honors accreditation to athletics compliance records, as students chart the winding path to graduation.

A program advisor counsels each scholar a minimum of four times per semester during the last week of each month for a 30 to 45-minute meeting selected by the student. Students complete a brief inventory prior to their arrival upon which the expectation is to discuss past and future opportunities for personal and academic progress and any impending barriers to success.

An academic coach trains each scholar a minimum of three times per semester on a date, time, and/or modality the student selects. After meeting with an academic coach, students anticipate having an improved aptitude to define academic success and fashioning appropriate skill, will, and resources for effectively identifying and defining personal goals.

Moreover, the advisors establish and maintain communication with each student the summer prior to their first-year and sustain a communication plan each subsequent summer when students have departed campus; thereby increasing student success by providing opportunities for direct access to the advising team until the model begins again the following academic year. The blended advising model practiced by CWSP permits both the

Figure 6.1 Blended advising model: academic advising, program advising, and academic coaching.

advising team and the scholars alike, to define and openly communicate the growing expectations such high performing students covet to enact necessary change and growth opportunities in the classroom.

However, fostering this level of academic rigor does not come without significant investment from all parties involved. These students have similar challenges as other students, plus some additional ones, such as lack of self-identity or self-esteem/confidence, trouble with relationships, and communication difficulties. Transitioning from high school and being immediately asked to be "the best and the brightest" is no easy feat, especially when surrounded by those whose achievements rival your own, yet the Cheatham- White Scholars do not shirk challenges. For example, campus support services do not often target high-achieving students or their course loads, but rather, focus on assisting at-risk populations and the general education curriculum, and instructors are normally curious as to why students with "A" or "B" markings are so insistent on having feedback and thus, professors are less likely to respond. Considering these challenges, establishing the blended advising model as a form of "concierge-like advising" responds to the targeted needs of these students, thereby positioning staff to become experts in who the student was, is, and will become.

Assessment Methods & Design

The Cheatham-White Scholarship Program seeks to address what successful advising involves at each stage of the blended advising model and how to measure such success. Assessment questions that CWSP seeks to address include the following:

1. What does successful academic advising accomplish?
2. What does successful programmatic advising accomplish?
3. What does successful academic coaching accomplish?
4. Are the accomplishment measures effective for assessing successful advising?

Successful academic advising is quantitatively assessed by the accrual of earned credits per semester, annual progress in academic classification, quantity of withdrawn credits, and cumulative grade point average. Proactive academic advising creates a critically important plane of success wherein programmatic advising and academic coaching can operate in the continued best interest of scholar development.

Assessment of programmatic advising is accomplished by recording the scholars' successful completion of the building blocks of short-term scholarly success inclusive of completion

of weekly study hall hours, documenting weekly interaction with professors, attending weekly scholar development sessions, monthly one-on-one progress report meetings, providing biannual evidence of scholarly development, and providing an annual reflection of successes resultant of programmatic participation. The weekly assessments capture quantitative, participation-based data, while the monthly meetings, biannual reports, and annual reflection capture qualitative evidence of the emerging habits of scholarship.

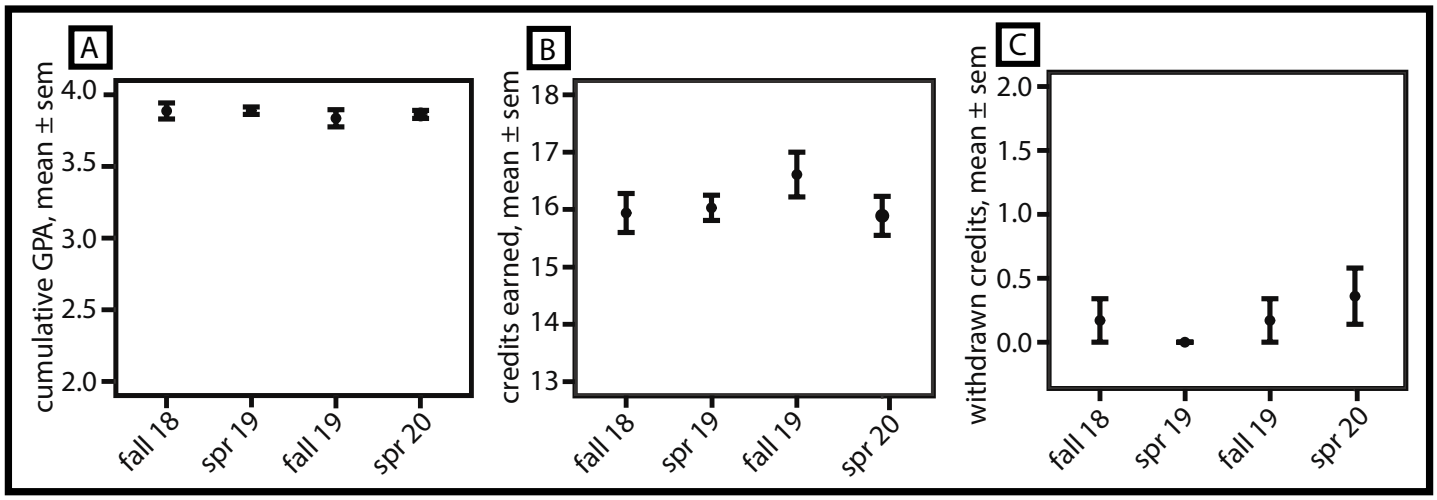
In addition, academic coaching is a qualitative task that solicits student reflection. Using focus-group-tested questions, students are asked to compare/contrast the current semester to the prior semester regarding transition, identity, communication, intentionality, procrastination, resilience, and past/present/future orientation.

Assessment Findings

The blended advising practices and expectations support scholarly thriving demonstrable as successful academic performance. The Cheatham-White Scholarship Program has already increased the academic profile: the GPA of CWSP (3.86) surpasses averages of learners participating in other campus scholarships and high-touch programs (3.46). Scholars have maintained an average cumulative GPA above 3.80 while attempting and successfully completing 15 or more credit hours per semester (see Figure 6.2). Current practices also support the need to serve specialized populations such that 94% of students were retained from the 2018 inaugural cohort. The immediate year following, 93% of those students returned for their third year in the program, and ever since, one scholar has graduated in under four years. The Cheatham-White Scholarship Program shows student success increases with appropriate intentional academic support alongside the removal of impediments characteristic of undergraduate populations.

Additionally, individual holistic development has been observed in scholars through goals defined by insightful student reflection such as mental health awareness, extracurricular experiences, and professional development. Scholars increased interactions with their professors (at least once a week outside of scheduled instruction time), originally a short-term success practice, which led to additional growth opportunities such as advisory board appointments and permanent research lab assignments.

Figure 6.2 Indicators of academic success: GPA, credits earned, credits withdrawn



When asked to reflect on their first-year with the Cheatham-White Scholarship Program, one student shared the following:

> "My short time as a Cheatham-White Scholar has resulted in some of the most enriching and character enhancing experiences that I have ever had the pleasure of being a part of. Through the program, I have been able to take advantage of numerous opportunities that have allowed me to connect with a multitude of professionals from a vast array of different fields, including my intended field of study… [It] has provided me with a community of scholars and advisors alike who all care about my development and success. All of whom have left an indelible mark on my journey to become a great physicist, engineer, and person."

Implications for Practice

Student-centered success is NCCU's guiding principle. In providing opportunities for college access to students with historically limited access to higher education, the Cheatham-White Scholarship Program will continue to deliver an exceptional educational experience for remarkable scholars, versatile thinkers, and well-rounded individuals. In promoting student learning and development extending beyond the first and second-year, the program will provide a fully funded scholastic experience and intellectually challenging enrichment opportunities to support a highly structured academic environment. Current practices support the need to serve a special population of high-achieving students by creating a meaningful and withstanding advising experience to support an honors focused course of study.

The Cheatham-White Scholarship Program at NCCU has established clearly defined goals for access, equity, diversity, and inclusion, and the blended advising model was designed and strategically implemented to support those goals. Recognizing that equitable and inclusive practices could only be sustained with the efforts of an advising team who is willing to focus their attention on serving student needs, equitable access is provided so student success can be realized.

Furthermore, Cheatham-White Scholars reside together and participate in a living-learning community which provides a distinct setting where students learn to bridge their academic, social, and institutional experiences with their everyday lives. They participate in weekly, non-credit bearing formative seminar series to support heightened academic expectations, as well as receive guidance from assigned faculty mentors in their field of study. Scholars also complete community service, research opportunities, and international experiences as a cohort under the guidance of CWSP.

The experience of developing this program may be of interest to minority-serving institutions, small/medium-sized universities, and resource-lean campuses. With the implementation of a blended advising model, the Cheatham-White Scholarship Program has proven quality student interaction and engagement can achieve positive student impact. Recognizing there are still other metrics to be determined to effectively measure long- term accomplishments, historical change must begin with building distinctive relationships created to remove barriers and encourage success.

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7 Northern Virginia Community College GPS for Success

Keri Bowman

Institutional Profile

Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) is an open access, comprehensive community college offering associate degrees and certificates as well as continuing education and community services programs. As one of 23 colleges comprising the Virginia Community College System, NOVA strives to provide equitable access to all and to meet the educational and training needs of people with differing experiences. This is accomplished by offering a variety of curricular and co-curricular programs. In addition, NOVA has six campuses throughout the Northern Virginia region, serving four counties with diverse populations. Five campuses are comprehensive; one is specialized, with a focus on Medical Education courses.

Serving over 73,000 headcounts and almost 32,000 FTE's annually, NOVA's student profile illustrates how it has become a "minority-majority" institution. In 2018, 37% identified as white. Out of the other 63%, 16% identified as black, 24% Hispanic, 16% Asian, and 7% identified as "other". Additionally, most of NOVA's students attend part-time: 67.2% of students were part-time. 57% of students were under 21 years old, and about 26% are 22-29 years old. Finally, about 20% of the population is first-generation, which means the student is the first in their families to attend college[1].

Advising for Equity and Student Success

As a "minority-majority" institution, NOVA's focus on access and equity has always been paramount. Like many institutions that are fully committed to access and equity, NOVA is honing and collectively crafting a diversity, equity, and inclusion statement to ensure that everyone is welcomed and valued. Recognizing the diverse range of experiences that students have with higher education, NOVA has always provided academic counseling to assist students in making sound decisions regarding career, educational, and personal goals. Academic Counselors continuously advise many students to guide them to the curriculum that best suits their needs and interests. In the past, new and returning students were served by any academic counselor or faculty advisor available; no systematic assignments or purposeful case management relationships were fostered. However, in 2012,

[1] https://www.nvcc.edu/oiess/_docs/oir/QuickFacts-2019-2020.pdf

the college began providing a first-year advising initiative that focused on comprehensive onboarding, academic advising, and orientation services for first-time-to-college students. The college's first quality enhancement plan for SACSCOC reaffirmation centered on the "GPS for Success" program that became the impetus for meaningful change at NOVA concerning advising and student success mandates. The mandates for student success and the processes laid out for GPS for Success, NOVA's 2012 Quality Enhancement plan provided equitable advising and case management to each of the GPS students (new first-time-to-college, recent high school graduates), regardless of campus attended or program of study. It also led to a significant transformational refocus on advising, relationships, and student success. In fact, the "2017-23 Strategic Plan: Pathway to the American Dream" focuses on every student succeeding, explicitly ensuring that "…all students are advised and have access to support throughout their time at NOVA…[2]"

GPS for Success purposefully paired each recent high school graduate, first-time-to-college student, with a dedicated, assigned advisor who met with the student and provided comprehensive case management services. This advisor initially met with the student through attendance at an "early advising session." The relationship continued to ensure that the student had set an appropriate academic goal, stayed registered for the correct courses to attain that goal, and designed an appropriate academic plan to stay on track with the stated goal. These first-year advisors forged relationships with students to teach them planning skills, how to register, and to provide engaging case management. Students remained with the first-year advisors to whom they were assigned for a year and then were systematically "handed off" to a faculty advisor in their declared program of study. Except for a small, specialized program, the process of assigning advisors and case management of new students upon intake was new for NOVA.

To support the more formally structured advising requirement and assignment process for faculty, NOVA identified talented faculty advisors. Not surprisingly, these faculty advisors represented many diverse backgrounds and disciplines loosely reflecting the student population. They would serve as points of contact to help with student assignments and addressing faculty concerns. They also provided support for faculty in need. These "faculty advising managers" (FAMs) forged a unique partnership between the student services and academic divisions, facilitating seamless transitions for students. These relationships have begun to erode academic/student services barriers and make student success a common goal and seamless endeavor. The connections have generated a team-like atmosphere and enhance the student experience. The faculty-staff cohesion is evident through the collegiality and shared facilitation of training and participation in planning.

NOVA committed to making consistent college-wide processes for student orientation, for the assignment of advisors, for communication, and for case management to yield relationships and improved student engagement. To facilitate these processes, NOVA committed further resources to secure an electronic academic planning and note-taking tool. This tool was intended to enable academic planning for students and allow electronic note-taking to document advising interactions. As IPASS and technology became a more recognized approach for student supports, NOVA further solidified their commitment to providing robust advising technology in both student-facing and advisor-facing platforms.

Additional institutional commitments that began with the GPS for Success initiative were the "Start Strong" registration holds, which centered on benchmarked best practices. These ensured students completed the necessary milestones before registering for classes. Students were prevented from registering if they had not completed placement requirements, participated in early advising, and attended orientation/registration labs. The advent of these holds was a distinct departure from viewing these activities as a "barrier to enrollment" to recognizing these milestones as fundamental for a successful educational undertaking. This change in mindset marked a new era for NOVA, moving toward a culture of investment in all students' preparation and success, not just initial enrollment.

The culture of commitment to student success also yielded another, substantive change – the obligation to use formative assessment and data to make enhancements to the process and the procedures outlined in the Quality Enhancement Plan. This fundamental commitment to continuous improvement has persevered and produced many beneficial changes to both advising and student support programming at NOVA. This continuous improvement also initiated the discussions about scaling services to ensure these supports were available equitably to all students, not just new to college, recent high school graduates. The formative assessments changed procedures for the GPS for Success and the financial and personnel commitment

[2] https://www.nvcc.edu/about/mission/strategic-plan2017-2023.pdf

for the expansion of a central, college-wide advising leadership team. The team expanded to include a director, an advising trainer, a coordinator of advising technology, and an assistant director for orientation and early advising.

The new coordinator of advising technology position was incorporated to scale the availability of advising and orientation information. The use of technology for scaling began with the implementation of online orientation, called New2NOVA. Additional commitments are evident in the implementation of a better system to replace the initial system for academic planning and note-taking. Implementing and mandating the use of a technological tool is a significant commitment for NOVA which recognizes the importance of student support and communication between all student-facing employees to serve students better. This is an ongoing project; we are strategically implementing change management principles to ensure faculty and staff buy-in and maximize utility.

Assessment Methods & Design

Because this began as the institution's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for reaffirmation of accreditation, a robust assessment plan was in place from the beginning. As mentioned previously, the most critical assessment became the formative assessment and immediate flow of feedback for processes that affected student enrollment and success. These feedback loops became an invaluable source of real-time information that allowed for immediate and on-the-go improvements to processes.

Student learning outcomes were established and tracked to illustrate the efficacy of the GPS for Success programming. Outcomes were grounded in the expected metrics that the case management relationship would influence student engagement, retention, gateway course enrollment, and GPA. NOVA's Office of Institutional Research provided a robust analysis of student records to illustrate trends in retention, gateway course enrollment, and GPA, which compared GPS to non-GPS populations.

Comparisons of NOVA's scores on national surveys before and after the implementation of the QEP help illustrate the positive GPS impact. Results from nationally normed CCSSE and SENSE surveys were analyzed to seek evidence that high-quality advising at NOVA fostered engagement. Additionally, data linked explicitly to success metrics of fall-to-fall and fall-to-spring retention, course enrollment, and end of semester GPA were analyzed compared to the non-GPS population.

What is not measured directly is the advent of significant institutional transformation. This transformation is, however, implicitly illustrated through the longitudinal review of policy establishment and enactment.

Assessment Findings

The introduction of formal, structured advising services has created significant supports for NOVA students. As a result, the college has observed gains in student achievement. Additionally, the more meaningful and productive engagement between students and advisors has been illustrated. Overall gains in student success metrics have been illustrated. Mean end of semester GPA, fall-to fall, and fall-to-spring retention remain higher for GPS students (first time in college, recent high school graduates) than other first time in college students at NOVA.

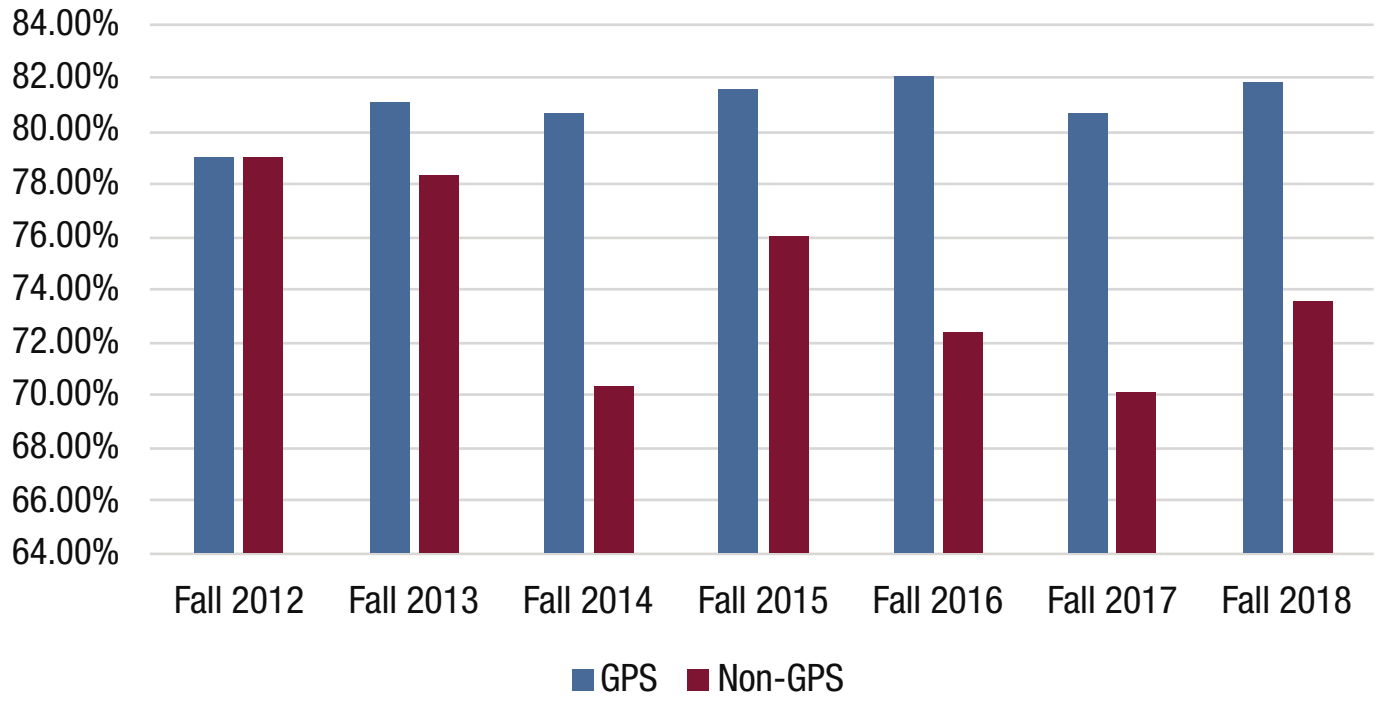
Evidence of student engagement is illustrated in the student responses on the CCSSE and the SENSE surveys. Increases were found in the comparison between versions of NOVA's survey, before GPS implementation and after. Scores reflected student understanding of the "college's emphasis on the frequency of advising" increased by 6 percent, "frequency of career counseling" increased 4 percent, and "talking about career plans with an instructor or advisor" increased 11 percent between 2011 (pre-GPS) and 2015 (during GPS) surveys. A comparison of SENSE results also indicates student recognition of a change in "Early Connections" and "Clear Academic Plan and Pathway" as NOVA went from below the national average and comparative peer groups in 2009 to exceeding in 2015.[3]

Finally, NOVA's survey of graduates showed that satisfaction with faculty advising increased steadily since the implementation of the QEP. The percentage of graduates who rated faculty advising as "good" or "excellent" increased from 61 percent in 2012 to 69 percent in 2016.[3]

Ongoing formative evaluations prompted several processes and procedural changes from the initially implemented plan. The ability to address issues that improve processes in real-time facilitated the success of this initiative. Incorporating feedback,

[3] NOVA's Quality Enhancement Plan Impact Report, 2017

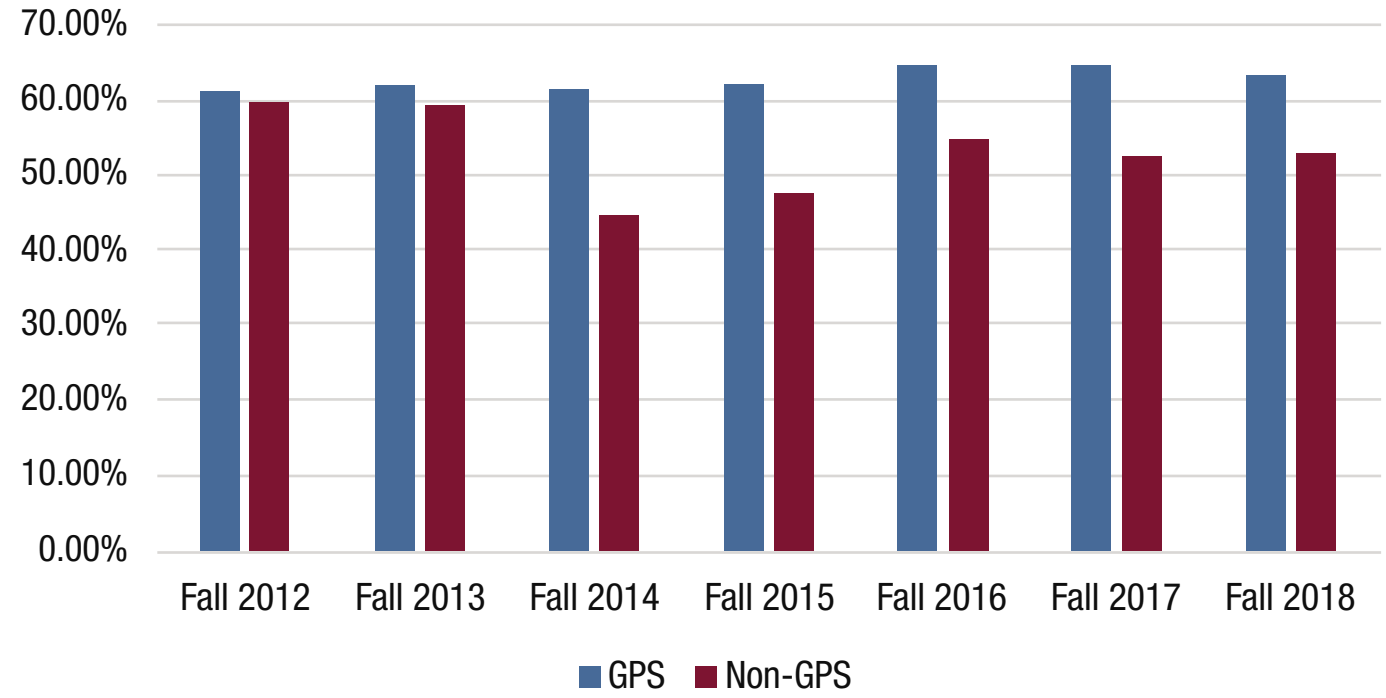
Figure 7.1 GPS vs. Non-GPS Fall-to-Spring Retention



Note. Source: https://www.nvcc.edu/oiess/oir/report/Home/Report?id=111

The above bar graph illustrates the gains in first time college students' retention from fall-to-spring in comparison to other new students who attended NOVA in the years of the QEP.

Figure 7.2 GPS vs. Non-GPS Fall-to-Fall Retention



Note. Source: https://www.nvcc.edu/oiess/oir/report/Home/Report?id=111

The above bar graph illustrates the gains in new first-time-to-college students' retention from fall-to-fall in comparison to other new students who attended NOVA in the years of the QEP.

examining processes against benchmarks at peer institutions, and accommodating our students' preferences and behaviors helped produce the necessary change to support students appropriately. These changes included the following:

1. implementation of more responsive IPASS technology;
2. changes in the handoff's timing address students' readiness;
3. implementation of "Start Strong" policies to require completion of key preparatory steps before initial enrollment;
4. addition of several positions to support the process;
5. establishment of a college-wide advisory council which shared members with strategic planning committees, policy planning committees, and, eventually, advising redesign committees .

Implications for Practice

The long-term, structural/cultural impact at NOVA happened largely because of the QEP's focus on the following areas:

1. dedicated resources;
2. changes in policy to support students' preparation;
3. the collaboration of faculty and professional advisors;
4. extensive communication, and
5. unwavering commitment from senior leadership.

Commitment from leadership must enhance what is already working at the institution. Take note of the strengths in staff, how students experience processes, and which areas will be most purposeful to change. Capitalize on the momentum gained by maintaining faculty and staff buy-in for whatever support programming is already successful. Constructing seamless partnerships to forge more synergy between faculty and staff to create a culture of teamwork. This teamwork will surround students with support that addresses both the academic and co-curricular concerns.

Commitment from leadership must also illustrate the ability to change formatively, to seek feedback from students and front-line employees. As institutions implement programming to address success and equity issues, a culture that embraces review and feedback will produce responsiveness and motivation to continually improve. This motivation allows an institution to direct valuable resources to address the needs of a dynamic and always changing population, our students.

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8 University of Alabama at Birmingham Equity in Advising: A Review of the E2E Appointment Manager

Tracy Lyons and Jennifer Wycoff

Institutional Profile

Founded in 1969, The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) is a public four-year research institution. It has a total undergraduate enrollment of 13,836, and its setting is urban. UAB ranks #153 in the 2021 edition of Best Colleges and National Universities. Some 70% of the first-year students live on campus. Seventy-four percent of students are full-time. Demographically, UAB has a student population that is over 60% female, over 17% adult learners, over 40% low-income, and almost 20% first-generation college students. The racial and ethnic mix of UAB is less than 1% American Indian or Alaska Native, almost 7% Asian, almost 25% Black, almost 6% Hispanic, and over 55% White (UAB Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analysis, 2019). This study focuses on the applicability to the advising community on the findings from the implementation of an appointment scheduler.

E2E Advising Appointment Program

Changing demographics implores the need for shifts in student engagement with low-income, first-generation, and students of color (Lee, 2018). Three concerns demonstrated the need for a change in practice at UAB. First, data on 8,174 students from Fall 2010 through Fall 2014 first-time, full-time cohorts were collected and analyzed (Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analysis, 2019). The study found that a

considerable number of vulnerable students are not earning degrees from UAB at the same rate as their counterparts. Opportunity gaps were found among the following: first-generation (12% gap); racially minoritized (8% gap); Pell-eligible (4.1% gap), and academically underprepared (27.9% gap) (Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analysis, 2019).

It is also helpful to understand the previous advising landscape. Campus leaders received mixed reviews of advising ranging from extremely helpful to extremely ineffective (S. Austin, 2014). Research indicates that marginalized students are often reluctant to schedule an appointment and even stress out about the advising meeting (Glaessgen et al., 2018). Although, research by Tippetts (et al., 2020) finds that meeting with an advisor just once a semester significantly impacts persistence. College know-how is critical for at-risk students (Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum, 2003). "We find that disadvantaged students with limited time and finances to devote to education are often confused about their choices. They do not know how to get the information they need, and small amounts of confusion can evolve into large problems of wasted time and poor decisions" (Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum, 2003, p. 124). Finally, research by Sapul et al., 2020) confirms that automated scheduling better conforms to student availability. Previously, UAB advisors spent so much time with scheduling, they had limited ability for proactive outreach and targeted campaigns.

To address these concerns, in Fall 2018, UAB launched the e2e appointment platform designed to provide real-time, quick access for scheduling advising sessions. Students can now access advisor schedules anywhere, anytime, on any device, and select the topics most important for their session. This equalizer grants students more quality time with their advisor since they get to focus the conversation on their needs. The goal was for the platform to allow for improved student-advisor relationships by making scheduling tasks more manageable for the advisor to focus on proactive advising (Sapul et al., 2020).

The aim of the E2E platform was for the management of the advising schedule and session to be put into students' hands. Secondly, the goal was to increase efficiency and productivity for advisors. E2E was also incorporated to address student frustrations related to advisor access and scheduling. The platform allows students to state the purpose of the visit and the things they want to discuss which may make a normally awkward starting conversation much more comfortable for the student and the advisor (Tippetts et al., 2020) E2E is designed to increase engagement between students and their academic advisors as well as be a lift in retention and graduation rates.

The administrative home for E2E resides with the Office of Undergraduate Student Success and Retention in the Division of Enrollment Management. A lead contact from each academic school/college is a trained administrator on the system. All primary and secondary faculty and professional staff advisors have access to use the platform. E2E Platform specifics include the following:

- appointment scheduling - advisors publish their appointment times directly in Outlook;
- students can book appointments from anywhere, anytime, on any device;
- after making the appointment, students receive a confirmation email and a reminder text;
- the E2E platform helps advisors manage their workday more efficiently as they do not need to make appointments themselves, as done previously;
- helps students prepare for the session and engages them in their success;
- helps advisors prepare for the session;
- creates a student-centered process for advising;
- ensures timely communication between students and advisors;
- allows advisors to conduct targeted appointment campaigns;
- empowers student action through text nudges.

Assessment Methods & Design

For the first time, UAB can collect comprehensive feedback on advising. This is important given the fact that students change majors roughly three times at UAB (Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analysis. 2019).

Using a mixed-methods approach, assessment objectives were as follows:

- to assess student's attitude toward online appointment scheduling;
- to explore student's attitude toward support received from advisors;

- to determine the percentage of students satisfied with overall UAB advising;
- to determine the percentage of students satisfied with E2E platform.

Following their appointment, students receive the following survey research questions. Some 49,968 students made appointments and 39,645 advising sessions were held since Fall 2018. There were 1,573 no-shows and 8,750 cancellations. Of these advising sessions, 9,314 students (23.4%) completed the survey questions:

1. I am very satisfied with my experience using and navigating the MyAppointment tool.
2. I am very satisfied with the support received from my advisor.
3. I am very satisfied with the helpfulness of my recent academic advising session.
4. Overall, I am very satisfied with advising at UAB.
5. Overall, I am very satisfied with the new MyAppointment scheduling tool.

Assessment Findings

The mixed-methods approach allowed us to join qualitative and quantitative data to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the students' experiences with the appointment scheduler (Creswell, 2014). Relying on two main data sources: 1) a survey; and 2) open-ended questions, results were as follows:

Quantitative Findings: 9,134 Responses

1. I am very satisfied with my experience using and navigating the MyAppointment tool.

   94.4% strongly agree or somewhat agree

2. I am very satisfied with the support received from my advisor.

   97.8% strongly agree or somewhat agree

3. I am very satisfied with the helpfulness of my recent academic advising session.

   97.6% strongly agree or somewhat agree

4. Overall, I am very satisfied with advising at UAB.

   96.4% strongly agree or somewhat agree

5. Overall, I am very satisfied with the new MyAppointment scheduling tool.

   92.7% strongly agree or somewhat agree

Qualitative Findings: 159 Responses

UAB received comments to the statement, *"Help us improve your next advising appointment by providing feedback about your experience."* Three themes emerged:

THEME 1: Advising Session Experience

1. My advisor was very helpful beyond just classes and showed me some new avenues major and career-wise. Extremely beneficial appointment.
2. Ms. XX was SO helpful and just made this advising meeting go so smoothly. Give her a raise lol.
3. XX is always perfect! She hears my problems and then gives me several options that can help me.
4. Two thumbs up to XX, who was wonderful, very clear and direct about what I needed to do to complete my goals and graduate on time. Thank you!
5. XX is a magician. She took the confused and miserable schedule I had and turned it into everything I needed and more!
6. I was nervous because I went to a community college where my advisor was also my teacher. But XX was very helpful, so I'm really glad to have him as an advisor!

THEME 2: Ideas for Improvement

1. Add via phone or zoom on the account page.
2. Send my class schedule after the session.
3. IT needs to update the information on the advisor's profile.
4. I suspect some students and professors would appreciate a similar scheduling tool for office hours.
5. I feel as though we should be able to talk to them as long as we need. Sometimes 30 min isn't enough to ask the questions you need. Especially for registration.

THEME 3: Thoughts on e2e Platform

1. Advising Appointments using the new E2E scheduling tool is so easy and reliable. I enjoyed my appointment!

2. No cons here! I really like the new check-in system!
3. Signing up for advising times via E2E helped me keep track of when my appointment was and the location. A reminder email was sent out, which was also helpful.
4. My experience was great. Easy to set up an appointment.
5. I'm overall satisfied. The texting reminders help!

Implications for Practice

From the data and observations, the following findings emerged: Initiatives aimed at engagement must include digital services because of the pervasive nature of technology in society. UAB students overwhelmingly like the platform and love getting the text reminders. This technology has minimized advisor and student frustration with scheduling. Passive support models (waiting for students to seek help) and crunch-time advising are not as effective as proactive outreach. By using E2E, advisors have freed up time to reach out to marginalized students and engage in early intervention activities. Office administrative staff and advisor productivity were previously consumed with hours spent scheduling, rescheduling, and modifying appointments via phone and email. The E2E platform automates these administrative functions so advisors spend more time engaging with students.

Research has shown that advisors can impact how students establish a sense of belonging (Lee, 2018). Similarly, by looking at advising scheduling through the lens of self-authorship, students can become better advocates for themselves. The control the platform gives students in deciding the direction of the conversation is noteworthy when considering a move from scripted, one-sided conversations to co-constructed conversations.

The current initiative was designed to shed light on how academic advisors contribute to the success of students, particularly marginalized students. Qualitative results do not note any concerns from these populations with their advising experience. However, to ensure the effectiveness of academic advising efforts and to increase vulnerable student use of such services, a deeper dive is needed to better understand how these students experience academic advising.

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9 The University of Cincinnati Lindner College of Business Undergraduate Advising

Sarah Jernigan

Institutional Profile

The University of Cincinnati (UC) in Cincinnati, Ohio is a public four-year institution that was founded in 1819 and is now recognized as one of the United States' top 20 public research institutions (The World University Rankings, 2020). For the 2020-2021 academic year, UC hit a record of 46,798 total students enrolled, with enrollment numbers steadily climbing over the past eight years. UC's students represent all 50 states and 114 countries outside of the United States. Of currently enrolled students, 28,820 are full-time undergraduate students with 24% being on-campus residents.

A UC sophomore-level student is identified by having successfully completed 30 credit hours, but no more than 60 credit hours. Overall, at UC, 88% of students return for their sophomore year. The University of Cincinnati defines a first-generation student as someone whose parent(s) did not earn a bachelor's degree within six years of graduating high school. The UC first-generation student population constitutes 31% of the student body. In addition, 20% of the UC student population are Pell grant recipients.

The Carl H. Lindner College of Business at the University of Cincinnati was established in 1906 and was renamed the Carl H. Lindner College of Business (LCB) in 2011. The purpose of the Lindner College of Business is to empower business problem-solvers to tackle the world's challenges. This purpose is achieved through a distinctive first-year experience (FYE), cooperative education, in-house study abroad office, and opportunities afforded by being an urban campus. Since its founding, the Lindner undergraduate student population has grown to 4,394 students as of fall 2020. Furthermore, the first-year retention

rate has increased to 93.5%. This impressive retention rate can be attributed to a myriad of factors; however namely, certainly the conscious efforts contributed by academic advisors have been influential. Table 9.1 depicts the current UC & LCB undergraduate student enrollment in relation to gender, race/ethnicity, and age.

Lindner College of Business Undergraduate Advising Office

The Lindner Undergraduate Advising Office serves as an essential proponent of the LCB first-year experience. The office is comprised of four academic advisors, two senior academic advisors, one assistant director, two associate directors, two directors, and one executive director. The average caseload for each advisor is 500 students. Despite heavy caseloads, the Lindner Undergraduate Advising Office continually scores near the top among all UC colleges on the yearly student satisfaction survey. Additionally, the advising office was the recipient of the University of Cincinnati 2020 Advising Unit of the Year Award.

The Lindner College of Business houses an immersive (FYE) that spans the entirety of students' first academic year. One component of the FYE includes a year-long course with students' academic advisors. The goals of the course are to expose students to Lindner business majors and minors, comprehend curriculum requirements for their degree program, prepare them for sophomore year, and facilitate discussions among students surrounding diversity & inclusion. Four weeks of the course in the spring semester are dedicated to efforts surrounding equity. During class sessions, students hear from guest speakers regarding diversity and inclusion on campus, alumni panels related to diversity in the business world, and participate in engaging activities that require introspection and consideration of equity. Additionally, advisors lead a semester-long service-learning project that encompasses students collaborating with local non-profit businesses to promote servant leadership and corporate social responsibility.

The introductory course led by academic advisors sets the precedent that LCB greatly values equity and diversity & inclusion efforts. The college is currently evaluating every business course in order to incorporate material related to equity into each class. By taking a deep dive into diversity and inclusion initiatives during their FYE, students are encouraged to become

Table 9.1 *UC & LCB Undergraduate Student Demographics*

Demographic	UC	LCB
Gender		
Female	14,113	1,447
Male	14,652	2,947
Unknown	55	0
Ethnocultural Diversity		
African American	2,314	154
American Indian/Alaska Native	65	1
Asian	1,234	184
Hispanic	1,129	130
International	2,180	204
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	25	0
Two or more races	1,037	137
Unknown	720	42
White	20,116	3,542
Age		
Over age 25	3,170	113

more civic-minded, empathetic, and cognizant, albeit emphasis on equity does not conclude in the classroom. The Lindner Undergraduate Programs Office has a close partnership with the Lindner Office of Inclusive Excellence, which promotes inclusive leaders, cultural competency, and global citizens.

The Lindner Office of Inclusive Excellence supports three student organizations, which have been developed to support and grow underrepresented minorities within the LCB student body. The first, Business Fellows, supports African American, Hispanic, Latino, and Native American students through a first-year study abroad experience, structured peer mentoring, and support in transitioning from high school to college. The program is structured to empower historically underrepresented students to excel within LCB and beyond. One function of the group is to take students on a study abroad, which may be their first international experience. Two members of the academic advising office accompany students on this trip, which promotes exploration of cross-cultural thinking and empowerment to converse on an international platform.

The second group, Lindner Women in Business, supports emerging female leaders in amplifying their voices, building confidence, empowerment, and crafting a personal brand. Initiatives center around engagements with successful female executives and alumnae coupled with scholarship opportunities and leadership training. Academic advisors support this organization by promoting the group's events in their courses and allowing a member of Lindner Women in Business to spend a few minutes of class time advertising opportunities associated with the organization. It is important to note that the group is not exclusive to only women. Men and non-identifying members are encouraged to attend organizational events as allies.

The third group, Pride at Lindner, supports LGBTQ+ identifying students through an inclusive and empowering environment. Involvement in this group encompasses weekly gatherings for LGBTQ+ students and allies. Efforts are geared toward building connections with LGBTQ+ identifying business leaders in order to encourage students to be their authentic selves both on campus and after graduation. Several members of the advising office attend regular meetings associated with this group and have markers in their office to indicate that they are a Safe Zone ally. Although numerous efforts have been made to promote diversity and inclusion among LCB students, faculty, and staff, there is still more work to be done.

Assessment Methods & Design

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six members of the Lindner Advising Office (two academic advisors, two senior academic advisors, one assistant director, and the executive director). Interviews are "guided question-answer conversations" (Tracy, 2013, p. 131) and provide an opportunity for mutual discovery, understanding, and reflection. Interview questions sought to discern how members of the Lindner Advising Office believes the office supports university equity and inclusion efforts. Specifically, interviewees were asked to consider how we support underrepresented students during their transition from high school to college; how FYE efforts have assisted in maintaining such a high retention rate; and if the Lindner College of Business is diverse.

All interviews were recorded with the interviewees' permission transcribed and coded. While coding, the researcher searched for themes among the data via thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a foundational method within qualitative research design and is a method for identifying and analyzing patterns (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Through a thematic analysis approach, themes are developed. A theme is identified as "something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82, emphasis in original). By grouping data into themes, the researcher was able to discern the most pertinent information related to the assessment objectives. To supplement interviews, university documents and the researcher's personal knowledge/observations were also used to explore the assessment objectives.

Assessment Findings

Transition from High School to College

As a young adult, the transition from high school to college can be intense, overwhelming, and confusing. Given this vital, formative period for students, it is essential for universities to support not only their transition to college but their entire collegiate experience. The Lindner Undergraduate Advising Office, and larger

Lindner community, is dedicated to student success – committed to building students' confidence, problem-solving capabilities, and social development to enable them to thrive in college and long after. The college has continuously prioritized the FYE, given shared beliefs that the stronger their start, the greater their opportunities.

The FYE begins with an orientation, which at UC, is a partnership between the central orientation office and college-specific efforts. Instituting the year-long course taught by an academic advisor allows for a steady progression of information to be presented and processed, rather than squeezing massive amounts of content into a short orientation period. As one interviewee asserted, we must ask, "what is it that students need to know to start the semester with a good foundation? Because you can't cover everything at orientation. That's just impossible." Keeping orientation simplified with specific goals abates the potential for information overload.

Additionally, LCB has concentrated efforts toward parents and guardians during orientation to ensure family members and students receive the same message. One academic advisor stated, "I think the fact that we reach out to parents in orientation and have that same communication that we are here for them, also reinforces that comfortability piece that they can connect with us early." Managing the narrative provided to students' family members creates a cohesive message and mitigates confusion. In sum, orientation has the capability to set the direction for a positive and impactful FYE before the academic year commences.

High Retention Rate

As previously mentioned, the Lindner College of Business has a 93.5% retention rate, much of which advisors attribute to an advantageous first-year experience. As one advisor affirmed, "the first-year experience is huge. It really buys people into what Lindner has to offer and it also treats them like business students right from the beginning." Throughout their first year, students have eclectic experiences that allow them to explore the various majors and minors Lindner offers. Unlike some colleges, Lindner first-year students hit the ground running, with immersive experiences that allow them to start working with real companies on "huge large projects that really give them a lot of great exposure to the business world and what it takes to be on a team like it would for a corporation." Work for real companies is conducted among their first-year learning communities, which allows them to take multiple courses together and "definitely builds a sense of community and comradery". One advisor remarked that they believe the only reason a student leaves the college after the first year is "truly because business was not a right fit for them." However, what occurs after the first year? How is this momentum maintained?

One advisor postulated that after the first year, students "want to see what's next." Because the FYE is strong, advisors indicated that other experiences, particularly future course work, may pale in comparison. This gap is disconcerting for transfer/transition students, as they do not have the opportunity to encounter the Lindner FYE. This inconsistency may hint at one area of improvement for the college.

Issues of Equity & Inclusion

When asked "is the Lindner College of Business diverse?" all interviewees responded with a resounding "no", albeit, all were also clear to mention that this is ubiquitous in the business industry, which is inundated by white males. With Lindner's demographics reflecting industry, it is clear that change is "not just a business or Lindner cultural change; it's a societal cultural change." Another advisor succinctly stated, "it's hard to recruit students where they don't see themselves represented." The aforementioned student groups, Business Fellows, Women in Business, and Pride at Lindner work to ameliorate feelings of isolation that underrepresented business students may experience. These groups are essential for student success as it "really goes back to supporting the students that are already here. Because if you are supporting students of color… if they are having a positive experience and they feel supported and they feel like there are people in the college that really care about their development and are there for them, they're going to then share that experience with other people. They're going to tell kids from their high school. They're going to tell their cousins. They're going to tell other people that Lindner cares about them. It's not about the headcount. It's about making the heads count" (personal communication).

Through their involvement with Business Fellows, one advisor exclaimed that it is a place that allows students to connect and illustrates that "you are not alone. These are your people. You have a sense of community here." Women in Business showcases "look who's done this before you." Furthermore, courses such as 'women in sales' highlights that there are major differences for women going to work in business. Advisors assert that these types of courses should be expanded to incorporate other majors and student demographics.

Lastly, Pride at Lindner recently underwent a rebranding and is overall nascent. As the group works to establish its brand, the sheer fact that the group has been created illuminates visibility, which as an interviewee stated, "we know that visibility is what literally saves lives, when students see themselves reflected in powerful positions." The assessment findings point toward inequities of opportunity for underrepresented business students as they enter the industry. However, there are meaningful initiatives that both the advising office and larger institutions can undertake in order to promote true equity.

Implications for Practice

Lack of diversity in business education and industry is not an anomaly; disparities exist in many other professions. However, other majors, such as engineering, promote their field early to prospective underrepresented students. Early pipeline attempts are a strategic priority for Lindner, with the enrollment team partnering with the engineering college to combine efforts within local high schools. This partnership holds promise as STEM exists within both fields, and through proper communication, high schoolers may better envision themselves in a business career.

Once students are enrolled, it is important for them to experience a world outside of their direct neighborhood. One interviewee asserted, "so many of our students are local and haven't been outside this world and so they need a worldview beyond Cincinnati." Through careful collaboration with the Lindner International Programs Office, the advising office promotes study abroad opportunities and determines how such experiences will best correlate with the student's academic plan. While Lindner is positioned opportunely as an urban business school, students should also have spaces to acknowledge the vast business world outside of Cincinnati.

Lindner does a superb job of collecting data via surveys from first-year students to determine what was most effective during their FYE. However, additional formal check-ins are sparse throughout the rest of their academic careers. Particularly, there are not any current means to inquire why students remained at Lindner through graduation. This data would be especially insightful to discern why students of color and women were retained. Presently, students are required to complete graduation contracts with their academic advisor the semester before they graduate to ensure they have fulfilled all graduation requirements. This encounter would be an opportune time to either poll students in person,or send a brief follow-up survey after the meeting to determine aspects they enjoyed about their Lindner experience and what needs to be improved. An exit interview with each graduating student would provide invaluable information to improve the college experience for future students.

A shift is slowly occurring at Lindner. As one advisor stated regarding diversity and inclusion efforts, "it's now more of a central goal with the new vision; the Lindner leadership is really taking a conscious effort to try and change something that is so systematically built." As the Lindner Office of Inclusive Excellence is only comprised of two people, the college has created a permanent Inclusive Excellence Council. The council consists of staff, faculty, and student members; their efforts are geared toward a host of issues: recruiting and retaining students, faculty, and staff with diverse backgrounds; promoting a college culture that values diversity, equity, and inclusion; and developing workshops for faculty and staff.

Workshops can provide a valuable means to engage and foster insightful conversations to better support students. However, as many workshops are currently optional, numerous interviewees noted that this allows the people who could benefit most from the workshops to opt-out. Specifically, many staff have degrees centered around student development and therefore are eager to attend, whereas faculty who have degrees within their specific academic field, may view the workshops as superfluous. Mandating certain workshops and training for all faculty and staff could encourage more mindful conversations and encounters with students.

Lindner leadership recognizes a vital opportunity to tightly align their innovative FYE with a strategic emphasis on equity. In this formative period that is undergraduate education, universities are situated in a unique and powerful position for tangible positive impact on students' capabilities; yet, the potential goes well beyond. Empowering mindful problem solvers, Lindner strives for inclusive business learning that serves as an impetus for students' careers. Although the fight for equity is perpetually upstream, higher education may serve as the catalyst that affects more inclusive and represented industries.

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10 The University of Pittsburgh "Forge Your Own Path" Strategy

April E. Belback and Julia Spears

Institutional Profile

The University of Pittsburgh (Pitt) was founded in 1787 and is one of the oldest institutions of higher education in the United States. As a state-related public research university, Pitt's Pittsburgh campus offers a multitude of degree-granting and other programs housed in 16 undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools. The University system includes the Pittsburgh campus and four regional campuses at Johnstown, Greensburg, Bradford, and Titusville, Pennsylvania. For the Fall 2019 term, the total undergraduate full-time equivalent enrollment (FTE) for all five campuses was 23,900.

Pitt defines a first-generation college student as one who is the first person in their immediate family to attend college. Pitt defines undergraduate sophomore-level by the student having earned between 23.5 and 53 credits. See Figures 10.1 through 10.8 for more information about these and additional undergraduate student demographics for Fall 2019, utilizing headcount (HC) data (n=24,553) (Common Data Set, 2019-2020; University Fact Book, n.d.).

The "Forge Your Own Path" Advising and Mentoring Initiative

The "Forge Your Own Path" (FYOP) strategy at the University of Pittsburgh is led by the Undergraduate Studies, Academic Innovation (AI) Team in The Office of the Provost. The aim is to prepare and empower students for lives of impact through educational experiences tailored to the specific goals and needs of each student (About, n.d.). Vital to the vision of this strategy is the integration of the rich expertise and network of the Pitt community with new and emerging technologies to provide customized, meaningful collaborations and experiences. This vision rests on the integration of four components: people, tools,

information, and infrastructure (About, n.d.). People are at the core of this approach with the realization that advisors and mentors enrich student lives so they may discover and forge a path that uniquely suits their individual needs and aspirations.

Advisors and mentors are among the most salient relationships students will form in their college years (Fox & Martin, 2017). Because students build trusting relationships with their advisors, the FYOP strategy focuses on the Provost's Priorities (2020) of personalizing education and diversity and inclusion, which also align with the university-wide strategic "Plan for Pitt," (2020) goals of advancing educational excellence and promoting diversity and inclusion.

To advance these priorities and goals, a Director of Undergraduate Advising and Mentoring was hired in April 2019 within AI to work collaboratively with professional and faculty advisors and mentors university-wide to implement and improve advising, mentoring, and student success practices. Pitt employs a decentralized, satellite model of organizational advising structure, where "each school, college, or division within the institution has established its own approach to advising" (Habley, 1997, p.39). Thus, Pitt recognized a need for institutional change in order to provide more standardization and collaboration to eliminate gaps in student success.

A National Gallup-Purdue Index study found that "if graduates strongly agreed that they 1) had a professor who cared about them as a person, 2) had at least one professor who made them excited about learning, and 3) had a mentor who encouraged them to pursue their goals and dreams, the graduates' odds of being engaged at work more than doubled" (Gallup, 2016). In 2016, Pitt commissioned Gallup, Inc. to survey recent Pitt alumni about their experiences as undergraduates and in the workplace. The survey found that one in ten Pitt graduates strongly agree that they had each of these experiences; while these findings are on par with other large public universities who report at 14%, Pitt's FYOP strategy was borne from the idea that we could do better (Gallup, 2016).

Thus, the AI Team works toward providing consistent and standard information for all units across the University and regional campuses. We strive to provide a more equitable, accessible, and holistic advising experience for all Pitt students by ensuring they are supported with standard information and emphasizing an ethic of care through the power of advising and mentoring relationships. We affirm the belief that "institutions who champion advising reforms help open the door to higher education for more students at a relatively low annual investment. Additionally, advising reforms that reinforce cross-functional teaming and strengthen data-informed decision making can have positive spillover effects on other areas of student success" (Boston Consulting Group, 2019). There are many ways in which this strategy is operationalized (Appendix B: "Institutional Supports for Advising and Mentoring Initiatives & Timeline"), all of which include championing greater collaborative efforts University-wide towards student success in the four components of people, tools, information, and infrastructure (Tyton Partners, 2020).

First, the convening of advisors and mentors university-wide has provided a space for networking. In 2018, the Mentoring and Advising Summit was launched to share ideas about ways to help students succeed. With a focus on inclusive excellence for the event, the advising and mentoring community at Pitt has been challenged to think more deeply about growing in "capacity to bring together different ideas, critical perspectives, challenges, and lived experiences" (2020 Mentoring and Advising Summit). More recently, the University Undergraduate Advising Committee (UUAC) was launched with the aim of enhancing advising and mentoring at Pitt by sharing ideas, best practices, and information with representatives university-wide. As needs from UUAC emerge, the AI Team offers professional development through the Mentoring and Advising Workshop Series (2020), one of several opportunities advisors and mentors must convene and learn about relevant issues.

The AI Team made a strategic communications plan to ensure advisors and mentors are provided with updated and timely information. This includes curating a list-serv for announcements and sending newsletters/an annual report. An "Advisor Toolbox" was launched in 2020 to provide "resources and referral information for undergraduate advisors and students." This was part of a website redesign to better reflect the compilation of the team's work.

During 2019-20, an intentional effort was made to foster new connections with Pitt's regional campuses, all of which have higher percentages of first-generation and limited-income undergraduate students than the Pittsburgh campus (see Figure 10.2). A Networked Improvement Community (NIC) was established to strengthen advising practices across undergraduate units at the University (2020). The NIC framework offers support with guided activities meant to identify a shared problem of practice and work toward change cycles addressing

Figure 10.1 University of Pittsburgh undergraduate student housing status by campus (Fall 2019)

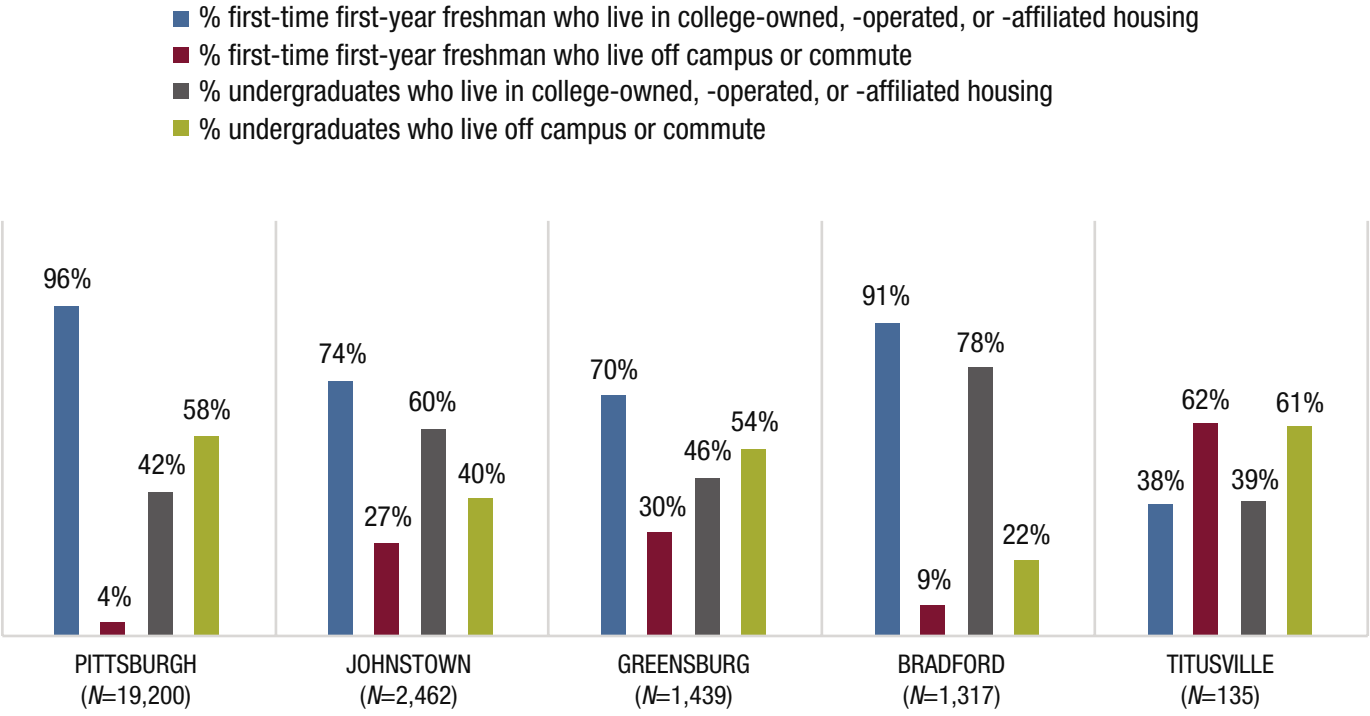


Figure 10.2 University of Pittsburgh undergraduate student demographics by campus (Fall 2019)

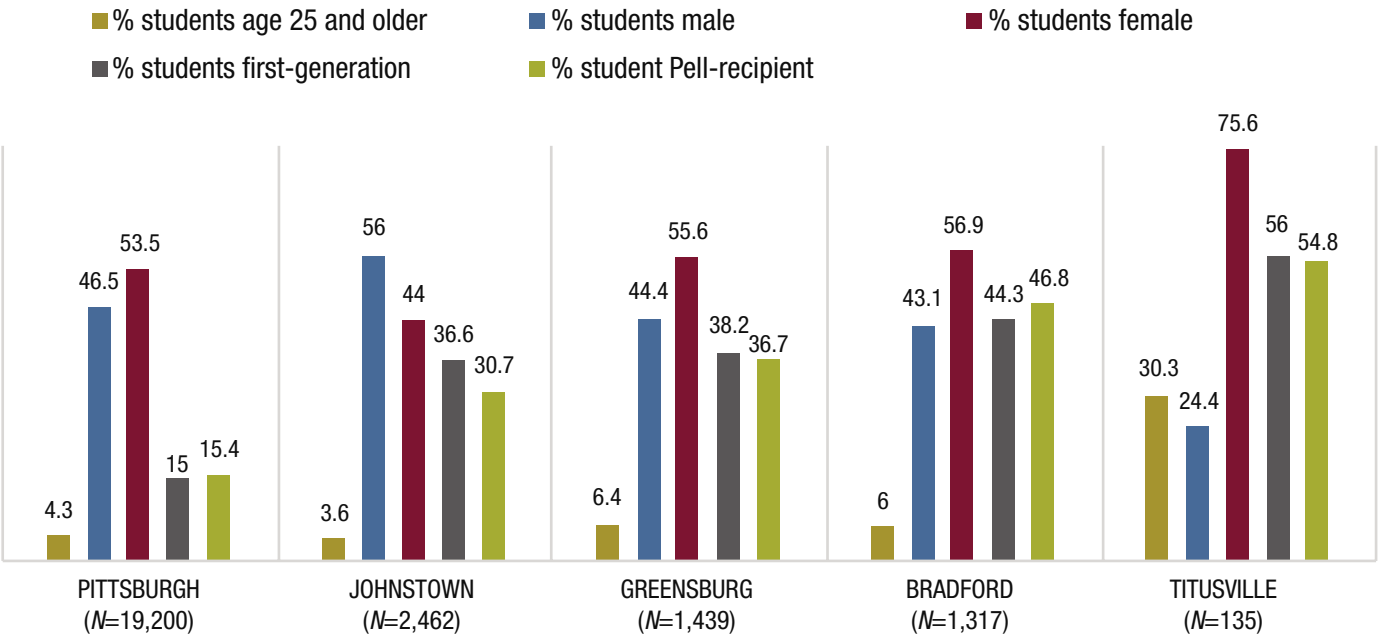
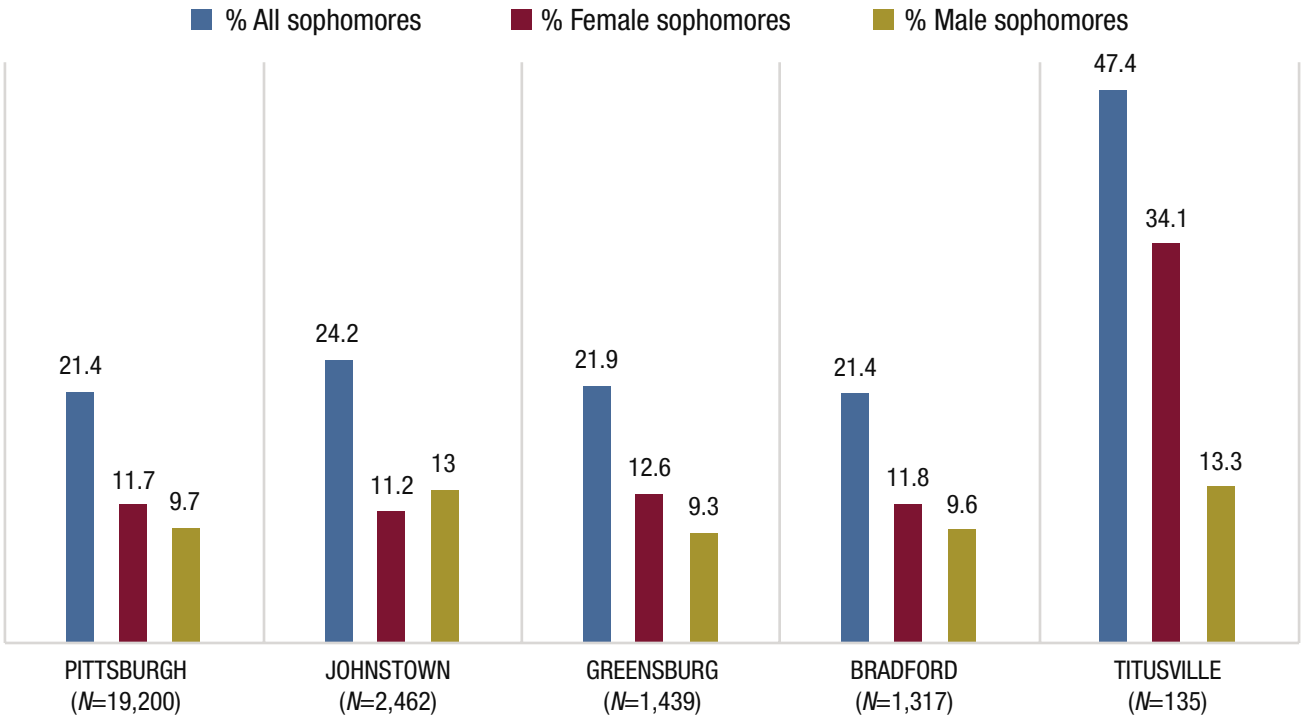


Figure 10.3 University of Pittsburgh undergraduate sophomore student demographic by campus (Fall 2019)



individual solutions (McKay, 2017). To work toward an institutional goal of more coordinated student transitions, the AI Team partnered with the Data Analytics Team to provide access to and training for data dashboards to all NIC teams. The NIC was also a catalyst, which helped to encourage more regional campus participation in the Summit and monthly Workshop Series events.

Assessment Methods & Design

Since the development of the FYOP strategy, The University of Pittsburgh has employed several methods to enhance transparency in the assessment of advising and mentoring practices university-wide. Assessment methods are based on NACADA's (2017) foundational elements in their core competency model for effective advisor training programs and practice, the outcomes of which are conceptual, informational, and relational.

First, the Director of Undergraduate Advising and Mentoring conducted an Academic Advising Landscape Analysis in Spring 2019, with the goal of understanding current advising practices at the University of Pittsburgh. A data collection tool was created using Excel. First, a content analysis was conducted via the website and advising material reviews. Then, a set of questions were developed for individual meetings with undergraduate advising units university-wide. From a review of the information, important themes emerged, and key recommendations were offered which helped to inform actionable steps for the AI Team.

One action item from the landscape analysis was to develop more standard assessment practices for advising to aid in providing crucial feedback to advisors and advising leadership. Thus, in Spring 2020, The Undergraduate Advising Training Needs Assessment Survey was sent to the University community to better understand faculty and staff training needs for advising. A total of 223 participants completed the survey in its entirety, representing 19 different colleges, schools, and three regional campuses. Topics were grouped into these three areas and participants were asked to rate each for levels of importance, responsibility, and competency.

Assessment Findings

The findings of the assessment methods of the FYOP strategy have helped to inform actionable steps for the AI Team. First, a report from Academic Advising Landscape Analysis, conducted in Spring 2019, was presented to academic units and was made available on the new website. For each college/school/advising center, the following data were collected:

- Headcount data
- Number of advising personnel
- Student success, resource, and referral information
- Advising assessment
- Connections between advising and career
- Advisor/student ratio
- Advising model description
- Description of advising training
- Academic exploration
- Advising at Orientation practices

After a review of the information from the website content analysis, advising material review, and individual interview meetings, important themes emerged:

- each unit has some training in place, but the majority do not have the capacity to employ regular opportunities;
- there was a desire for a more holistic and proactive approach to career and academic exploration;
- student resource and referral information is managed locally and each college/school/center approaches in from a different vantage point;
- transition points (from one academic or support unit to another) can be confusing for advisors and students;
- there are many different roles university-wide in the space of advising, mentoring, coaching and counseling;
- each school/college/advising center approaches advising at Orientation differently;
- the assessment of advising was managed locally.

Then, in Spring 2020, the Undergraduate Advising Training Needs Assessment Survey was launched and 233 faculty and staff mentors and advisors from departments across the University and three regional campuses participated. The survey was based on NACADA's (2017) core competency model's foundational elements for effective advisor training programs and practice and fall under three major areas: concepts advisors should understand, information advisors should know, and skills advisors should demonstrate. Topics were grouped into these three areas and participants were asked to rate each for levels of importance, responsibility, and competency. For every topic, the levels of importance and responsibility were scored higher (respondents indicated these topics are important and part of their responsibility) than the level of competency (respondents indicated they did not feel as competent about these topics), thus, illustrating the need for an advising training program for undergraduate academic advisors and mentors at Pitt. One respondent indicated, "I'm thrilled to see you're using the NACADA Academic Advising Core Competencies. NACADA is a wonderful, invaluable resource for academic advisors and they have done a lot of great work on the history, theory, and practice of advising."

Respondents also shared considerations for training at the University-level. The following themes emerged:

- collaboration across the University for training opportunities is important to advisors;
- connecting advisors to campus resources and information is vital to their success;
- Pitt-specific advising and mentoring technology is meaningful to advising training;
- ensuring a balance between university-wide consistent information and departmental referrals should be key to any training opportunities.

Both university-wide assessment methods have informed the FYOP strategic priorities for the advising and mentoring practices at Pitt.

Implications for Practice

In collaboration with the Center for Teaching and Learning, the data from the Undergraduate Advising Training Needs Assessment Survey helped to launch a project that aims to create an online training platform for advisors and mentors, called the *"University of*

Pittsburgh Advising Certification and Training Program (Pitt ACT)" set to be released in March 2021. The following considerations for the project and implications for advising practice at Pitt have only strengthened in the year since the landscape analysis was conducted:

- providing advisors and mentors with standard, consistent, and timely information, including how and when to refer students to campus resources;
- maintaining an online "Advisor Toolbox" resource to ensure equitable access for all Pitt students, advisors and mentors;
- offering additional training programs and opportunities for the campus community to learn, collaborate and network;
- providing resources for advisors and students to better understand their academic choices is vital because academic exploration work is difficult and important to retaining vulnerable populations of students. Therefore, the AI Team is working on university-wide tools for major exploration such as websites and a Catalog of Engagement Opportunities.

Through assessments and increased conversations with advisors and mentors university-wide, it has become clear that standardization is a critical component to ensuring effective institutional processes that enhance student success. The FYOP strategy continues to work toward short- and long-term improvements in support for advisors and mentors through our focused priority of collaboration.

Figures 10.4-10.8 University of Pittsburgh undergraduate racial/ethnic makeup by campus (Fall 2019)

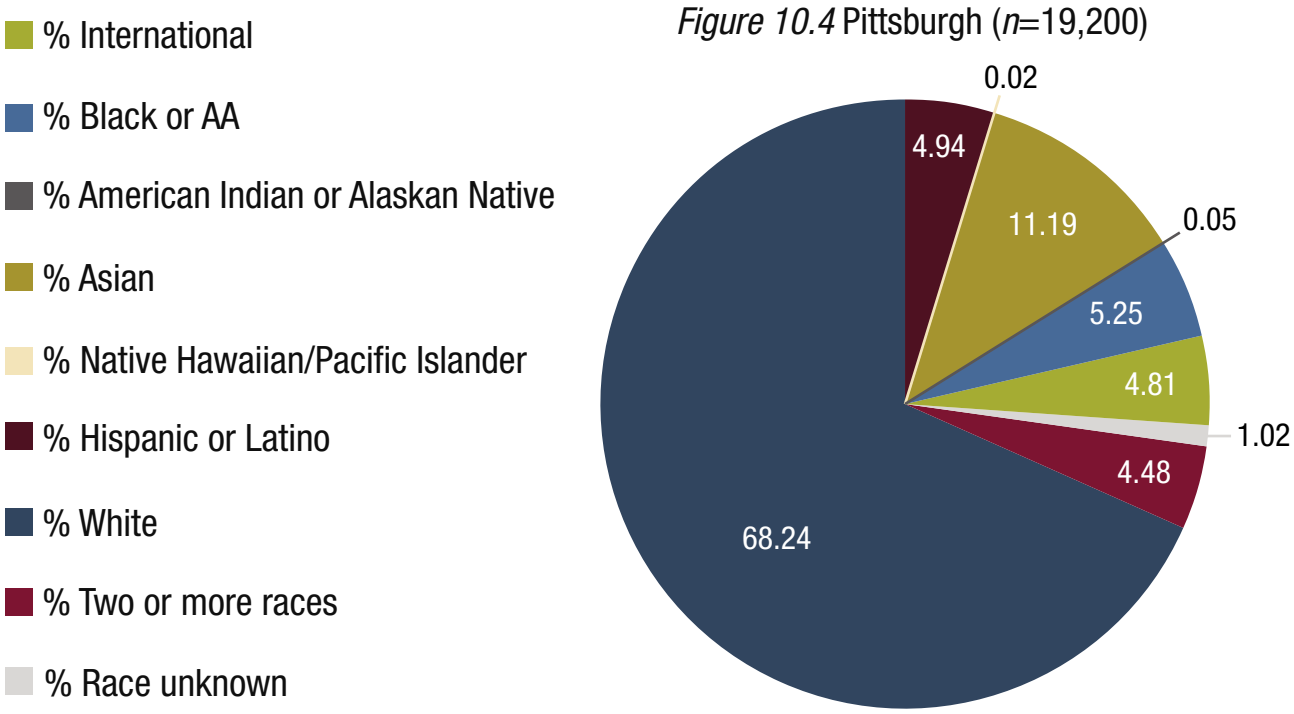


Figure 10.4 Pittsburgh (*n*=19,200)

Figure 10.5 Johnstown (*n*=2,462)

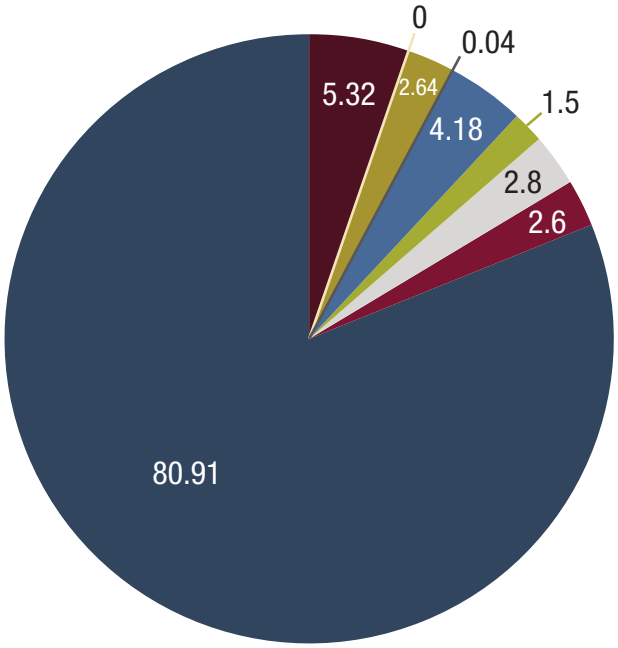


Figure 10.6 Greensburg (*n*=1,439)

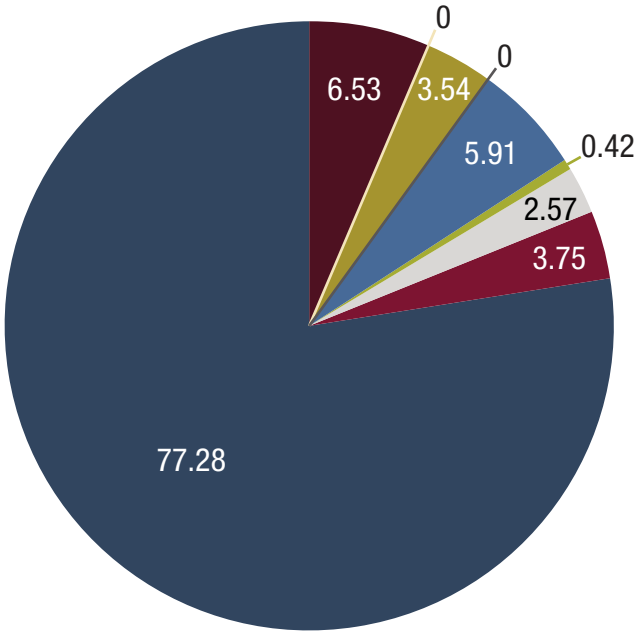


Figure 10.7 Bradford (*n*=1,317)

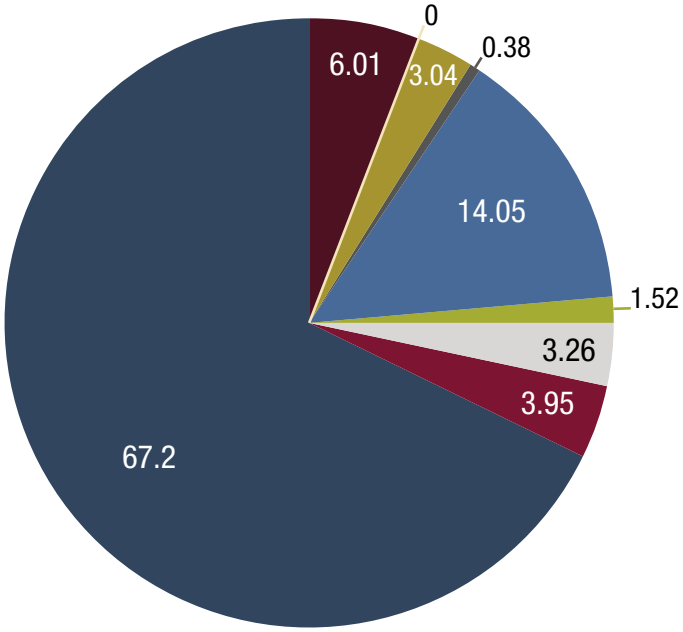


Figure 10.8 Titusville (*n*=135)

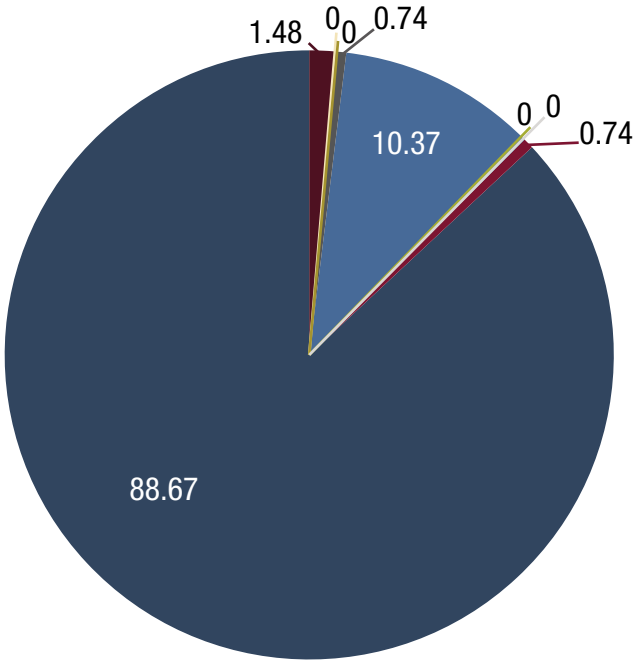
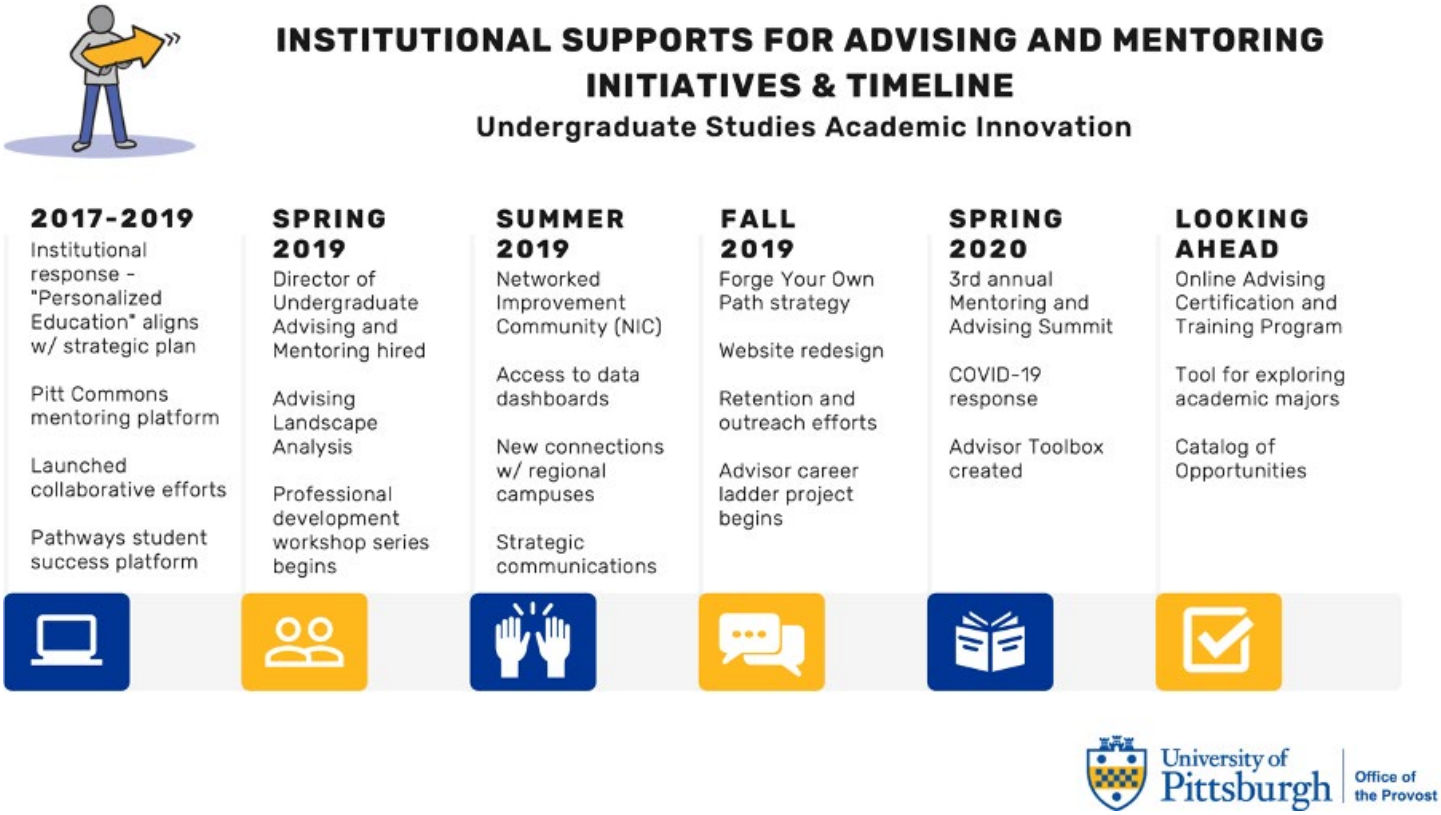


Figure 10.9 University of Pittsburgh Office of the Provost Undergraduate Studies Academic Innovation Team Institutional Supports for Advising and Mentoring Initiatives & Timeline)



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11 The University of South Carolina Organizational Restructure Toward Improved Equity for All Undergraduates

Claire Robinson, Mike Dial, & Jane Bouknight

Institutional Profile

The University of South Carolina (UofSC) is a public, four-year, urban campus that serves as South Carolina's flagship university enrolling 34,795 students on the Columbia campus, including 26,733 undergraduate students, 6,213 graduate students, and 1,849 professional students. Undergraduate academic programs are offered through 11 degree-granting colleges and schools. Undergraduate enrollment consists of 55% in-state and 44% out-of-state with approximately 28% of students living on campus (96% in the first-year) and 72% commuting to campus. UofSC defines sophomore status as a student who has completed the equivalent of one year of full-time undergraduate work, that is, at least 30 semester hours but less than 60 semester hours in a 120-hour program. In fall 2019, 24.53% of the undergraduate population met this definition. Almost all UofSC students receive some form of aid, while 20% of undergraduate students receive the Pell grant. Racially, UofSC undergraduate students are comprised of 76.7% White, 10.2% African American, 4.0% Hispanic, 2.3% Asian, 0.1% Pacific Islander, and 3.2% identify as two or more races. The undergraduate population is 53% female and 44% male. UofSC defines first-generation students as those whose parents

have not completed a four-year degree. This status is self-reported at UofSC though, so it is difficult to identify a true percentage of the undergraduate student population who are first-generation students.

The Establishment of the University Advising Center

Prior to fall 2014, student and parent complaints were directed to the UofSC Office of the Provost regarding the inconsistent and unequal state of advising across UofSC's 11 colleges and schools. At the time, UofSC operated under a decentralized model of advising (King, 2008) wherein each college dictated the style and substance of advising practice. Some academic advising on campus was heavily focused on course selection, and schedule planning and thus was highly transactional. During these years, student and parent complaints were at an all-time high. Concurrently, university leadership sought to improve institutional retention rates in alignment with those attained by UofSC's peer aspirant institutions. With hopes of reducing student dissatisfaction with advising and making meaningful gains in first-year retention, the Office of the Provost convened an Advising Coordinating Taskforce (ACT) to review advising practices at the University. ACT reviewed the information, surveyed students and advisors, and solicited responses on advisement practices from each college/school. At the conclusion of their work, ACT made six recommendations, the first of which was to establish a University Advising Center to standardize advising across a decentralized campus and institute first-year advising.

The University Advising Center (UAC) was established in July 2015 and the First-Year Advising (now Undergraduate Academic Advising) program was implemented in January of 2016. Since 2015, institutional investments in staffing, training, and technology have enabled UofSC advisors to be more efficient, reduce the time needed for transactional advising, and allow advisors to devote more time and effort to building relationships with and providing holistic advising to all students in their caseload. The UAC defines holistic advising as a combination of prescriptive (i.e., the course selection and degree requirements), intrusive (i.e., proactive outreach and academic interventions) and appreciative advising (i.e., using narrative inquiry questions) that supports the student's whole academic experience in and beyond-the-classroom. By standardizing advising without centralizing it, the UAC provides highly trained professional academic advisors with consistent caseloads of an average of 300 advisees to all students in their first-year and to many transfer students.

The UAC supports the academic mission of the University by providing undergraduate students, academic advisors, and the advising community with resources, training, services, and assessment in accordance with national best practices. At UofSC all undergraduate students are required to meet with an academic advisor prior to registering for courses each term. These formal advising appointments often result in conversations that intersect student interests and needs, curricular requirements, experiential learning opportunities, and holistic student support. As such, UofSC Academic Advisors are uniquely positioned to maintain communication with, support, and retain students who are often categorized in an achievement gap at UofSC (Pell-eligible students, males, and African American males). Through the standardization of advising, the UAC seeks to improve the student experience for all students at the University.

The UAC standardized advising on the UofSC Columbia Campus through first-year advising management, advising system management, and the identification of consistent evaluation metrics. All first-year advising is facilitated by Undergraduate Academic Advisors (UAA) employed by the UAC. Caseloads are capped at 300 students per advisor which allows for four hours per student per year of dedicated support. Not all students will need all four hours of an advisor's time. By adopting a population health model, UAAs dedicate their time and energy to those students with the highest need or risk of attrition. Doing so treats each student as a unique individual with specific needs, which allows for greater attention to students that may be facing challenges, like historically URM, low-income, and first-generation college students. Additionally, UAAs are available throughout the semester for 30-minute appointments. Prior to the establishment of the UAC, advisor caseloads may exceed 600 students, advising was sometimes handled in the group, 15- minute sessions, and students often signed up for advising within a two-week window by putting their name on a piece of paper on an instructor's door. UAAS availability allows students to receive support when they need it. Position descriptions across the 34 FTEs are standard, and the performance management process is consistent across colleges.

From a system perspective, technology adoption and access are standardized. UofSC advisors utilize Banner, DegreeWorks, and EAB Navigate to prepare for and during advising sessions. Curricular tools including the UofSC program of study and major maps are developed by the colleges with assistance and support from the UAC. Finally, new academic advising initiatives are implemented campus-wide, rather than in pockets and major changes between degree-granting colleges are designed to allow as seamless a transition as is possible for students.

Today, the UAC comprises 36 professional UAAs, 12 Exploratory Advisors/Academic Coaches, and 12 additional administrative staff. The UAC works collaboratively with the 11 colleges and schools that make up UofSC to recruit, onboard, and support the UAAs who provide holistic advisement to approximately 9,000 students, roughly 33% of the undergraduate population. The UAC solidifies its professional relationship with each of the colleges through signed Memoranda of Cooperation (MOC). As approved by the UofSC Advising Directorate, the UAC allocates advisors to colleges following four rules: 1) all first-year advising is conducted by the UAC in coordination with the colleges, 2) allocation is based on college enrollment (300 students:1 advisor), 3) all first-year students are advised by a UAA, but UAAs may advise beyond the first-year, and 4) if a college/school wishes to move into advising beyond the first-year through the UAC, the funding must come from the college. Since the establishment of the UAC, several colleges have invested in the model as evidenced by a 44% growth in FTE UAA positions from 2016 to 2020.

The administrative team provides advisors support including curricular resource utilization, technology implementation, transfer student advising, and training and certification. Through the leadership of the Assistant Associate Deans Council (AADC), the advising infrastructure is embedded within the colleges. In addition to the UAC's 44 professional staff advisors, the UAC aims to ensure an equitable advising experience for all undergraduate students through the training and certification of an additional 56 full- and part-time academic advisors hired by the colleges and 336 faculty who serve as academic advisors.

Advisor Training

New academic advisors at UofSC must complete Advising Foundations, an online course, which ensures that new advisors understand FERPA and other legal and ethical considerations prior to having access to student information.

Following Advising Foundations, the UofSC Academic Advisor Training and Certification Program is a multi-level program that covers seven distinct competency areas, which are aligned with the NACADA Core Competencies Model and framework (NACADA, 2017).

Specifically related to equity initiatives on campus, Level One of the Advisor Training and Certification program includes a module dedicated to the Opportunity Scholars program and first-generation students. Additional in-person training covers content on supporting students with achievement gaps, namely first-generation students and transfer students. Level Two of the Advisor Training and Certification Program includes content on supporting transfer students and academic success coaching with a focus on a partnership with TRiO Programs (detailed below). Level Three covers veterans and international students. Finally, Level Four requires advisors to attend campus partner training devoted to understanding and supporting LGBTQUI students, international students, student veterans, transfer students, and mental health/suicide prevention training.

To foster ongoing development, the UAC hosts several in-person events including a systemwide advisors conference. The 2020 conference theme was *Every Student. Every Voice. One University: Fostering Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion in Advising* and featured a keynote presented by Dr. John Dozier, the University's Chief Diversity Officer. Eight additional concurrent sessions covered topics related to diversity, social advocacy, and supporting special student populations including transfers, LGBTQUI students, and first-generation students. Notably, the 2020 conference featured a student-led session titled "Students Call for Equitable Advising." Past conferences have included no fewer than four concurrent session offerings dedicated to supporting diverse student populations. Beginning in summer 2020, the UAC planned and facilitated dedicated in-person training sessions on diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism. These trainings aid advisors in having difficult conversations and supporting students from backgrounds unlike their own.

Transfer Students

The UAC has increased its focus on supporting transfer students for several reasons in recent years. First, one-third of the UofSC Undergraduate population began their UofSC experience as transfer students. Of those only 65.5% graduate from USC compared to 72.3% of FTIC students. Of those who do graduate they earn on average 138 overall credit hours and take 3.4 years

Figure 11.1 UofSC Academic Advisor Training and Development Model

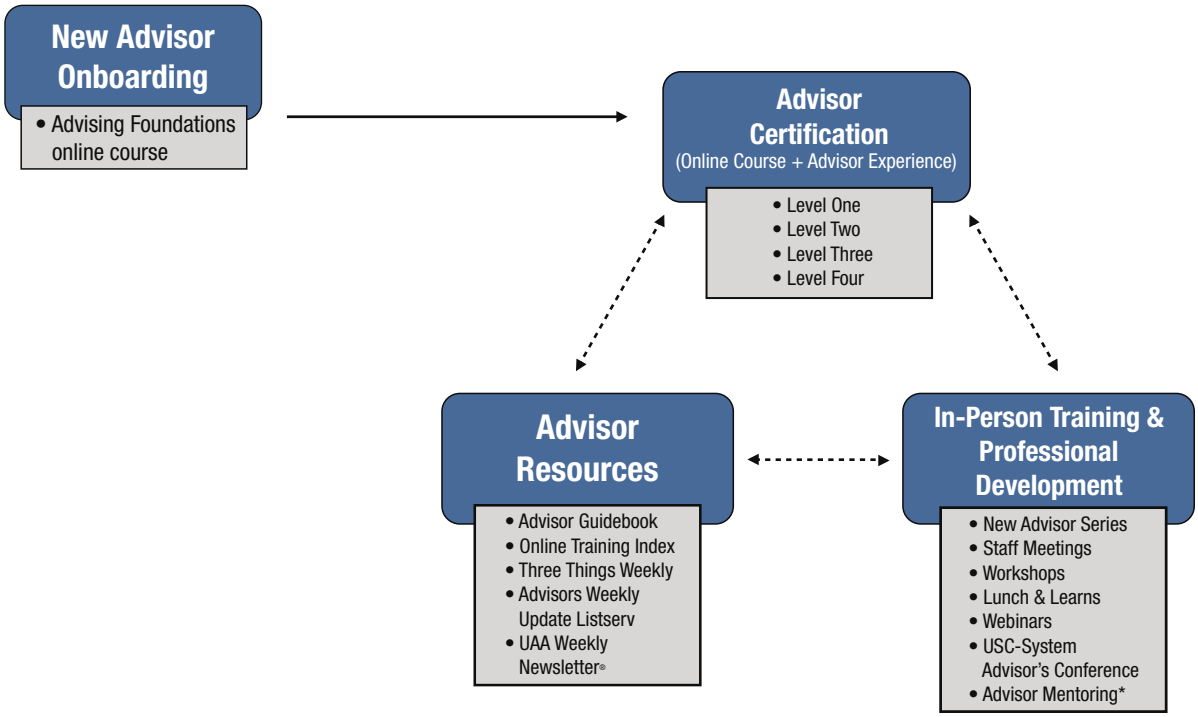
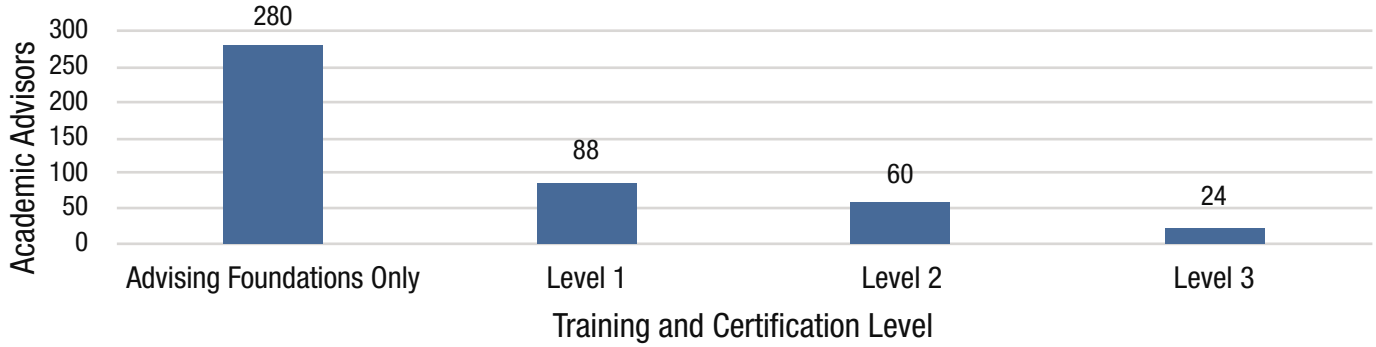


Figure 11.2 Certification Levels of Advisors with Active Caseloads During the Spring 2020 Semester. Based on Internal Data



to graduate once first enrolled at UofSC. In spring 2019, the UAC hired an Assistant Director of Transfer Advising and Retention who has spearheaded a campus-wide effort to improve the transfer experience. One specific effort undertaken by the UAC has been expanding advising opportunities for transfer students. Across the colleges, advisors offer drop-in hours early in the term specifically set aside for transfer students, guarantee multiple appointments, or a 60-minute appointment compared to the 30-minute appointment offered to most students.

Partnerships

The UAC maintains several partnerships with the academic colleges and schools as well as programs in the Division of Students Affairs to improve student success outcomes for historically underrepresented students. One example, The Academic Coaching mandate for Gamecock Guarantee and Opportunity Scholars Program (OSP) students, is a joint effort between the Exploratory Advising Office in the UAC and the

Office of TRiO Programs. Students in OSP are first-generation college students from low-income families in the state of South Carolina who also receive financial support through the Gamecock Guarantee grant. This program provides academically talented, low-income, first-generation college students from South Carolina an affordable opportunity to attend USC. The Gamecock Guarantee covers undergraduate tuition and technology fees for up to four years, as long as the student meets program criteria. Approximately 700 students each year receive the Gamecock Guarantee (UofSC Division of Student Affairs, 2020). Students in the OSP Program who do not meet the requirements of the Gamecock Guarantee Memorandum of Understanding or who are classified as academically at-risk, are required to attend at least two Academic Coaching sessions during the semester and complete an Academic Plan with their Coach. They may attend as many coaching appointments as needed/desired. In their coaching sessions, students receive individualized support from their Coaches in the areas of general academic advising and major exploration, academic planning & success strategies, strengths identification, engagement planning & campus involvement, and navigating campus resources.

Assessment Methods & Design

An initial survey conducted in 2014 led to the establishment and funding of the UAC, 25 First-Year advisors, an advisor training and certification program, and implementation of new advising technologies. The UAC continues to reference student feedback when assessing program success and future initiatives.

Measures

Undergraduate Advising Survey. Biannually, an electronic survey is distributed to a stratified random sample of undergraduate students. In spring 2019, the instrument was sent to 12,000 students and yielded an 11% response rate (n=1,087). Survey response mirrors the student population across the colleges and student classification. Survey design is mixed methods and includes Likert-scale and open-ended questions. The survey's intent is to measure students' perceptions of the Undergraduate Academic Advising environment, students' perceptions of advising outcomes, and students' knowledge of policies and procedures related to academic advising.

Transfer Student Survey. During spring 2020, a survey was distributed to all transfer students who entered the University in the fall 2019 cohort and yielded an 8.84% response rate (n=143) and all transfer students who entered the University between 2013 and 2018 and yielded a 6.08% response rate (n=153). The intent of the survey was to evaluate various facets of the transfer experience including admissions, orientation, and advising.

GPA, Persistence, and Retention Rates. Institutional datasets are used to calculate student grades, retention, and graduation.

Assessment Findings

Persistence and Retention

Since the establishment of the UAC in 2015, the institution has experienced gains in both first- to second-year retention as well as four- and six-year graduation rates. As evidence, UofSC attained a 3.7% increase in four-year graduations, as well as a 1% increase in the six-year graduation rate (EAB, 2018). While it can be reasonably assumed that gains have been made across the board, this data has not been analyzed to identify institutional gains in retention or persistence for first-generation students or students who fall within UofSC graduation gaps.

Student Satisfaction and Knowledge of Advising Policies/Procedures

Comparison data from the 2014 and 2019 Undergraduate Student Survey demonstrate an 8% increase in student satisfaction along with increases in 12 categories associated with advising. Categories included students' receiving accurate information (+18%), understanding general education requirements (+49%), and receiving help choosing a major (+74%), referral to campus resources (+56%), and recommendations of beyond-the-classroom/co-curricular opportunities (+55%).

Additionally, internal research has found statistically significant, positive correlations between time in advising sessions and discussions of experiential learning, careers, and graduate school with overall satisfaction in advising. Additional in-person training and educational materials are being developed to share these best practices across campus.

The Transfer Experience

Over the years, UofSC has attempted numerous niche programs with the goal of improving the transfer experience and transfer retention and persistence rates. While it's too early to identify changes in retention or persistence to degree, the improvements to transfer advising seem to be responsible for demonstrable gains in transfer student satisfaction with their advising experience. In fact, results of the Transfer Survey exemplify this as student satisfaction with advising experienced a 0.61-point increase for the fall 2019 cohort when compared to transfer students who entered the University prior to fall 2019.

Figure 11.3 Undergraduate Student Survey % Agree or Strongly Agree Comparison 2014-2019

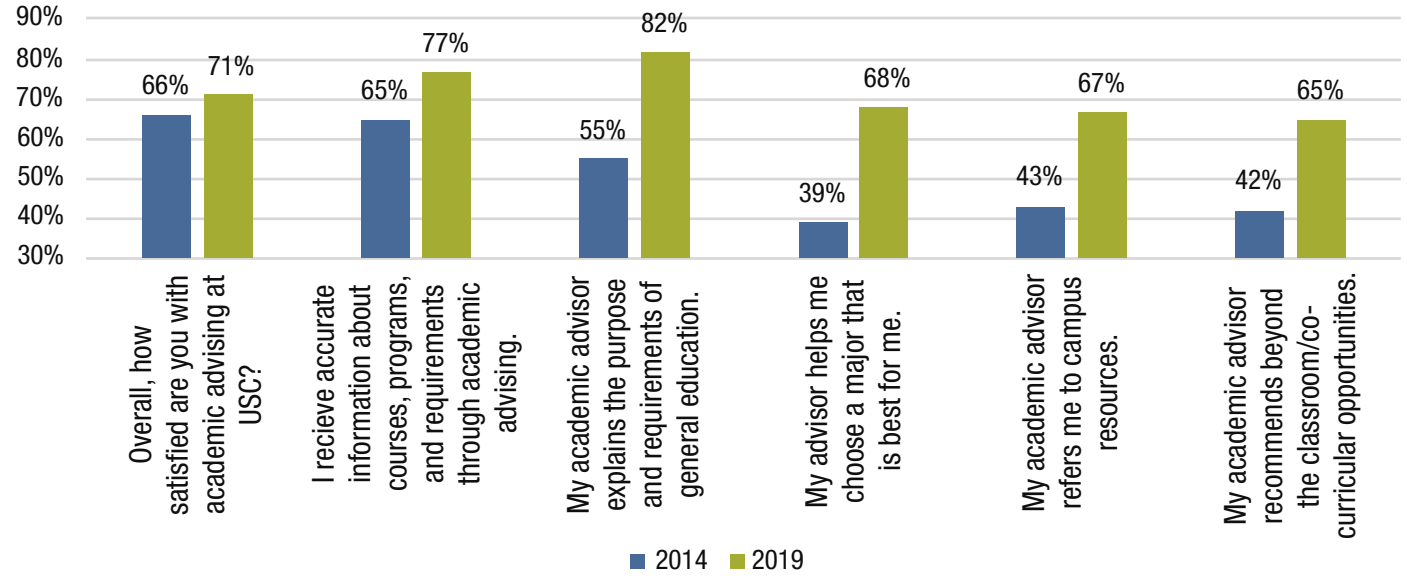


Figure 11.4 Transfer Student Perceptions 2013-2018 vs Fall 2019 Entry Cohorts

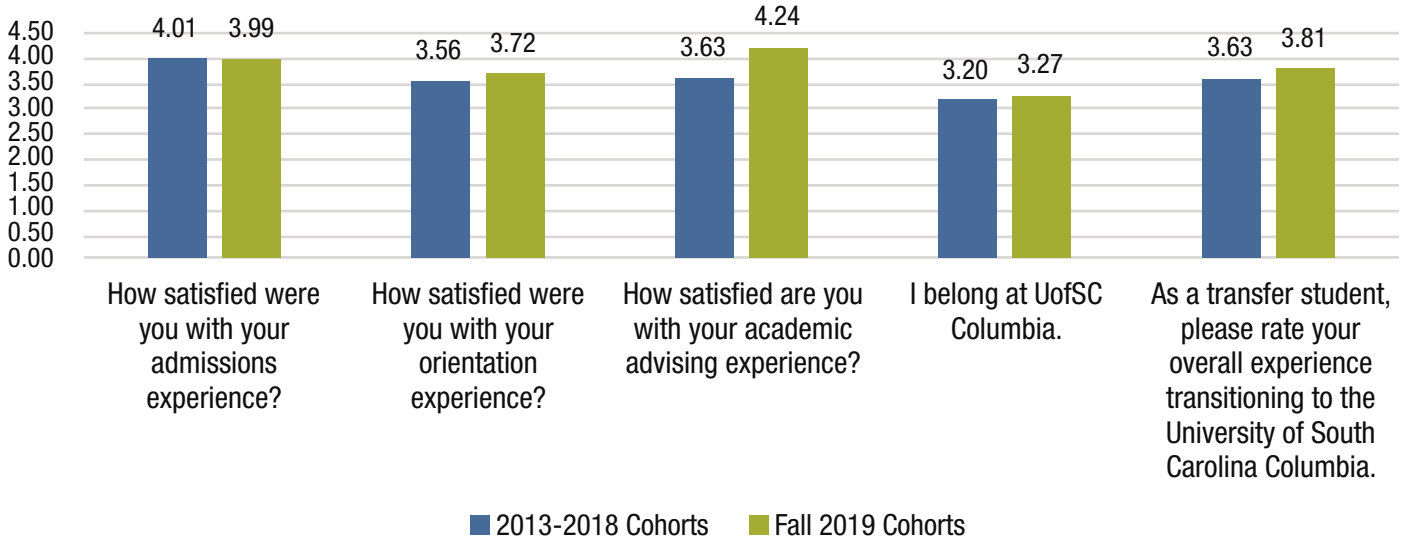
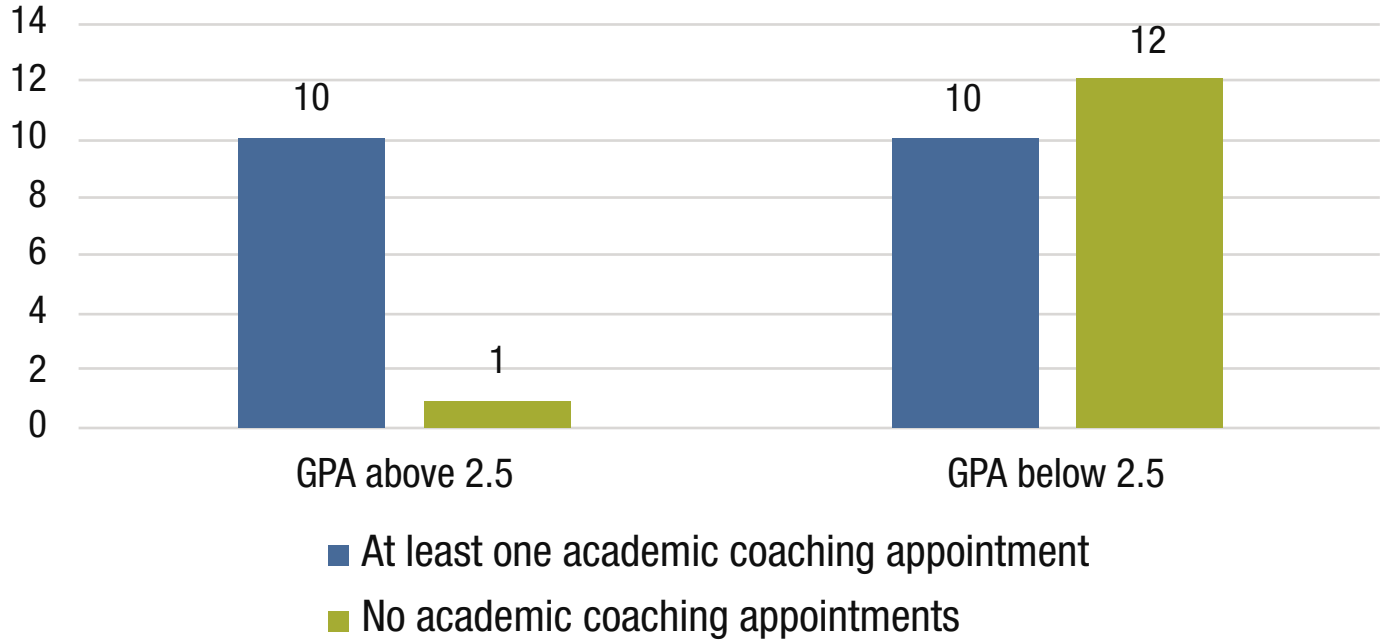


Figure 11.5 OSP Partnership Outcomes End of Semester GPA By Coaching Appointment



OSP Partnership

There are approximately 450 students in the Opportunity Scholars program across all four classes. During spring 2020, 33 students were referred to Academic Coaching for having GPAs below 2.50/4.00. Of the referred students, one did not return from the fall semester, 25 improved their GPA by an average of .28 points, and 11 raised their GPA above the minimum standard of 2.50/4.00. However, students who attend at least one Academic Coaching (M=1.5, SD=0.51) appointment attain a 2.50 or greater GPA at a significantly higher rate than students who do not attend at least one Academic Coaching (M=1.92, SD=0.28) appointment; $t(31)=-2.72$), $p=.011$.

Implications for Practice

For decades, like many universities, UofSC has invested "effort, time, and resources in well-intentioned, yet often disconnected or small-scale" (Lawton, 2018, p. 33) improvement initiatives. According to Lawton (2018), when academic advising is underfunded, understaffed, and underequipped with appropriate advising technologies, students that fall into various opportunity gaps may be disproportionately negatively impacted. Through the UAC, UofSC has made systemic changes to advising with equity at the heart of the transformation. Standard advising practice ensures that all students across campus have access to high-quality, highly trained professionals to assist them into and through the University. Kerr and King (2005) posit that academic advising is perhaps the most important way that first-year students interact with a representative of the institution (p. 320). As evidence of the commitment of the institution to quality academic advising for all students, the Provost's Office now commits $1,884,000 annually toward the funding of 32 full-time UAAs, an Assistant Director, and a Coordinator of Advising and Academic Intervention. In total, the UAC maintains a $3,000,000 operating budget.

Since the initial student survey in 2014, the UAC has learned to better train, support, and utilize full-time academic advisors across campus. As a result, their effectiveness as advisors and utility to students has increased. As evidence of their achievement on campus, the Undergraduate Academic Advising initiative and the Exploratory Advising initiative have been recognized by NACADA as Outstanding Advising Programs.

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12 The University of Toledo Success Coaching Model

Julie Fischer-Kinney and Denise S. Bartell

Institutional Profile

Located in Toledo, Ohio, the University of Toledo is one of 27 four-year, public research comprehensive universities in the country. For the 2019-2020 academic year, the number of Full-Time Enrollment (FTE) undergraduate students was 13,607; the overall headcount was 15,568. Approximately 24% of all undergraduate students resided on-campus. A sophomore is defined as a student who has cumulatively earned between 30-59.9 credit hours; sophomores comprised 18.7% of the overall headcount for 2019-2020. The undergraduate gender composition was 50% male and 50% female. The average age of undergraduate students was 22 years, with 10.5% age 25 and older. The ethnicity breakdown was: 68.5% white; 21.8% ethnic minority; and 4.2% unknown. The residency composition was 84.6% in-state; 9.8% out-of-state; and 5.6% International students. Of our 2019 total headcount enrollment, 28.3% of students were Pell-receiving, and 23.8% were first-generation (i.e., students for whom no parent or guardian has completed a bachelor's degree).

Toledo Success Coaching Model

Success coaching was implemented at the University of Toledo in August 2013 as a partner to academic advising. UToledo has relatively high caseloads in academic advising, and therefore services focus on the traditional scope of academic plan of study, time to degree, course registration, etc. Students are assigned a professional or faculty advisor from the point of program entry, depending upon their college, and so may have multiple advisors over their undergraduate career. The success coach model sought to create complementary support for advising services, providing students with one constant contact person and holistic support to navigate barriers to success and improve student outcomes.

At inception in 2013, the primary goal of the success coaching program was to increase the first-to-second year retention rate (full-time, first-time students) from 62% to 80% and the six-year graduation rate from 41% to 50% by 2022. While the

current scope still includes these goals, a concerted effort is also being placed on reducing equity gaps to improve student success between majority students and underrepresented minority students (e.g. African American, Latinx, First Nations, and Hawaiian-Pacific Islander) and Pell-awarded students, as guided by the university strategic plan and institutional plan for diversity and inclusion.

In July 2016, the Center for Success Coaching was created to centralize the success coaches under the Office of the Provost in Academic Affairs. Unlike academic advising at the institution, which is decentralized, the Center for Success Coaching is centralized to provide consistent support for all undergraduate students. The Center's mission is to empower UToledo students to thrive academically, personally, and professionally from orientation to graduation through a holistic, student-centered approach. The Center is led by the Assistant Provost for Student Success and Retention, who also serves as the Center Director. Three committees (programming, communications, and assessment) were created within the Center to execute its mission and goals.

Keys to Success

Success coaches are full-time professional staff with assigned caseloads, who act as retention specialists and student advocates, but do not academically advise or monitor degree progress. A success coach is a student's personal GPS. Success coaches provide individualized support to students in the following areas:

- helping students be proactive and empowered through courserelated challenges;
- making referrals to academic support services and other campus resources;
- supporting time management, study strategies, and stress management;
- connecting students to campus engagement and experiential learning opportunities;
- supporting budgeting, navigating financial processes and financial literacy; and
- career and major exploration, career development and goal setting.

Success coaches also proactively outreach to students about opportunities, such as scholarship and student involvement, and areas of concern, such as financial holds on student accounts and academic concerns from instructors. As students navigate from where they are upon entering college, to where they want to be, coaches: offer one-on-one guidance and customized support through caring about all aspects of a student's well-being; serve as a non-judgmental sounding board who provides honest feedback; and provide proactive outreach and communication on key institutional dates, deadlines, opportunities, and events. All undergraduate students are assigned a success coach who is with them from orientation to graduation. While the student may change academic majors/colleges and academic advisors, their success coach will not change during their academic journey.

Coaches document appointments and outreach efforts in Starfish Early Alert and Connect. There were 21 success coaches on staff during the 2019-2020 academic year, a significant increase from the original 12 coaches hired in 2013. Coaches are aligned to all undergraduate students by special student populations and by the academic college. This allows for specialization utilizing the expertise and strengths of each coach to address the needs of different student populations. Additionally, it allows for stronger collaboration and partnerships between success coaches and advisors, who jointly support the students they serve. For example, success coaches are aligned to all international students, to all student-athletes, to all 100% distance learners, and to all military-connected students. In addition, there are other success coaches aligned with domestic students by age, academic preparation, and academic college/major.

The Center for Success Coaching also offers a variety of services and programmatic offerings to support student success, including Success Series Workshops each semester. These one-hour, interactive workshops provide strategies, tools, and resources on topics such as time management and study strategies. Other offerings include Coach Express Events, which are 15-minute pop-up events in locations across campus that provide students with healthy snacks, engagement, and interactive education on topics such as note-taking and beating procrastination. Coach drop-in office hours are offered at various days, times, and locations across campus to meet students where they are at with respect to access, such as Wednesday hours in the campus library. Other initiatives include tabling at key points of the semester, collaborating with Residence Life to offer drop-in hours in residence halls, and partnering with Student Affairs on registration outreach efforts. Coaches are now part of the process workflow with many departments to ensure the timely completion of relevant forms and procedures.

Examples of integration include identification and outreach to students who may be eligible to appeal a college scholarship or financial aid decision (e.g., SAP appeals; communicating registration dates and re-enrollment outreach campaigns for students who stop out of college; working with Residence Life on the completion of housing contracts and exemptions; supporting the completion of incomplete grades from prior semesters; and working closely with the Registrar's Office on administrative adjustments or medical withdrawal processes and appeals). Success coaches also work with Student Affairs in areas such as serving on conduct boards, working daily with the student advocacy office on case management of student issues and concerns, programmatic efforts with the multicultural student success and career services offices, and linking students to the food pantry.

On the communication front, success coaches use Google Voice to text with students individually; send out carefully crafted infographics and visuals through email to provide critical dates, deadlines, and opportunities; push out referrals and/or flags of concern to students through Starfish; leverage three social media platforms using nudging strategies and visually appealing prompts; provide information and tips on the Center website; sponsor a Youtube channel full of engaging videos on various topics; and conduct outreach campaigns through phone, email, and text on key university student success efforts.

Assessment Methods & Design

Given the strategic goals of the university, the most important assessment objectives have involved tracking first-year retention and six-year graduation rates over time, as the success coaching program was developed and expanded. UToledo also examines retention and graduation rates disaggregated for underrepresented minority and Pell-awarded students, to assess the impact of the success coaches on our strategic goal to reduce, by half, equity gaps in retention and graduation by 2022.

To understand students' level of engagement with success coaches, we track the number of student engagements with coaches, peak times and themes for engagement during the semester, the number of coach outreach efforts per student, student satisfaction with and perceptions of engagements with success coaches, student participation in coach workshops, quantitative and qualitative assessment data gathered in post-workshop evaluations, student focus group feedback, the percentage of students who view coach emails, and social media engagement.

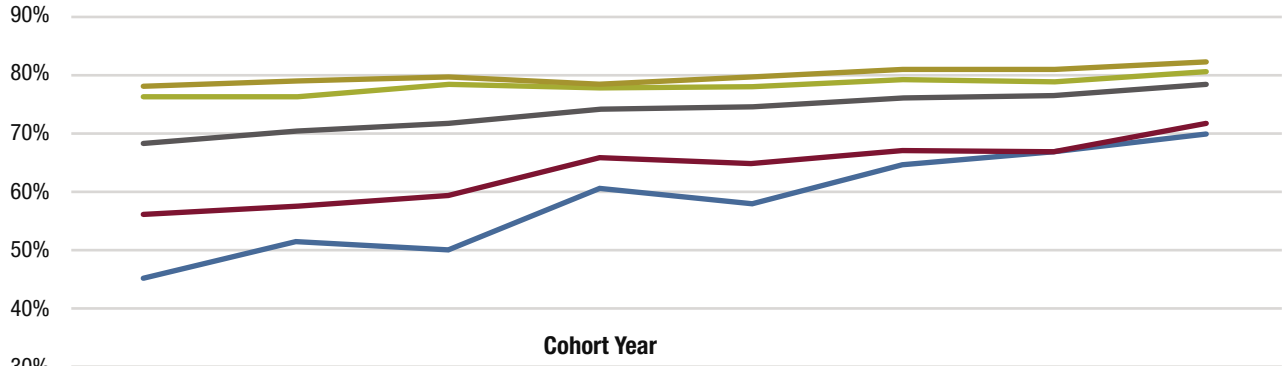
Finally, to understand the impact of success coaches on our campus, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is utilized to ask questions on the quality of engagement with support staff, including the advising module in 2019, which asked students a series of questions about the nature and supportiveness of various kinds of advising interactions. This tool also allows for benchmarking the perceived impact of success coaches at UToledo against those of peer institutions who participate in the survey.

Assessment Findings

Since the inception of the success coach program in 2013, UToledo has improved first-year retention by 10.5%, from 68% for the 2012 cohort to 78.5% for the 2019 cohort (see Figure 12.1). In addition, we have reduced equity gaps in retention for URM students by 30%, from 31.1% for the 2012 cohort to 10.1% for the 2019 cohort, and by 10.8% for lower-income students, from 21.7% for the 2012 cohort to 10.9% for the 2019 cohort. In fact, we have surpassed the strategic goal of reducing these gaps by half and done so two years ahead of schedule. The success coach program, and the development of the Center for Success Coaching, have been instrumental in these gains, as they have allowed us to provide more intentional, holistic support for student success in the critical first year of college. Qualitative student data supports our conclusions about the role of success coaches in our improved retention results. As one student reflected, "During my freshman and sophomore year, my coach was extremely fundamental in my preparation for my engineering classes, co-op, and career."

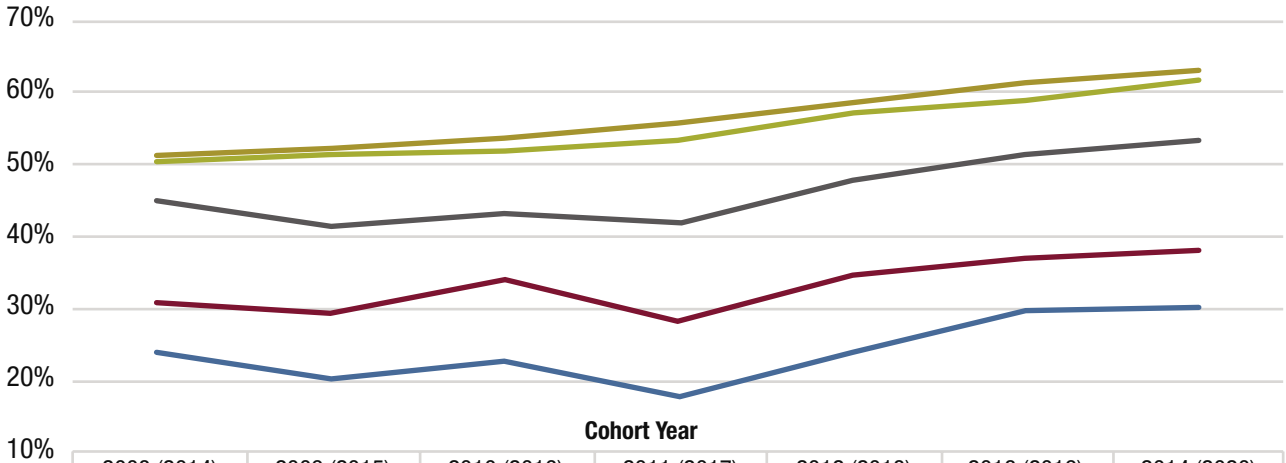
Six-year graduation rates have improved by 8.3%, from 44.9% for the 2008 cohort to 53.2% for the 2014 cohort (see Figure 12.2). In fact, we saw a nearly 4% increase in the six-year graduation rate during the first complete student cohort cycle under the coaching model. We achieved our 2022 goal of a 50% graduation rate three years ahead of schedule. However, we have not yet seen a significant decrease in equity gaps for six-year graduation rates. As is the case for retention, the Center for Success

Figure 12.1 First-Year Retention Rates for 2012-2019 Cohorts



	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
URM	45.16%	51.38%	50.34%	60.75%	58.15%	64.70%	66.90%	70.20%
White	76.22%	76.35%	78.38%	77.99%	77.89%	79.20%	78.90%	80.30%
Overall	68.03%	69.97%	71.85%	74.07%	74.46%	75.90%	76.40%	78.50%
Pell	56.22%	57.52%	59.20%	65.82%	64.97%	66.83%	67.10%	71.20%
Non-Pell	77.94%	78.67%	79.77%	78.59%	79.74%	80.92%	80.80%	82.10%

Figure 12.2 Six-Year Graduation Rates for 2008-2014 Cohorts



	2008 (2014)	2009 (2015)	2010 (2016)	2011 (2017)	2012 (2018)	2013 (2019)	2014 (2020)
URM	23.50%	20.21%	22.77%	17.83%	23.80%	29.40%	29.80%
White	50.55%	51.46%	51.65%	53.12%	57.00%	58.90%	61.50%
Overall	44.90%	41.48%	43.27%	41.86%	47.50%	51.10%	53.20%
Pell	30.77%	29.22%	33.79%	28.04%	34.26%	36.70%	38.00%
Non-Pell	50.99%	52.20%	53.42%	55.55%	58.49%	61.10%	62.80%

Coaching has played a key role in our overall improved graduation rates, as it provides a single point of contact for student support from the first-year through graduation. The supportive relationships built by this model empower students to engage with coaches at multiple points in the student life cycle when they face challenges to timely progress and completion. Qualitative student data reinforces the key role of success coaches on our improved graduation rates, especially for historically marginalized students. When asked about the impact of success coaches on their success, one student reflected, "My coach ended up being my support system and kept me in check for academics as well as other life activities." And another said, "There aren't words to describe the impact my coach had on my college career – not only helping me improve my grades but also helping me find a major I truly enjoy. Four years ago, I never would have thought I would be in the position I am today and part of that is because of the guidance I was able to receive from my coach and the resources she provided for me."

Since the creation of the Center for Success Coaching in 2016, we have seen a continued increase in student utilization of coaching appointments, in the breadth and depth of coach communications with students, and in outreach engagement such as course presentations and stand-alone workshops (see Table 12.1). Interestingly, during the 2019-20 year, after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of student appointments dramatically increased. This increase reflects the extent to which students, faculty, and staff have come to rely on success coaches as a primary support mechanism for our students. Outreach numbers declined during that time because coaches were engaging more directly with students through appointments, reducing the need for multiple outreach attempts.

Based on the results from the 2019 NSSE Advising Module, UToledo first-year students were significantly more likely than students at other institutions to report discussing advising issues with our success coaches. Our first-year students were also significantly more likely to report that success coaches helped them to develop their academic goals and plans than students from other institutions. These differences, as compared to peer institutions, reflect our efforts to meaningfully engage students in developing relationships with their success coaches during the critical first year. URM and Pell-awarded students reported meeting more often with their success coach and reported their coach to be more helpful than did non-URM and non-Pell-awarded students. These results suggest that the success coaches are playing a key role in our progress reducing equity gaps in retention.

Reviewing our NSSE results from 2015 through 2019, we have also seen a consistent increase in the extent to which UToledo students report our institution as helping them to manage their non-academic responsibilities (e.g., work, family) and providing support for their overall well-being (e.g., recreation, health care, counseling). For example, in 2015 our students reported us as significantly less likely to help them manage their non-academic responsibilities than did students from peer institutions. By 2019, they reported us as significantly more likely to do so. This pattern of results suggests an impact of the holistic approach of success coaches and their increased engagement with students over the last five years.

Implications for Practice

By all available evidence, the success coaching program and the Center for Success Coaching have played a primary role in achieving our institutional strategic plan goals of improved

Table 12.1 *Student Level of Engagement Data*

	Academic Year			
Type of Engagement	**2016 - 2017**	**2017 - 2018**	**2018 - 2019**	**2019 - 2020**
Student appointments	12,853	13,174	13,524	16,238
Student outreach communications (e.g., newsletters, emails, texts, phone calls)	301,596	434,996	485,789	325,227
Outreach engagements (e.g., workshops, coach express presentations, course presentations)	342	405	722	3,749
Total Points of Engagement	314,791	448,575	500,035	345,214

Note: Student outreach communications and outreach engagements in the 2019-2020 academic year were reduced and halted due to the pandemic.

retention and graduation rates and reduced equity gaps. Both retention and graduation are at historic highs for UToledo. Subsequently, there is a direct and linear relationship between increased student engagement with success coaches via appointments, communications, and workshops, and increases in our retention and graduation rates.

Success coaching provides an important complement to our academic advising services on campus. Given our decentralized model of advising and our assignment of all students to majors from point of entry, as well as the general prevalence of major changes, having a single point of contact for holistic concerns from matriculation through graduation provides essential continuity of the supportive relationships critically important for the success of all students, but particularly for students from historically underrepresented backgrounds.

Key to the broad campus engagement we've achieved with our success coaching model has been the level of collaboration with other student services offices, the intentional efforts to build relationships with college academic advising offices, the gradual expansion of the Starfish platform for early alert and reporting, and the elevated level of support provided to instructors. The intentional building of these connections over the last seven years has allowed us to construct a success coach model that has significantly improved student success at UToledo. Deemed an Ohio High-Impact Best Practice, the success coaching process and structure should be broadly applicable to a variety of two- and four-year institutions that also seek to improve retention and graduation and equity of outcomes for their students.

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Conclusion

Chelsea Fountain

The purpose of this case study collection was to demonstrate innovation and institutional transformation around academic advising focused on identifying initiatives that advance equity. To move beyond persistent racial disparities and to realize a vision for American higher education that is equitable and inclusive, we must first consider racism and its harmful effects on people in postsecondary contexts (Harper, 2012). If all student experiences were created equal, advising would easily be a standardized, consistent student experience. However, students' experiences do differ, yet we continue to remain uniform in student advising. Advising is a known critical component of student success, and a "bright star" in the integrated constellation of student supports at an institution. The advisor-advisee relationship supports students as they identify and attain their academic, career, and personal goals. Further, academic advising is the only structured activity on campus in which *all* students have the opportunity for one-on-one interaction with a concerned representative of the institution (Habley, 1994).

Here, we asked institutions to provide contextual information aimed at depicting their institutional profile, including the percentage of Pell-receiving students, and a campus-based definition of a first-generation college student. In addition, the authors were asked to include a description of their advising initiative, assessment methods and design, and assessment findings, as well as reflections on implications for practice. This resulted in three umbrella themes which we have named technology-enabled advising, scalable advising solutions, and differentiated advising support.

Themes of the Collection

Three consistent themes arose from the collection: technology-enabled advising, scalable advising solutions, and differentiated advising support. The first theme "technology-enabled advising" is characterized by advising programs that have implemented technology as a critical tool in improving the student advising experience. Case studies from three institutions fit within this theme: Albany State University (AARC), Northern Virginia Community College (GPS for Success), and University of Alabama at Birmingham (E2E Platform). Second, the theme "scalable advising solutions" represents a diverse set of institutional programs and initiatives which either currently, or in the future, show promise for campus-wide adoption. The following six institutions fit within this theme: Boston University (Time to BU), California State University Dominguez-Hills (Destination Graduation Program), North Carolina Central University (BAM! Blended Advising Model), University of Pittsburgh (Forge Your Own Path), and the University of South Carolina (University Advising Center). The third theme "differentiated advising support" points to specialized programs that are designed to meet the needs of a specific major, living-learning community, or marginalized student populations. Three institutions fit within this theme: LaGuardia Community College (Culturally Responsive Student-Centered Curriculum), Montana Technological University (First-Year Engineering Advising), and University of Cincinnati (Lindner College of Business Model).

Final Thoughts

The goal of this project began as an opportunity to amplify voices and practices in the field which merit replication and advance quality advising practices. Specifically, our collection was aimed at capitalizing on the rich diversity and varying approaches to academic advising, knowing that promising practice looks different based on student experience, campus context, academic major, etc. One of the greatest strengths of academic advising is its horizontal nature, requiring collaboration from faculty, staff, and students across all areas of the institution. Advising has the power to introduce, develop, and unify the entire campus community. External forces such as funding, organizational hierarchy, and policy will likely always coexist, yet *quality* advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience (Light, R.J., 2001). In a pandemic and politically polarized society, advising is one of the critical unifying tools

in higher education which promotes holistic student success. We hope this collection will serve as a catalyst for considering academic advising as a transformed landscape for student success and educational equity as well as raise the standard for equity as a deliberate and intentional basis for supporting students.

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The Effect of Technological Advancements on Academic Advising at an Urban Community College

By

Yovan Daniel Reyes

A Dissertation Submitted to the University of St. Francis College of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Dissertation Advisor

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Abstract

Attending college for the first time is foreign for any student as there is no way to prepare oneself completely for the rigor and fast-paced nature of coursework and environment. High schools attempt to assist by offering dual enrollment and advanced placement courses, while colleges have orientations and catalogs outlining policies and procedures. However, for the majority of students, it may be similar to learning a different language, and one to one guidance is needed to enter into this new environment. In higher education, academic advisors help navigate the complex system of rules and regulations and also guide students to complete their goals and objectives. The purpose of this study was to measure how different types of academic advising affect student success in an urban community college. This study was completed using a quasi-experimental, correlational study design investigating three items among college students including the outcomes of combining traditional academic advising with e-advising, focusing on both academic advising techniques separately, and the academic effects of students not receiving any academic advising. The sample of this study examined one year of specific math courses in college trigonometry and pre-calculus courses in the Fall 2019 for 242 students. In Spring 2020, college trigonometry and pre-calculus courses were observed for a total of 228 students, bringing the total number of participants to 470 students. The data analysis from the college system included demographics, final grades in students' courses, semester and cumulative GPAs, and credits attempted and earned. The results of this study showed that no specific type of academic advising was significant in determining student academic success. Rather it demonstrated that all advising was important and had some type of impact on student academic success.

Keywords: Academic Advising, E-Advising, Virtual Academic Advising, Student Success, Math, Trigonometry, Pre-calculus, Community College, Credits Attempted, Credits Earned.

Certification: In accordance with college and university policies, this dissertation is accepted in partial fulfillment of degree requirements.

Jean M. Denos, Ed.D.

Dissertation Advisor

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Acknowledgments

It is hard to believe that you are finally at the end of a journey when before you got to the end, at times you forgot how long you have been on it, where you were going, or why you were doing it. Regardless of those things though, my journey has unfolded exactly how it was supposed to. Coming from a household where neither parent graduated college, it was shocking that college was the only path they strongly encouraged for me to take. Mom and Dad equipped me with the tools and confidence in me to go on this trek and always made me feel like I was never alone when none of us knew the complications of the higher educational system. But we got through it and I cannot thank them enough for everything. My kids only knew to play somewhat quietly when daddy had a class or work to do. It was interesting for them to see me in action every Monday for 3+ years and I greatly appreciate that they let me get everything done in time. I do not think they understand the work and dedication of it all, but I hope someday they will find their own paths.

Professionally a big thank you to Michael Ranahan, my first supervisor whom I respected and admired during my time at the University of Tampa, as well as Dr. Lorie Kittendorf, my mentor who I chose regardless if she would have me or not. They both gave me the skills and knowledge and have guided me throughout my personal life and professional career. They have seen me at my best and at my worst, but have always stood by me. Hillsborough Community College and my Title III Department also deserve sincere appreciation as they were the impetuous to finally assist in funding this degree and helping me move forward professionally and as a person.

I honestly would not have attended the University of St. Francis if it wasn't for an afternoon phone call with Dr. Keith Pain. He convinced me that this was the right program for me and I was the right person for the program. There was a connection and bond there that I still to this day cannot explain, but he was the reason I became a student and one of the main reasons I am

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The story of my wife and I is one that I wish I could write more professionally but quite simply, we met when we were 13 years old, in just our first year of high school. We have been through all 4 years of high school, 4 years of undergrad, 2 years of grad and now 3½ years of a doctoral program, and these degrees are just as much hers and they are mine. She has been the one constant in all of my life, and there is truly not enough room on this page nor in a book to express my thanks to her and all she has done for me. Her sacrifices for my education and profession of those of lore. Behind every good man, is a great woman. Danny knows this, but now it is written and cannot be undone. I love you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of the Study

Higher education institutions are faced with many different obstacles year after year such as securing sufficient funding, maintaining steady enrollments and graduation results, and various societal pressures; however, a consistent issue is increasing academic success. There are a multitude of variables that can affect the outcomes of academic success, but academic advising is one of the key components. Academic advising at higher education institutions is not a new concept. The term itself is a fairly new development; however, the action of assisting students through one on one interaction was introduced at the beginning of established higher education institutions. In the beginning, the intention was to assist with day-to-day problems, which then evolved into choosing registration of a wide variety of courses, to now circumnavigating degree exploration and completion. Face to face appointments, which were the norm and usually required, are slowly becoming a thing of the past.

The advancement of technology has created a plethora of avenues for students to earn an education online while they work full-time jobs, spend time with their families, live in rural areas, or do not have a stable location. Due to the fact that distance learners are not able to meet with an advisor face to face, other forms of communication have been created to ensure students' successful integration with the institution and retention to graduation. Video conferencing, texting, sending emails, and having a more robust website and/or student intranet all combine to create e-advising. When face to face interactions are paired with e-advising strategies utilized for distance learners, it should result in an increase in student retention and achievement.

Dating back to the original schools of thought in the mid-to-late 1600's, faculty were then training boys to be gentlemen. Over time, it was realized that the men with whom they were

working could make decisions on their own and faculty began focusing on course selection and declaration of a major. As future generations attended colleges and universities, further guidance was needed to assist students with social and psychological issues and career choices (Gillispie, 2003). Although academic advising has been instituted for some time and there have been variations on which topics to advise students, the models of academic advising have also been plentiful.

Academic Advising Models

Intrusive, appreciative, developmental, and prescriptive advising models are a few of the most popular trends of advising students. A basic definition of traditional advising is that "students typically will seek help…when experiencing difficulty" (Rowh, 2018, p. 31). Intrusive advising is on the opposite spectrum when compared to traditional advising as advisors proactively seek out students rather than wait for students to come to them (Rowh, 2018). This can be seen as an effective model as "potential problems are identified and addressed before they become major barriers" (Rowh, 2018, p. 31). Similar to intrusive advising, appreciative advising is another buzzworthy advising trend; however, a newer approach to advise students "is the intentional collaborative practice of asking positive, open-ended questions that help students optimize their educational experiences and achieve their dreams, goals, and potentials" (Bloom & Ye, 2008, p. 11). Appreciative advising follows a six step or "phase" approach as it incorporates a sequence of advising students from start to finish: "disarm, discover, dream, design, deliver, and don't settle" (Bloom & Ye, 2008, p. 11).

Last but not least, there is prescriptive versus developmental advising. All advising models utilized the foundation of these two models as they were the first to be modified from traditional advising and are the simplest forms of working with students. Simply stated,

prescriptive advising "answers only specific questions and not taking individual development into consideration" (Hale, Graham, & Johnson, 2009, p. 315). This type of advising is straight to the point and typically is the least amount of time spent when advising a student. On the other hand, developmental advising "is based on a personal relationship between the student and advisor, and integrates academic, career, and personal goals into advisement, rather than having a sole focus on academic goals" (Hale et al., 2009, p. 315).

All models demonstrate a focus on the student and typically refer to face to face interactions. However, with more institutions providing access to a greater number of students, increased enrollment in online courses and advancements in technology have modified this face to face interaction to now include virtual forms of communication such as online course management systems, webpages, email, video conferencing, and texting (Dahl, 2004; Steele & Thurmond, 2009). Many have agreed that the relationship between student and advisor is an extremely beneficial bond and effective positive retention predictor; however, some are indicating that it is more critical for a distance learner than for a student who can visit an advisor face to face (Lorenzetti, 2004).

Importance of Academic Advising

In either case, the majority of studies indicated that academic advising is extremely important as it is a strong indicator of positive student satisfaction which in turn assists with attainment. "Academic advising is intended to enhance students' academic and social integration into the institution. Effective academic advising has been shown to be an important institutional factor influencing student retention" (Hale et al., 2009, p. 314). According to Gravel (2012), "advisors critically influence the success of online students because they serve as mentors, guides, teachers, and educational brokers" (p. 58).

A retention model that was developed in 1975 and later modified in 1993, Vincent Tinto's theory on student departure has continued to be a litmus test on how we can begin to understand a college student's decision to continue or discontinue their education (Hale et al. 2009).

> Tinto developed a widely accepted model of student attrition from higher education...which is affected by five primary factors: pre-entry attributes, initial and subsequent academic goals and level of commitment to the institution, academic and social experiences at the institution, academic and social integration, and external commitments. (Hale et al., 2009, p. 314)

We can safely assume that based on the timing of the creation of this theorized model and its emphasis on social experiences and social integration that it is intended solely for on-campus students. Although it could still be applied to distance learners; the results may be vastly different as institutions try to help them "overcome the isolation they often feel while studying at a distance" most likely due in part to the lack of in-person, social interactions (Steele & Thurmond, 2009, p. 86).

Distance learners would typically only be connected with a faculty member directly associated with their online course and an academic advisor to review course registration, policies and procedures. It is possible that for the majority of students "advising is the only structured service on campus that guarantees students some kind of interaction with a concerned representative of the institution" (Gravel, 2012, p. 57). Based on a Noel-Levitz's nationwide survey in 2006, the findings showed that "next to quality of instruction, academic advising is consistently the next-most-important area of the college experience to students" (Hale et al., 2009, p. 315). When thinking about ways to replace in-person, social interactions for distance learners, virtual communication such as email, phone calls, video conferencing and texting

would be the primary avenues of contact for academic advisors to their students (Steele & Thurmond, 2009). This may promote a different, yet an effective type of social integration for the student with the institution that is similar to face-to-face interactions.

E-Advising

When comparing the two groups of students, those who took courses on-campus and those who solely enrolled in courses online, the results were consistent in that "students preferred a developmental style of interaction…and student satisfaction was positively related to time spent discussing personal values and possible academic majors/concentrations" (Gravel, 2012, p. 57). With students who take both on-campus and online courses, they have the benefit of interacting with an advisor face-to-face and by means of virtual communication. Due to the increase in course registration options and the sheer number of students enrolling, "some believe that traditional advising models are outmoded and not necessary to higher education in a technological age" (Luna & Medina, 2007, p. 22) and that "technology can be used to maximize the effectiveness of academic advising for students" (Steele & Thurmond, 2009, p. 85). This new type of advising methodology is called e-advising. The use of interactive social media platforms, such as Facebook, can create "community building" (Steele, 2018, p. 62) or "online learning communities" (Stanford-Bowers, 2008, p. 38) where students can not only collaborate with the instructor but their peers in a virtual environment. One creative study "integrated Instant Messenger (IM) as part of faculty office hours…" (Luna & Medina, 2007, p. 22).

Websites and student portal systems have also become more detailed for students to understand policies, procedures, major, minor, and certificate programs as well allowing students to determine course registration options and time to graduation (Jaggars & Karp, 2016). In this researcher's experience, with limited research found, two-way texting communication is

becoming more popular as well as it is a quick and effective way of meeting students where they are, which is typically on their mobile device.

"Many community colleges are adopting e-advising technologies that they hope will allow them to deploy scarce advising resources more efficiently and effectively" (Jaggars & Karp, 2016, p. 53); however, its success will hinge largely upon everyone's ability to adapt to change. Focusing on the student's perspective, do they understand what they are reading when they are examining email or text communication to explain complex topics? Detailed information could be lost in translation. Essentially the students are being asked to self-advise to a certain extent by giving them all of the necessary information electronically (Dahl, 2004; Jaggars & Karp, 2016). Considering changes that the advisor or faculty member needs to take into account, they need to be well-versed and thoroughly explain complex information (Steele & Thurmond, 2009). "FAQ pages…online course management systems…and self-service products" where "students can access their records, register for courses, and review their graduation requirements" (Dahl, 2004, p. 4) must be in-depth and accurate as to not cause confusion and inaccuracy that could delay graduation. Although there are numerous advantages to e-advising, "becoming a 24-hour professor" or advisor "may imply continuous contact for students" and "the potentially horrifying prospect of 24 hour office hours seven days a week" (Luna & Medina, 2007, p. 22).

Though e-advising poses some advantages and disadvantages, "there is no question that technology…will shape the delivery and expectations for academic advising in higher education" (Steele, 2018, p. 59). "Advising must unify both (a) a service-oriented approach by pushing information to passive students, as well as, (b) a learning-centered and developmental approach by pulling information from students through active dialog-based discussions" (Steele, 2018,

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ABSTRACT

Methods of communication on the college campus are receiving more attention only to the extent that the college anxieties and problems are attributed to the lack of proper communication. Because colleges are expected to promote the free interchange of ideas, opinions, and information, more effective communication on the campuses can be expected. In 1971-72 a series of interviews was conducted to obtain opinions about the effectiveness of campus communication and methods of improving it. The attitudes which emerged were: first, improvement in communications was found to be the most significant need on campuses; second, although many suggestions for improvement were offered, the general conclusion was that there are no clear or easy solutions finally, concern was expressed about the lack of sensitivity and attention to communication problems observed among those with the knowledge and position to make improvements. (The author lists thirteen conclusions from an opinion survey relating to attitudes about campus communication.) (RN)

IMPROVING INTERNAL COMMUNICATION: A CAMPUS QUANDARY

Jerry M. Anderson

Communication is the lifeline of a social system or organization. The success of organizations to accomplish functions and achieve goals is directly related to the effectiveness of their communication systems. Ineffective communication costs business, industry, government, and post secondary education billions of dollars each year and immeasurable morale problems.

Organizational theorists posit that the variety and amount of communication, and the degree of difficulty in evaluating a communication system, correlate closely with an organization's complexity of functions and often its size, and the rapidity and nature of change in both functions and size. Even in relatively stable periods the study of campus communication is difficult. For the smallest of colleges as well as megaversities are pluralistic social organizations with multiple functions, experiencing constant change, unique in role and mission, and misunderstood by many on the campus as well as the public. Each, however, is held together by and dependent upon human communication to function. The biological metaphor of UCLA Chancellor, Franklin Murphy, in commenting on the complexity and growth of the modern university, quoted in T. A. Harris' popular book, I'm OK--You're OK, seems perceptive.

> The preoccupation has been with the anatomy of the beast rather than its physiology. If the body gets ahead of the nervous system,

> the animal gets incoordinate--the animal staggers sometimes. With the university we now have to create a nervous system to match the animal. It takes a sophisticated nervous system to deal with complexity, to carry messages between the differentiated organs.[1]

Harris, commenting on Murphy's metaphor states;"The function of the 'nervous system' of a university is the same as that in the human body--communication."[2]

In the past decade campus communication has been subjected to the severest of tests in attempting to respond to unprecedented public expectations of higher education, unparalleled growth and support accompanied by stress, and now a decline in growth with relative austerity and accountability.

During this decade there have been signs of an increasing awareness of the importance of communication to the campus. One sign has been the signal response tendency to attribute one or more communication deficiencies as the cause of nearly every campus anxiety. And, even in the absence of any causal analysis, this seems justifiable in many instances. At the same time, concerted efforts to evaluate and improve campus communication have been disappointing.

This discussion and report of research emphasizes internal campus communication. But, the dynamic, interactive process of communication in any organization is not limited by geographical boundaries or outer limits of organizational charts. The campus

is not isolated. There is a continuing and reciprocal relationship between on and off-campus events communicated via various sources and channels modifying attitudes and behavior both within and outside the "walls of academe" with direct impact on institutional ethos, and operation.

Time Spent Communicating

The "average" American spends 70 to 75 percent of waking hours in verbal communication behavior, listening, speaking, reading and writing, in that order.[3] The percentage is higher on campus since human interaction and communication transactions are vital to learning and other activities. Recent models of participatory governance and shared decision making add to communication activity. If nonverbal communication, "body language," is added, time spent in communicating is substantially increased.

The amount of time consumed by those in higher education administration has not been researched, but it is probably at least equal to that of business management personnel who are estimated to engage in communication 90 percent of their work day, three-quarters of it in oral face-to-face communication.[4]

The Nature of Campus Communication

Communication on campus, as in society, occurs in various ways and may be characterized by various terms. Communication may be intentional, unintentional, formal, informal, official, unofficial, horizontal, vertical, verbal, nonverbal, written, oral, and unresponsive as well as responsive.

Illustrative of written communication on the campus are various authorized and unauthorized publications, plus memos,

letters, and newsletters, originating from and directed to groups, sub-groups and individuals of the campus community, including faculty, staff, and students, transmitted by personal, mass, and a variety of other dissemination and transmission methods and channels. Other forms of written communication include meeting minutes and reports from governance groups, committees, divisions, departments, centers and other units, plus forms, surveys, various reports, bulletin boards and information centers.

Oral communication on campus occurs in dyadic, small group, and public meetings. The telephone, intercom systems, oral-visual media in the form of closed circuit television, campus radio stations, and carrousel recordings extend this partial list. In addition, the oral communications of the corridor, water fountain, lounge, and coffee klatch are important channels and also generate vast amounts of grist for the rumor mill.

People also communicate through various social events, retreats, sit-ins, demonstrations, marches, and strikes. Teaching-learning by traditional and non-traditional methods and models and learning resource centers are vital components in the campus communication network.

The reasons humans communicate are infinite. They do so for social, psychological, personal, and professional reasons, to seek clarity, convey ideas, stir and release emotions, modify behavior, direct action, legitimize actions, resolve conflicts, make judgments and decisions, solve problems, establish rapport and empathy, and entertain. People also communicate to express hostility or assure others of no hostile intent.

As an environment which seeks to foster free, open, and responsible expression of ideas and information, the expectation for effective communication is probably higher on the campus than in almost any other social institution. This expectation challenges all members of the community who collectively share responsibility for the quality of communication, but especially those in administration. The contemporary administrator must possess insight into the communication process and demonstrate essential skills, both as a source and receiver.

Effective Communication

Effective communication stimulates interaction and results in transactions of feelings, values, meanings, and messages between sources and receivers. Human communication involves who transmits what in what channel to whom with what effect.

Communication is a process which includes a source or sender, meaning or message, channel for transmission, and receiver who decodes the meaning. In intentional communication, the source encodes by analyzing the intended receiver and circumstances involved to decide what is to be sent and how. Feedback is a factor to be considered in all communication, and in intentional communication its existence or lack of it provides some audit for the source to interpret the extent to which the intended meaning was attended to by the receiver and the transaction completed.

An effective campus communication system must be understood, credible, and utilized. Its functional efficiency may be measured by the extent to which it facilitates interaction, and beyond that, results in accurate communication transaction.

Attitudes About Campus Communication

This summary of attitudes about campus communication is the result of opinion research. During the 1971-72 academic year, formal interviews set by prior appointments and with the topic of the interview, "your views about campus communication," announced in advance were conducted with over 90 people, ranging in length from 15 to 90 minutes. The research population consisted of a randomly selected semi-stratified sampling of persons directly affiliated or closely identified with the campus. Interviewees included administrators, faculty, students, staff, alumni, and trustees, representing over 30 post-secondary institutions of various size and mission, public and private, two and four-year, graduate and undergraduate, and from several states. The largest subset of the interview population represented four-year universities and colleges.

Beyond the 1971-72 research, the cumulative input of two decades of observation and experience in higher education as an undergraduate and graduate student and assistant, faculty member with responsibilities including travel to campuses across the nation, department chairman, academic administrator in central administration, communication consultant and participant in numerous communication and education conferences add to this analysis. Discussions during this time with communication scholars and members of related disciplines from at least 500 institutions about interpersonal and organizational campus communication and study of related literature and research add insight and also intensify concern about the campus communication quandary.

The 1971-72 opinion research followed an interview format designed to be open-ended to encourage respondents to call upon personal experience and ventilate feelings. The experience from these interviews suggests an effective way to uncover concerns of a campus population is to probe into communication attitudes, for the personal experiences volunteered provided useful insight into issues and anxieties.

Two questions formed the basis for interviews, except in a few instances where a more structured questioning approach was necessitated to elicit more extended responses. Those two questions: From your perspective and experiences, how effective is communication on this campus? What, if anything, would you do to improve it?

Three general attitudes clearly emerged. (1) The need for improved campus communication is among the most significant and pressing problems. When asked <u>why</u>, most answered that the functional operation of the campus was dependent upon communication effectiveness and it could be much improved, and internal effectiveness as perceived by those outside the campus would determine the level of future support. (2) Recommendations for improvement were multiple, usually incomplete in development, and concluded with the statement that no clear solutions existed. (3) Concern was expressed about the lack of sensitivity and attention to communication problems by those with the expertise to improve the situation and by others in positions to effect change. Several respondents viewed those in a position to effect change, in most cases meaning the administration, as remiss by

not encouraging those with expertise to make a communication evaluation. Those with the expertise were criticized for lacking incentive in applying it to the campus to improve communication. While not surprising, these attitudes were revealing.

Other conclusions about campus communication from the opinions expressed and experiences volunteered include these. (1) The intensity of desire to improve communication corresponded with the amount of concern for what was usually expressed as "the erosion of a sense of campus community." (2) The intensity of concern for increased communication did not vary substantially with size or complexity of campus mission; however, faculty of longest tenure in institutions experiencing most rapid growth and change reminisced more about the "good old days when people across the campus knew each other" and also felt they were aware of the most important information and actions on a daily basis. (3) The greater the perceived stress from an issue or issues, the more intensive was the call for improved communication as a preventative or curative remedy. (4) The ultimate responsibility for campus communication rests with the administration. (5) The more authoratarian an administrator or administration in behavior the greater the need for shared information, especially expressed by faculty. (6) The population who are or identify themselves in administrative roles share the frustration of other members of the campus on how to improve total communication; the group expressing greatest sensitivity and frustration to communication deficiencies included major academic officers and deans. (7) The problem of <u>communication overload</u> and insensitivity to <u>timing</u>

and duration variables was expressed by some faculty and especially department chairmen, who noted dissemination of information came in clusters. "Unreasonable" deadlines for return of materials needing preparation, and for reactions to proposed policies, were counter to informed responses. Advance notice for effective implementation of policies was not sufficient. (8) The feeling of "alienation by communication denial"--communication underload--was expressed by most interviewees, especially middle level administrative support staff in service offices who felt bypassed. (9) The opinions of several staff reflected they felt a lack of confidence and betrayal of trust in them by supervisors due to excessive surveillance of their work and pre and post-auditing of communications for which they perceived themselves as the responsible originating source. (10) The feeling of communication denial and concern for message distortion were evident by criticism of traditional approaches to information processing through the classical-hierarchical organizational model tending to cast administration as management, faculty as employees, and students as consumers in the vertical flow of communication from the top down. Distortion by filtering agents in the flow was a concern. The model was further criticized because information access provided a basis of power and influence. On collective bargaining campuses less concern was expressed about the classical model by faculty favoring collective bargaining, perhaps because of a perceived influence role through negotiations, special conferences and other provisions, but students seemed more concerned because they lacked negotiation influence.

Faculty opposed to collective bargaining were critical of the adversarial relationship polarizing the campus and were highly critical of what they called "the myth of clearer communication" from formalized contract relationships and closure of continuing communication.

Three other conclusions from this attitudinal research warrant special reporting.

(11) The changing models of governance and decision making concerned several in terms of the consumption of time and frustration with the amount of communication activity involved in simply deciding "who decides," resulting in unclear decisions and "politicizing" the campus at the expense of academic endeavors.

(12) The group expressing little or no concern about communication consisted of approximately 20 percent of the sample, mostly students and faculty, in that order, who stated in various ways their lack of interest in the internal affairs of the campus, including communication, and the desire to go about "their thing." The concern of this group was that the increasing emphasis on community participation in internal affairs put pressure upon them to participate and intruded on what they really came to the campus to do. Many faculty viewed campus "political" participation becoming an increasingly important criterion in personnel decisions for promotion, tenure and salary, sublimating teaching and research. This group felt that the campus politicians get the rewards and patronage because they have visibility with the reward-makers, even when their academic endeavors are grossly substandard.

(13) The interviewees most distrustful of the administration, and most unhappy with administrative communication behavior, especially lack of disclosure, expressed opinions remindful of the administrative rating scale presumably invented in jest by a quality control engineer employed by a major automobile manufacturer which listed the following topics: "Talks with God; talks with angels; talks to himself; argues with himself; loses arguments with himself."

These attitudes reflect the pluralistic and complex nature of the campus and the quandary faced in improving campus communication. The desire for improvement in communication seems apparent, level of expectancy high, but proposals limited. Perhaps more importantly, these attitudes reflect the range of causes of communication breakdown, which are as many in number as there are potential channels and variant beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of individuals and groups who serve as both sources and receivers.

Major Causes for Breakdowns

Major causes singularly and in combination include ambiguity in behavior in the use of verbal and nonverbal forms of communication, perceived and actual deliberate misrepresentation or withholding of information, factors relating to organizational size, complexity and distance, and factors of trust and believability. In addition, breakdowns result from difficulties arising from not knowing or understanding or agreeing, filtering sources intervening in the flow of communication causing distortion by inattention and selective perception, and above all because

meanings are in people. Frustration from communication overload, information underload and alienation by communication denial, problems in timing and coordinating release of meanings and messages and in feedback requests are common causes of breakdowns and also evident in campus communication systems.

Some Breakthroughs Evident and Needed

Breakthroughs, improvements in the climate and practice of communication, gain less attention and are more difficult to identify and generalize than breakdowns. Breakthroughs gain less attention because of the particular attitudinal inherency or mentality in academe which presupposes all problems lend to solution when subjected to critical evaluation, even when evaluation has been limited. Moreover, the campus as an environment fostering criticism tends to surface rather than cover its failures more than other social institutions. Breakthroughs gain less attention in times of stress, like those experienced by the campus, as failures tend to subordinate successes. Some observable breakthroughs have occurred improving both the climate for and practice of internal communication in general and on particular campuses.

The increased sensitization of the campus from recent experiences with more attention to and greater desire for communication and some evidence of it actually happening is both a breakthrough and requisite to future improvements. Since researchers conclude that as the number of communications increases so does the probability of a perception of trust, and since the restoration of a trust relationship is of high priority on campus,

the signs are encouraging.[5] Some of the accountability pressures from within and outside leading to increased communication, however, may not be those which the campus community would have chosen.

Yet, these pressures have resulted not only in more communication but in some cases better communication and provided the potential for greater campus cohesiveness by the need to share information and seek broader based input. For instance, the new emphasis on management by objectives has resulted in greater community-wide input in systematic longer range planning. Performance based objectives in learning has encouraged greater interaction of faculty, students and administration in developing new learning approaches, with specialists talking more with other specialists within disciplines and cross disciplinary efforts beginning to show. The breakdown of traditional structural models built to facilitate message flow through a hierarchical power structure has been another advance and lessened vertical and increased horizontal communication and experimentation with new channels and opening up of old ones long under used, even if some channel clogging is apparent at the moment. Both formal and informal approaches to professional negotiations by several component groups have forced more communication, albeit competitive in nature and for strategic reasons often selective, incomplete, inaccurate and sometimes dishonest, and forced more input and information access for some groups previously excluded due to hierarchical prejudices. While more communication does not mean more effective communication or the fact people are still

communicating too little, blunderingly, missing what others say, hearing but failing to understand, or hearing and understanding too well, or communicating past each other,[6] there is at least evidence of quantitative breakthroughs.

There is also evidence that administrators are showing greater insight and making greater effort to be skilled in and accepting roles as facilitating agents for effective communication, which the attitude research previously cited indicated is an expectation. Communication competency is a substantial factor in the rise and fall of the personal credibility of any administrator.

More research on campus communication and attempts to apply studies of other organizations are increasing.[7] There is yet considerable incongruence between the efforts and results of investigation and continuing need for improved communication. The vast amount of research on student culture and more recently on faculty culture,[8] as well as those on academic governance and decision making, provide related useful information.[9]

The efforts on some campuses in experimenting with new approaches, methods and techniques, some of which may be perceived as "gimmickry," in improving communication need to be noted. Information clearinghouses in various forms have emerged in an attempt to avoid the overload problem, lessen duplication of information, provide consistent intervals of dissemination through consistent channels, and with color coding and other attention devices increase both communication efficiency and sources attending better to those communications received. Efforts to be more

receiver oriented in analyzing audiences and turn-around-time for information return when requested have improved, but have a long way to go. These attempts at coordination have also lessened costs. Use of available electronic media long overlooked, including such new technological advances as compressed television, is encouraging. Such a simple matter as providing informational announcements on closed circuit television between classes has proven to be effective. The use of telephone answering services in offices during after hours, and as a message dissemination system for people to call and hear important recorded messages, or for opinion polling purposes on campus issues, has also proven helpful. The assignment of people to campus switchboards around the clock, plus the work of volunteer groups manning phones to hear and help with problems, has had a humanizing result. The search for efficiency measures to emancipate administrators and support staff from their offices to meet people in their own environment is ongoing and necessary.

Catalogues and bulletins and other information sources need to be written with the sensitivity to readability, and are in some cases. Information dissemination centers located at various points on campus containing publications and other information for readier access are proving helpful. Departments or divisions, especially in large institutions, should be encouraged to develop internal newsletters distributed at regular intervals with attention to information of special interest to their constituency, but coordinated with campus-wide mass distributed information. These unit and campus-wide print items should be made available

at various information access points keeping intercommunication among units open.

Better judgment could be shown in using the telephone more often when things do not need to be part of a written record and in multiple carbon copies. Letters could be shortened. Bulletin boards could be keptup to date and used more extensively. The coordination and some consolidation of the minutes of various governance groups and committees need special attention. Meetings need to be planned better in advance and determinations made which could lead to lesser numbers spending lesser time. Audiences need to be alerted and better prepared for changes in policy or changes to be considered and allowed an opportunity for input; "surprises" provide counter attitudinal reactions and add to low campus morale. Cooling off periods, no matter what the pressure from special interest groups, on issues which do not require urgent attention should be considered so that rational analysis replaces emotional response and "brinksmanship" decision making. The less vocal and aggressive on campus should not be forgotten in the dissemination of information.

The breakthroughs being attempted and those possible could provide an endless list, many obvious and long overdue. What is needed more than anything else is some systematic evaluation, frequently referred to as auditing, of the campus communication system and sub-systems.

Auditing and Evaluation

To determine what ought to be, it is first necessary to determine and evaluate what is. Auditing really means monitoring and appraising the system. The prediction of John Gardner and Alvin Toffler that organizations of the future will be constantly changing to meet new problems adds to the challenge to develop ways and means of auditing communication. A variety of approaches is possible.

A common auditing approach is "flow tracing," by examining the individual components in dynamic relationships of a sampling of communication messages at intervals in the basic communication process. Another approach seeks to determine cost efficiency by analyzing actual communication costs in priority of organizational needs and then systematizing communication production and management accordingly. Emphasis here is placed on the responsibility of organizational management for the maintenance of an effective communication system.

Another approach at both minimizing cost and maximizing the data that can be gathered considers message diffusion variables: structure, load, rate of message flow, extent of message distortion, amount of redundancy, efficiency of the message channels, and functions messages were intended to serve. This message diffusion approach has considerable adaptability in gathering and analyzing data, including cost factors, about the communication system's performance. It is administered by having key respondents record their communication behavior with trained observers doing the same and a comparison made, followed by a

tracing of the steps taken by a message in its diffusion through the organization. This model goes beyond flow tracing.

Other specific techniques to assess communication include use of retention of message measures, disparity scores, measures of readability in written communication and instant intelligibility in oral communication, rumor transmission analysis, and several ways of measuring network effectiveness. At the same time, the audit itself needs evaluation to assess how attitude and opinion change is affected by the administration of it, and to what extent doing it contaminates results, usually done through pre and post questionnaire methods.

It is possible to audit and evaluate the communication of a campus or divisions of it, and the alternative methods and combinations are numerous. Most colleges and universities have the expertise right on campus to undertake some kind of communication audit. In some cases it may be desirable to use only members of the campus community to conduct the audit because of their insight into the institutional style and situational variables. In most it seems desirable to call in outside auditors for reasons of objectivity. The "golden mean" is perhaps a mixed team consisting of both inside and outside auditors, or whatever sources will provide the necessary expertise, objectivity, and credibility to elicit the cooperation needed.

Will the Quandary Be Resolved?

Breakdowns will always exist but recent breakthroughs provide encouragement. The need to generate more research and evaluation of an ongoing nature on campus communication should be a high

priority.

Perhaps the most accurate answer to the question of will the quandary be resolved, was provided by an interviewee with many years of teaching and administrative experience currently holding a high level administrative position in a multiversity who was deeply concerned about campus communication and had spent considerable time in attempts to improve it. He observed: "Perfect campus communication is a goal to be sought, but one you should never expect to attain."

FOOTNOTES

Jerry M. Anderson is acting Vice Provost and Professor of Speech at Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant. He was a fellow in the Council's Academic Administration Internship Program, 1971-72.

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ABSTRACT

A variety of community college programs and services designed to enhance minority student participation and success in higher education are described in this volume. Issues related to minority student recruitment, retention, and transfer to four-year institutions, and to minority staff professional development are explored in the following 15 articles: (1) "Minority Participation in Community Colleges: A Status Report," by Adriana Barrera and Dan Angel; (2) "Community College Access: Barriers and Bridges," by Raul Cardenas and Elizabeth Warren; (3) "Model Programs in Minority Access," by Roy G. Phillips; (4) "Minority Student Recruitment," by Anne E. Mulder; (5) "Minority Student Recruitment: A Connecticut Model," by Ronald A. Williams and Mary Anne Cox; (6) "Minority Student Retention," by James C. Henderson; (7) "Minority Student Retention: The Prince George's Community College Program," by David P. James; (8) "Minority Student Retention: ENLACE," by Mauro Chavez and Margarita Maestas-Flores; (9) "Minority Transfer: A National and State Legislative Perspective," by Louis W. Bender; (10) "The Many Faces of Transfer Education," by Judith S. Eaton; (11) "A Model in Community College Transfer Programs," by Aram L. Terzian; (12) "Diversifying Leadership in Community Colleges," by J. Richard Gilliland; (13) "Ten Steps to Successful Minority Hiring and Retention," by Dale V. Gares and Exalton A. Delco, Jr.; (14) "Revitalization Efforts," by Dan Angel and Adriana Barrera; and (15) "Sources and Information: Minority Participation in Community College Education," by Grace Quimbita and Anita Y. Colby. (PAA)

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Rekindling Minority Enrollment

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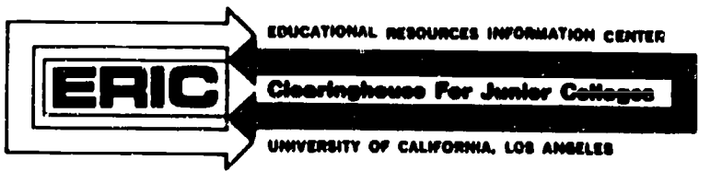

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Increasing the rates of participation and success of minority students is one of the most important current goals of American higher education. Attaining that goal will benefit not only the groups directly affected, but our society as a whole. The national interest in this issue cannot be overstated. By the turn of the century, one of every three American school children will be members of minority groups; within a few more decades minorities will constitute one-third of the United States's total population. Through the year 2000, minority workers are expected to compose one-third of net additions to the work force. These statistics suggest a growing need to improve educational opportunities for blacks, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and American Indians.

Yet evidence shows that the pace of minority advancement has slowed since the significant achievements of the 1960s and early 1970s. In 1987 concern over reports of faltering progress prompted leaders of the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Education Commission of the States to form the Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life. The commission, made up of distinguished citizens from government, business, minority organizations, and higher education, spent six months reviewing relevant demographic and economic data and research and consulting with numerous experts in the field. It concluded that the nation was moving backward rather than forward in its efforts to integrate minorities into the life of the nation. Further, it challenged the nation to strive to erase the inequalities that characterize the lives of minority Americans, so that in twenty years an examination of similar data would reveal that minority citizens had attained a quality of life as high as that of the white majority.

Of course, this process will not be quick or easy, as recent findings on the educational attainment of minorities make clear. Statistics from ACE's Annual Status Report on Minorities in Higher Education show that, after improving for a number of years, high school completion among Hispanics declined dramatically between 1985 and 1989 (Carter and Wilson, 1991). During that period the rate for eighteen- to twenty-four-year-olds dropped from 62.8 percent to 56 percent. Among black Americans high school completion rates have improved little since the early 1980s, largely due to a stagnation in the rate for black men. And although Asian Americans complete high school at rates much higher than other ethnic groups, the overall figures mask wide disparities among subgroups. In 1980 only 22.3 percent of Hmong Americans and 31.4 percent of Laotian Americans over age twenty-five had completed high school.

These low—and in some cases declining—high school completion figures are major factors in the slow improvement in college participation

by most minority groups in recent years. In some cases the situation has gotten even worse. The gap between Hispanic and white college participation has actually widened, and in 1989 only 16.1 percent of eighteen- to twenty-four-year-old Hispanics were enrolled in college. In 1988 the *number* of blacks enrolled in college reached an all-time high; however, over the last several years of the decade, blacks' rate of participation in higher education increased only slightly, and that increase was due exclusively to gains made by black women. Both Asian Americans and American Indians continue to be extremely underrepresented in higher education compared to their proportion of the U.S. population.

Because large numbers of minority students leave high school before completion, more of these young people end up seeking diplomas through the General Educational Development (GED) tests. In 1989, about one-third of candidates eighteen to forty-four years old were members of minority groups. Among all GED candidates, about one-third indicated that they planned to enroll in a community or junior college the following year. Such evidence suggests that community colleges need to be accessible to these students and be prepared to provide the kinds of support services required to help the students return to a traditional educational environment.

For minority students who aspire to continue beyond high school, community, junior, and technical colleges are an important gateway to higher education and a better quality of life. That fact helps account for the continuing strong expansion in community college enrollment at a time when the cohort of high school graduates is shrinking rapidly, and minorities constitute a growing share of that enrollment.

Research conducted by ACE found that in 1988 minorities composed 23 percent of the enrollment at community colleges, compared to 16 percent at four-year institutions (Carter, 1990). Minorities are more likely than whites to attend a two-year college. In 1988 46 percent of all minorities in higher education attended a community or junior college, compared to 36 percent of white students. Hispanic students especially remain concentrated in two-year institutions; 56 percent of those who continue past high school enroll in these schools. And the trend is accelerating. In the late 1980s Hispanic enrollment in community and junior colleges grew twice as fast as in four-year institutions.

In our rapidly changing economy those who attain only a high school education or less are burdened by significant and growing disadvantages. In this respect earning an associate degree can have major economic rewards, especially for blacks. Whereas the difference in median income between those with a high school diploma and those with an associate degree is 29 percent for the population as a whole, the disparity for blacks is 51 percent. The income difference between black bachelor's degree recipients and associate degree recipients is an additional 20 percent.

The latter figure demonstrates the importance of encouraging persis-

tence and promoting the transfer of minority students from two- to four-year institutions. However, at present, transfer rates for Hispanics (23 percent) and blacks (18 percent) are far below the national average of 29 percent.

Recognizing this fact, with funding from the Ford Foundation. ACE formed the National Center for Academic Achievement and Transfer in the fall of 1989. The goal of the center is not merely to increase transfer activity but to raise the academic prospects of low-income students in urban areas.

During the first phase of the project, grants were awarded to partnerships of two- and four-year institutions with high concentrations of minority students in the twenty-five largest U.S. cities. The grants supported efforts by the partner colleges to collaborate more closely on academic activities designed to promote transfer. The center has also been developing a national transfer policy statement and conducting research, publishing and disseminating information, and examining legislative obstacles and opportunities. In the second phase of the project, the center will award grants to partner institutions to undertake development of joint core curricula that promote the movement of students from one school to another.

Our hope, of course, is that the projects sponsored by the center not only succeed at the partner institutions but serve as models to be emulated or adapted by hundreds of other colleges and universities. The ultimate measure of success will be whether we see an increased flow of minority students from community colleges to baccalaureate institutions and on through graduation, with all the options and opportunities such attainment affords.

But although transfer is of critical importance and must be encouraged, we also must remember that community colleges serve a vital function unrelated to the acquisition of degrees. In 1980 50 percent of two-year college students polled by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges said that their primary reason for enrollment was to learn new job-related skills. With constant changes in technology, the increasing competitiveness of the international economy, and the aging of the U.S. population, continuing education will be a valuable key that can open doors to greater economic progress for persons of all groups.

Yet if access to educational opportunities for minorities does not improve—if we do not regain the momentum of the 1960s and 1970s—a disproportionate percentage of the members of these groups will continue to be condemned to lives of deprivation. Such a condition runs counter to our national ideals and threatens the foundation of our democratic system. Persistent inequities serve as a catalyst to social tensions and unrest. They also undermine our position in the global arena as both a moral force and an economic power.

As minority participation in the work force and other aspects of American life grows, we must begin to see minority citizens not as separate from

the majority, but as a major component of the new America that will emerge in the next century. To prepare for that era, we must be willing to recommit ourselves to the goal of ensuring that all our citizens benefit from the prosperity and progress of the nation.

In this volume Dan Angel and Adriana Barrera provide an excellent review of the issues and challenges surrounding minority participation in community college education and of the initiatives being undertaken by a variety of organizations and institutions to promote it. These accounts are encouraging in that they demonstrate that efforts are being made in this area. However, they also serve as a graphic reminder of how much more must be done to ensure equal educational opportunity for the nation's minority citizens. Therefore, the best use to which readers can put this volume is not merely to absorb the information it presents but to devise ways in which they can adapt existing programs or develop new ones to meet the needs of their own institutions and students.

Robert H. Atwell
President
American Council on Education

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Robert H. Atwell has been president of the American Council on Education (ACE) since December 1984. As president of ACE, Atwell is the leading spokesperson for American higher education on a broad range of public policy issues. He has been involved in efforts to preserve and expand federal funding for higher education and to increase educational opportunities for minority citizens.

EDITORS' NOTES

According to a report issued by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges and the Association of Community College Trustees (1990), minorities made up 22 percent of students enrolled in community, vocational, and junior colleges in the fall of 1986: 10 percent were black, 7 percent Hispanic, 4 percent Asian, and 1 percent Native American.

The figures are certainly not proportionate to the percentage of these groups within the U.S. population, and there is virtually unanimous agreement that within the next decade one-third of all Americans will be members of minority groups. The problems posed by these participation rates and demographic realities are reinforced by the global economic situation. In order to maintain our standard of living, the United States will have to develop a world-class work force. We can not reach that goal with a policy of de facto or de jure exclusion.

Our national record of success at minority participation in higher education seems to have abruptly ceased in 1978. Finally, in the late 1980s three major educational associations initiated significant efforts to rekindle minority participation in higher education. They have since been joined by hundreds of community colleges throughout America. This volume is focused on the efforts of these institutions and associations.

Chapter One provides a current snapshot of attempts to improve minority participation, using a review of the literature and the results of national survey data.

Chapters Two and Three deal with access. Raul Cardenas and Elizabeth Warren provide a general overview of the barriers to access and suggest a number of solutions. Roy G. Phillips assesses model access programs.

Chapters Four and Five examine recruitment. Anne E. Mulder focuses on recruiting obstacles and the means to remove them. Ronald A. Williams and Mary Anne Cox present a well-developed Connecticut state recruitment model program.

Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight are concerned with retention. James C. Henderson presents the relevant issues within a Native American context. David P. James, Mauro Chavez, and Margarita Maestas-Flores describe model programs successful with black and Hispanic students.

Chapters Nine, Ten, and Eleven deal with transfer. Louis W. Bender outlines state policy efforts. Judith S. Eaton focuses on the various treatments of transfer at community colleges, and Aram L. Terzian profiles an encouraging transfer opportunity program at the Community College of Philadelphia.

The crucial part of faculty and the administration role model are candidly discussed by J. Richard Gilliland in Chapter Twelve. Dale V. Gares

and Exalton A. Delco, Jr., chronicle successful approaches at Austin Community College (Texas) in Chapter Thirteen.

Chapter Fourteen reviews the leadership provided by the American Council on Education, the Education Commission of the States, and the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. Anyone seriously interested in the minority participation issue should examine the many publications from these sources, as well as the materials listed in Grace Quimbita and Anita Y. Colby's annotated bibliography (Chapter Fifteen).

The editors cannot conceive of an issue on the national higher education agenda deserving a higher priority than that of minority participation.

We have the need.

We have the knowledge.

Now is the time for action!

Dan Angel
Adriana Barrera
Editors

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Dan Angel is president of Austin Community College.

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Activities to rekindle minority participation in community colleges are evidenced throughout the nation.

Minority Participation in Community Colleges: A Status Report

Adriana Barrera, Dan Angel

The introductory statement of *One-Third of a Nation* (American Council on Education and the Education Commission of the States, 1988, p. 1) notes, "America is moving backward—not forward—in its efforts to achieve the full participation of minority citizens in the life and prosperity of the nation." If this statement is true, the nation's community colleges must institute programs to reverse the current trend.

According to *Campus Trends, 1988* (El-Khawas), only one in four postsecondary institutions reported increased enrollment of black, Hispanic, or Native American students between the 1987 and 1988 academic years. The same report indicated that two-fifths of the administrators responding to the *Campus Trends* survey rated their institutions' ability to retain minority students as fair or poor.

Demographic projections, however, indicate that minority group populations are expected to increase more rapidly than the white population (Hodgkinson, 1985). Such an increase would not be alarming were it not for the fact that historically, as well as presently, the educational attainment of minority students has lagged behind that of their white counterparts.

That postsecondary institutions are concerned and actively involved in confronting the problems associated with minority student recruitment and retention is evidenced by the publication of *Minorities on Campus: A Handbook for Enhancing Diversity* (Green, 1989). But that publication includes seventy model practices, only three of which are associated with community colleges.

Based on these reports and on the consensus that minority students are more apt to attend two-year institutions of higher education than four-

year colleges and universities, the editors of this book determined to assess the status of minority student participation in America's public community and junior colleges.

To do so, the editors conducted a literature search, surveyed the commissioners of higher education in each state, conducted a survey of a sample of community colleges nationwide, and identified implementers of promising programs.

A summary pertinent to each phase of the research will be presented.

Literature Search

A search of the ERIC database was conducted during the spring of 1989 that requested abstracts of articles submitted since 1980 on minority student participation in community colleges. The first purpose of this review was to provide data on minority student access, recruitment, retention, transfer, and attainment of educational goals. Another goal was to identify the researchers, as well as the implementers, of programs geared toward promoting minority student success. A second literature search examined articles published between March and December 1989.

Table 1 indicates the categories into which the articles from both literature searches were judged to belong. The categorization process followed a simple content analysis of the abstracts. Once completed, those categories that were rather limited in scope—that is, those containing fewer than five articles—were collapsed into broader categories. In two instances where the

Table 1. Categories Revealed by Literature Search

	1980–89	*Mar.–Dec. 1989*	*Expected Number to Be Submitted for Nine Months*
Institutional Categories			
1. Issues, trends, and demographic research	28	4	2
2. Self-assessment (service to minority students)	23	17	1.84
3. Basic skills instruction/ vocational education	22	2	1.76
4. Diversification of faculty and leadership	3	8	0.24
Student Categories			
1. Access/recruitment	20	9	1.60
2. Assessment	3	4	0.24
3. Retention/success	19	6	1.52
4. Transfer	30	2	2.4
Total	148	52	11.6

categories contained fewer than five articles but where the other labels did not capture their content, the original category labels (Student Assessment and Diversification of Faculty and Leadership) were retained.

A cursory examination of Table 1 shows that—with three exceptions—the nine months between March and December, 1989, were a prolific reporting period during which institutions assessed their own activities and services regarding women, minority, and disadvantaged students. This result surpassed expectations based on the previous nine years as recorded by the ERIC database.

These literature searches served to identify community college practitioners who could be tapped to provide specific information on their programs regarding minority students.

Survey of Commissioners of Higher Education

During September and October of 1989, the editors conducted a telephone survey of the commissioners of higher education in each state. The editors talked with the commissioner or a member of the commissioner's staff in thirty-four of the fifty states (68 percent). In two instances, the states did not have community colleges, and therefore the respondents could not assist in identifying exemplary programs in their states that dealt with minority student participation. Three state offices reported not having a sufficiently large minority population for which to develop specific programs. Of the remaining twenty-nine states, the staff of twelve commissioners' offices conveyed further information concerning particularly successful programs targeting minority students.

Unlike the literature searches, the telephone calls to the commissioners of higher education (or—if the position existed—to the commissioner for the community colleges division) revealed a general laissez faire attitude regarding minority student enrollments. Often two or three telephone calls were required before the person designated to answer these questions could be identified. Even then, the information available in the state offices was sketchy.

Nonetheless, of the twelve state offices that provided specific information, three furnished leads that developed into chapter contributions for this book.

Survey of Community Colleges

A questionnaire accompanied by a cover letter and self-addressed, stamped response card was mailed to 177 community college presidents. The cover letter from Dr. Dan Angel, president of Austin Community College, asked for assistance in identifying the administrators at each randomly selected college who could respond to questions regarding minority student enrollment and minority personnel employment practices and to programmatic

questions regarding student support and academic services. This mailing resulted in the receipt of fifty-nine completed response cards for a response rate of 33 percent.

The questionnaire was then mailed with a second cover letter to the person named in the completed fifty-nine response cards as the chief institutional research officer. Followup mailings and telephone calls resulted in forty-six completed surveys, constituting 26 percent of the original sample. In fact, the completed surveys represented 82 percent of the completed response cards.

Eleven of the colleges that completed the survey reported an unduplicated head count of fewer than two thousand students; eighteen reported an unduplicated student head count of two to seven thousand students; and seventeen schools had unduplicated head counts greater than seven thousand students. Slightly more colleges reported having a majority of students enrolled in arts and science (N = 17) programs than in vocational technical programs (N = 11); eleven colleges reported fairly even enrollments in both types of programs.

The institutional profiles show that the colleges with fewer than two thousand students also reported less of an ethnic student mix than the larger colleges (see Table 2). Although minority students increased their enrollment in these colleges between 1983 and 1988, the pattern differed according to ethnic group. Regardless of college size, Asian students increased their enrollment dramatically; black student gains were more limited; Hispanic students decreased their enrollment in colleges with fewer than two thousand students but made substantial gains in larger institutions; and Native Americans decreased their enrollment in colleges with over seven thousand students but increased enrollment in colleges reporting fewer than seven thousand (see Table 3). These gains in minority student enrollment are tempered by the fact that white student enrollment grew across the board during the same period by an average of 34 percent. In order to have increased their relative

Table 2. Average Percent of Head Count by Ethnicity and College Size, Fall 1988

Ethnicity	*Less than 2,000 Head Count (N = 11)*	*2,000–7,000 Head Count (N = 17)*	*7,000–30,000 Head Count (N = 17)*
Asian	6.5	1.2	7.0
Black	3.5	5.2	7.2
Hispanic	1.2	16.4	7.5
Native American	1.6	1.8	0.5
White	86.8	74.0	74.0
Other	1.4	1.7	4.2
Total	101.0	100.3	100.4

Table 3. Percent Change in Unduplicated Head Count by Ethnicity and College Size, 1983-88

	< 2,000			2,000–7,000			7,000–30,000		
Ethnicity	*1983*	*1988*	*Change*	*1983*	*1988*	*Change*	*1983*	*1988*	*Change*
Asian	13	78	500%	385	776	101%	8,736	14,867	70%
Black	225	354	57%	3,188	3,326	4%	14,994	17,219	15%
Hispanic	108	98	-9%	8,215	10,453	27%	11,390	17,356	52%
Native American	178	198	11%	794	992	25%	1,345	1,274	-5%
White	6,248	8,661	39%	34,407	46,023	34%	153,917	196,512	28%
Other	60	28	-53%	813	869	7%	7,805	8,308	6%
Total	6,832	9,417	38%	47,802	62,439	31%	198,187	242,152	29%

college participation, enrollment by minority students must have outpaced that of white students. Unfortunately, at the colleges completing the survey, minority gains between 1983 and 1988 lagged behind that of white students (see Table 3).

Two areas that have been discussed in relation to minority student participation in higher education have been access to colleges from secondary school systems and transfer to four-year colleges and universities from community colleges. Overwhelmingly, the forty-six colleges reported articulation agreements in place with secondary school systems (76 percent) and four-year postsecondary institutions (91 percent).

Financial assistance to students by ethnic group was requested for the years 1983 and 1988. This information was rather difficult for most colleges to ascertain. Only a handful supplied data for both years; a few more reported the information for 1988 only. Several colleges wrote or called explaining that this type of detailed information is just now being recorded in an accessible manner. Because the information collected was fragmented, it is not reported in this chapter.

In examining minority student participation, it was also important to view changes in employment patterns according to ethnic group. Table 4 shows an increase in employment of all ethnic groups among the ranks of faculty, administrators, and professional-technical staff. These gains are relatively small, particularly when compared to the growth among white employee ranks.

Although the questionnaire used to collect these data was quite comprehensive in scope and detail, some information was readily accessible and some was not. Therefore, the responses to some of the questions posed (for example, regarding recruitment and retention) are not being reported here. The information was varied and in most instances did not yield to analysis.

Interviews with Implementers

The questionnaire did serve to identify some colleges that have or are developing promising programs. Some respondents sent brochures, pamphlets, news articles, and other items of information pertinent to the data collection. Additional contributors to this volume were also identified during this phase of the research.

A Note of Progress

Two years ago little was being reported about minority student participation in community colleges. However, discussions with practitioners across the nation and a review of the material accompanying the questionnaires indicate that many community colleges are taking action. Data are not always recorded in the same manner, and successes are not always published; how-

Table 4. Change in the Number of Personnel by Employment Classification, Ethnicity and College Size, 1983-88

	Faculty		*Administrators*		*Prof/Tech*	
Ethnicity	*1983*	*1988*	*1983*	*1988*	*1983*	*1988*
Asian	40	46	3	7	9	12
	44	86	8	11	11	38
Black	85	78	14	31	24	62
	147	207	27	43	53	101
Hispanic	98	112	22	51	201	289
	65	122	10	31	32	67
Native American	5	9	0	2	6	7
	5	18	0	1	1	8
White	1411	2206	258	446	328	719
	2674	3583	477	574	478	592
Other	2	3	1	1	1	1
	0	2	9	1	0	1

Note: For each ethnic group, the top row represents colleges with an unduplicated head count of fewer than 7,000 students; the bottom row represents colleges with an unduplicated head count greater than 7,000.

ever, activities to rekindle minority participation in community colleges are in evidence throughout the nation.

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Community colleges provide a crucial link in the educational chain. Institutions must ensure that their policies and programs promote access for those who need it most.

Community College Access: Barriers and Bridges

Raul Cardenas, Elizabeth Warren

Open access to education is what distinguishes community colleges from all other educational institutions. It is through the community college commitment to access that the American dream of universal higher education is put into action and given substance. Community colleges have become expert at fitting into the context of people's lives and into the communities that they serve, both because of their proximity and because of the programs and services they offer.

The community college provides a special link in the educational chain. It serves as the only avenue to higher education for many minority students, older students, first-generation college students, and a number of others who may have dropped out of the educational mainstream. The community college provides a means for students to achieve their goals. Yet many students do not even make it through the open door, and those who do may still encounter barriers.

Fryer states that the primary strength of community colleges is "their uniquely American authenticity and congruity with this society's values" (1986, p. 19). The most effective community colleges are both mirrors and catalysts in their communities: they reflect the population and its values and strengths while at the same time providing educational services as a catalyst for change. To the extent that communities change, and some do very rapidly, there will always be challenges to access.

Maintaining open access and the range of programs that it requires is not only the most important service that community colleges offer, but it is also the most challenging. The key to preventing serious barriers to access at the institutional level is in always adapting to change. To react to change,

the college must have accurate and continuous information about its community and its students. Just as important, it must be prepared to act on the information, a challenge that can be very difficult. Some institutions existing today were suburban "junior colleges" in the 1960s with predominantly white, 18-year-old, transfer-oriented populations. Twenty-five years later these same colleges have been transformed into urban "community colleges," trying to serve an adult population with vocational needs using the same aging faculty and out-of-date mission and goals. The irony for such community colleges is that they are being forced to react to changes that they in effect created by increasing the overall access to education in their communities.

Access and the Institution

Most community colleges have been in the position of responding to changes in the community and to the needs of its student population. In adapting to change so that access is preserved, the college must be prepared to examine and alter everything from the simplest telephone techniques to the mission of the institution. This chapter will assess challenges to access at the institutional level, provide some general recommendations on public policy, and describe some programs designed to insure that the concept of access remains meaningful.

The College Mission. The mission sets the expectations that both the college and the community have for the institution: that mission should create a climate that promotes access. If the mission is out of date, reflecting a time of different community and student needs, there will be a discrepancy between what the college is doing and what is needed. The mission must be reviewed at regular intervals to insure that it is still relevant. Other processes that derive from the mission, such as strategic, long-range, and budget planning, will suffer if the mission is obsolete. Even if the mission is broad enough to encompass changes in the community, a lack of vision, funding, motivation, or expertise will make it difficult to establish a process to support the necessary reforms. In an institution where there is a match between the mission and the needs of the community, the institutional priorities will reflect this congruence, and access will be preserved.

Funding. Institutional funding policies are usually built around the mission of the college and the needs of the community in order to maintain open access. In an environment of inadequate funding, these policies should support and protect on a priority basis those programs earmarked to serve minorities and other nontraditional college students and should insure that such programs are neither limited in scope, nor eliminated. Cohen comments that "state policies and funding formulas in large measure determine patterns of curriculum, student access, and eventually outcomes" (1987, p. 20). In addition, a decrease in student financial assistance will

have a negative impact on minority and disadvantaged student enrollments. Federal, state, and institutional policies that place more of the burden on students to finance their education only serve to limit further access.

Assessment. An effective assessment program is built on the assumption that the institution has an option for students other than just rejecting them. Assessment can become a barrier when the process is used to limit access to certain programs or when there is inadequate programming to address the range of needs in the community. It can also prevent access when the assessment process is too mechanical, poorly presented, or generally insensitive to students, so that it itself becomes an impediment. The institution must insure that students are assessed, placed, and in general assisted in dealing with their educational needs.

Academic Placement. Closely related to assessment is the issue of placement. If the academic placement process is poorly developed and does not provide for remedial course work, it can serve as an obstacle to enrollment for those who need it most. The need to assess student strengths and weaknesses for placement purposes is very much a part of the everyday process. Colleges must be careful to assure that assessment instruments are used to determine appropriate placement and not to screen. Kanter shows that placement can be a barrier to underrepresented students: "In California's community colleges and in many two-year institutions across the nation, students are not 'admitted' to college in the formal sense. Instead, they are placed into courses as a result of assessment and directed into various levels of the community college curriculum. Thus, a parallel can be drawn between *placement* in an open access system and *admissions* in a closed or selective system" (1990, p. 10). Placement is an area that needs to be carefully monitored to insure that access is not being denied to minority and first-generation college students who are more prone to enter with lower skills.

Staff Development. An academic environment that supports access is one that provides academic readiness and facilitates student transition at a variety of levels and in a range of contexts. Colleges must provide preparation for faculty and staff so that they are prepared to meet the range of individual learning styles and student needs. Carefully designed and consistently funded faculty and staff development programs that promote cultural diversity are necessary to make certain that access is preserved. In addition, the curriculum and student services must be consistently monitored and adjusted to insure that they are current.

Articulation and Transfer. Problems with transfer and articulation have been consistent obstacles to access. The most common and persistent area of concern is the lack of articulated agreements between colleges and universities and even among community colleges themselves. There are often agreements in place that can facilitate the transfer of credits from institution to institution; however, much work remains to be done to smooth out and document the process for students. For many students, the community

college is the only route to a four-year degree: when the transfer process is at best cumbersome, poorly coordinated, apathetic, or hostile, many minority and first-generation students opt out.

College/School Relationships. Coordination and articulation among all levels of education—from elementary through university—relates to curriculum, course competencies, course transfer, and adequate preparation of students. When institutions do not coordinate well, students repeat courses and lose credits and valuable time toward the degree, all of which can discourage students and ultimately affect access.

An important aspect of the college mission should be creating and maintaining open communications among all segments of the education system. Institutional connections between the links in the educational pipeline insure programming relevance, provide a more meaningful context for remediation, guarantee mutually complementary curricula, and facilitate transition. These linkages reinforce those institutional connections with the community necessary to keep the mission in focus and to preserve access. Inconsistent and poorly coordinated policies and procedures such as scheduling or course numbering—seemingly minor procedures from the institutional point of view—send confusing signals to students and directly limit access.

Student Support Services. Adequate student support services are critical to both access and retention. Institutional policies that limit these services create serious problems. Miller states that student services, in particular, "motivation, appropriate placement, realistic expectations about the nature of college life, support of academic performance, short- and long-term advising, and career counseling, are critically significant for fragile populations of learners" (1990, p. 8). Without these services students will find the adjustment to life in the institution problematic. Counseling and advising stand out as the most critical aspects of an effective student support system. Student support services must be valued highly by the institution in relation to its instructional offerings, because without them many students do not make it to the classroom.

Child care is also a constant concern for most adult students. The availability of child care services, which provide students an opportunity to attend classes while rearing their children, is an important part of a student support program that takes into account the whole context of students' lives.

Public Policy Impact on Access

Community colleges maintain access by responding to the requirements of their communities, but they are also bound by state and federal directives. Access problems can result when federal, state, and local policies are not coordinated, are poorly thought through, or are in direct conflict with one another and with community and student needs.

One example of counterproductive funding legislation is the Federal Vocational Education Act. This legislation restricts the access of the very student it purportedly intended to serve. As Prager describes it, the act ". . . restricts funding specifically sub-baccalaureate activity. This means that counseling services that would assist career students in transferring or curriculum articulation efforts between a community and a senior college (but not between community college and an area vocational and technical school) are precluded from fiscal support. Thus, a potentially powerful agent mandating the improvement of occupational-technical educational opportunity for the disadvantaged has built in provisos that limit the academic attainment of those whom it is designed to serve" (1988, p. 83).

Federal, state, and local governments can promote access through maintaining and improving funding and through coordinating broad policies to avoid problems like the one cited above. Below are some general recommendations on how public policies could be improved so that access is improved.

Funding for community colleges should be increased to insure that a broad range of academic, job training, and other services are provided for minority students. In addition, financial aid should cover the actual costs of attending college; otherwise the financial burden on students can be crippling and limit their ability to succeed.

As community colleges are part of a larger educational system or pipeline, funding for elementary and secondary schools must be improved to assure the retention and preparation of minority students.

States should mandate the coordination of data about students among and within education systems. States must also encourage coordination among institutions that promote transfer and retention.

States must be cautious about imposing policies that regulate assessment and testing, as they can impede rather than facilitate access.

Although the issue of transportation is rarely mentioned in the literature, it is a major consideration for most students. State and local governments must take into account students' physical access to colleges and other educational institutions when transportation plans are developed.

Community colleges serve many students with families. Single parents, in particular, are often unable to achieve their educational goals because of inadequate child care. The state and federal government must furnish adequate funding for child care for those who need it, especially those who are pursuing educational objectives.

Programs That Promote Access

The first part of this chapter has described the need to improve and develop programs that broaden the relationships among all segments of the educational community so that policy and procedures do not become barriers to

student access. Programs are now being developed around the nation designed to promote and maintain access to higher education for minority students. The programs highlighted here are just a few of those within the Maricopa Community College District (Phoenix, Arizona) that address some of the problems described above. These are programs specifically designed to insure that policies and programs facilitate access to education.

Think Tank. The Think Tank is a consortium of educational institutions representing the educational continuum from kindergarten through the community college. It represents a unique opportunity for substantial, positive changes in the delivery of educational services to the residents of the city of Phoenix. Together, the participating institutions combine their expertise, support their respective initiatives, and coordinate the delivery of services to improve the potential and the quality of the lives of the students they serve. The members of the consortium have made a commitment to develop longitudinal programs that may take from ten to fifteen years to yield results. The programs being developed through the Think Tank are being organized into a model that will "wrap around" students to promote academic success (Jordan, 1990).

Achieving a College Education. The goal of the Achieving a College Education (ACE) program is to increase the numbers of students who achieve baccalaureate degrees after successfully completing high school and community college degrees. ACE is geared to students who make average grades but who are at risk of not completing high school. Students are recruited in the second semester of their sophomore year of high school and are involved continuously with the college from that point onward. Parental involvement and preparation are stressed throughout the program. Students are oriented to postsecondary education and provided with the academic and social skills necessary to survive in that environment. The program is based on overlapping the community college experience with the high school on one end and the community college with the university on the other to eliminate the gaps between institutions. Students have the opportunity to experience the next level of education while they are still in a comfortable, familiar environment.

Urban Teacher Corps Partnership. With the dramatic demographic changes taking place in our public school population, the need for minority representation on faculties is evident. The shortage of qualified minority and bilingual teachers has been identified as a critical problem for Phoenix's elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools. The Urban Teacher Corps Partnership (UTCP) is addressing this concern by structuring a program for instructional aid so that prospective minority teachers can pursue their education. The UTCP program enables teacher candidates to participate in an ongoing, structured study/support group program and to complete a baccalaureate degree and obtain teacher certification. The program offers on-site classes at the school districts and provides child

care, transportation, mentors, teleconferencing, computer-based learning (where possible), and ongoing group support. The UTCP emphasizes preparation for and assistance with transfer and adjustment to higher education. It also focuses on developing the teachers' commitment to teach in the inner city. The program consists of blocks of required courses at the community college and university. Candidates have the opportunity to pursue individual specialties and interest areas through elective courses.

Student Monitoring and Alert System. In an effort to follow up on the students enrolled in ACE and similar programs, the Student Monitoring and Alert System (SMASh) was developed. SMASh has been designed to work under a fourth-generation, relational data base management system with links to existing student data systems at the Maricopa Community Colleges and the Phoenix Union High School District. Plans are under way to include elementary schools in the system as well.

SMASh functions as a student-progress monitoring and early-alert system that combines current, dynamic information from public schools and postsecondary institutions. The system allows longitudinal comparisons of program, group, and individual student performance so that timely and effective interventions can be planned. With the unique data-sharing agreements that exist among the participating institutions, SMASh will be able to provide extensive information on student activity (both curricular and noncurricular) so that sound decisions can be made allowing both students and programs to fulfill their true potential.

Conclusion

Barriers to access to higher education are not likely to disappear easily. The reality for community colleges is that they will serve an increasingly urban, younger, and minority population, as well as one more financially dependent. Preserving access depends on the colleges' ability to adapt to changing community needs, to evaluate and adjust institutional practices, and to continue to monitor and influence policymakers.

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In addition to its traditional function, a higher education system should be judged by its ability to increase the pool of well-prepared minority students.

Model Programs in Minority Access

Roy G. Phillips

A review of the literature regarding the access of minority groups, including blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans, indicates that they continue to be underrepresented in higher education and the professions. This underrepresentation has created a national urgency to enlarge the pool of well-prepared minority students in order to improve the productive capacity of our nation within an increasingly competitive global economy. Moreover, because minority students are concentrated in the community colleges of the nation, the role of the community college system—especially its success in promoting transfers to four-year institutions—becomes a paramount issue in this decade and beyond.

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to assess model programs in minority access and to discuss their implications for new directions in community college education. For purposes of definition, the concept of *minority access* shall be confined to mean the admission of students whose academic performance may have been compromised by inadequate preparation, resources, and support (Birnbaum, 1987). By this definition the concept of access is separate from that of academic quality as gauged by such standards as SAT scores.

Overview of Trends and Issues

Legal Basis for Access. The legality of equal access to public secondary and higher education in America has its basis within the liberal tradition of

the American education system. This tradition was reaffirmed by the 1954 Brown decision and the 1960s civil rights laws passed by the United States Congress. Although the civil rights legislation of the 1960s was designed to redress the historic exclusion of blacks from access to the public secondary and higher education institutions, it also provided the legal foundation for the inclusion of other disenfranchised American minorities, including Asians, Hispanics, and Native Americans. The effect of the 1960s civil rights legislation was to refocus national attention on the egalitarian function of education (Astin, 1982).

The decade of the 1960s showed promise for access to higher education by minorities. As a general trend, enrollment in higher education between 1976 and 1986 increased 13.8 percent. Enrollment of minority students in higher education during that period increased significantly. Between 1984 and 1986, the enrollment of minorities increased by 7.6 percent (American Council on Education, 1988). By the middle of the 1980s, however, a new policy agenda arose in higher education. The new policy agenda was reflected in the Defunis and Bakke cases and the educational reform movement of the middle and late 1970s.

As a consequence of the Bakke decision and the emerging educational reform movement initiated through an assessment of our public schools in *A Nation at Risk*, the tension between quality and access heightened (Birnbaum, 1987). A renewed concern for quality resulted in the restriction of access based on relative achievement on standardized tests. Furthermore, this renewed concern for quality was simultaneous with a reduction of minority enrollment and the waning of public interest in the question of minority access.

Impact of a Changing Environment. Since the end of World War II, changes within the American economy have retarded the access and mobility of an increasing number of minorities, especially those who were not able to gain from the economic expansion of the post-World War II era. Several trends have added to the plight of poor and disadvantaged minorities. First, the American economy has become increasingly global. The nation no longer wields the dominant economic power over the global market place. It faces intense international competition from other emerging industrialized nations. Second, structural changes are taking place within the American work place. Highly influenced by increasing world competition and an emerging information-based technology that requires less energy, the country is now moving toward a radical transformation of its occupational and income structure (McKee, 1985). Old-line users of steel, transportation, textiles, and rubber have declined. Some phases of production are moving abroad where cheaper, nonunionized labor is more available. As a consequence, the nation's job structure and new educational requirements have curtailed the prospects for equal access and social mobility for those who occupy the bottom tier of the income and occupational pyramid. Third, a new and different immigration trend has emerged in the

last two decades. Immigrants from Latin America and Asia have accounted for more than three-fourths of all legal immigration during the 1970s (McKee, 1985). The second wave of the new immigrants has been mainly unskilled minorities who have settled in the large urban centers of the nation and compete for jobs and other declining resources with an increasingly disadvantaged black population.

Birnbaum (1987) indicates that the multiplying impact of these trends has added a new dimension to the politics of quality and access: "Resources of all kinds are always limited; and time, attention, political support, and money are devoted to one item on the agenda—whether the agenda of public policy or that of an academic institution—are not available to another" (p. 3). The limited federal resources have shifted many traditional federal responsibilities to the state and local governments. As a consequence, Birnbaum (1987, p. 3) further asserts: "A preoccupation with access during the earlier period has been replaced today by a consuming interest in quality, and it has not appeared possible to attend to both." A review of this dilemma will provide some understanding of the increasing impact of state policymakers attempting to respond to the conflicting needs of access and quality.

An Assessment of Model Programs in Minority Access

Assessment Criteria. Astin describes a number of factors affecting minority access. These will be used to assess the quality of model programs in minority access that have been surveyed in the literature. Astin's factors are summarized in four major areas: academic preparation, career planning, positive reference-group expectancy, and institutional and financial assistance (1982).

The literature confirms that the quality of the students' academic preparation at the time of college entry has the greatest impact on access and success of any single measure (Astin, 1982). High school grades, aptitude test scores, study habits, and the nature of the subjects taken are positively related to persistence for minority students. The student's initial choice of career goals and plans shows a substantial relationship to undergraduate grade-point average and persistence. Career-goal-directed students tend to be highly motivated and self-directed in higher education. In addition, high expectations communicated by parents, teachers, peers, and significant others provide a positive group expectancy. The message from these groups is powerful in that it communicates, either verbally or nonverbally, the level of performance that is expected. The impact of institutional climate and financial assistance measures are also significantly related to college persistence of minority students. Comprehensive support services such as tutoring and work study, on-campus residency, and faculty attitudes are contributing factors.

Minority programs that incorporate these factors promote high rates

of student success. The research literature describes the impact of these programs. The characteristics of four model programs will be discussed in the following categories: an early intervention strategy, a transfer strategy, and a retention strategy.

An Early Intervention Strategy. An early intervention strategy in Florida is described by Phillips (1988). The two programs are called the Miami Promise and the Black Student Opportunity Program, both developed and implemented in 1987. They were designed as a partnership among Miami-Dade Community College, the Urban League of Greater Miami, the Dade County Public Schools, the United Teachers of Dade, and the Mitchell Wolfson Senior Foundation. The major goal of the two programs is to increase the college attendance of well-prepared black students.

Miami Promise is an early intervention academic preparation program at the elementary school level that has received nationwide attention. The current program is housed at the Dade County Charles Drew Elementary School. Approximately sixty-two sixth-grade students were selected.

The Black Student Opportunity Program is an early intervention academic preparation program at the senior high school level. The current program is housed within two Dade County public schools: Northwestern Senior High School, a predominantly black high school, and Southridge Senior High School, an integrated school located in the south Dade County community.

Students within the two programs were selected based upon the following criteria: standardized test achievement in the middle stanine range (5-6) of the Stanford Achievement; a 2.0 grade-point average; parent participation; student participation in after-school and Saturday tutorial sessions; and student participation in motivational, time-management, study-skills, and self-management workshops. Students are also required to enroll in the essential academic disciplines that improve information skills: in mathematics, science, English, social science, and computer literacy.

In addition to the academic preparation component, the program contains three others. The first provides scholarship assistance based upon incentives for achievement. Funds are raised for each student by a sponsor. Based upon the student's achievement, beginning at the ninth-grade level, he/she is able to earn dollars for letter grades in each of the basic disciplines computed on an annual basis; for each *C*, $30 is placed in the student's account; for each *B*, $60; and for each *A*, $90. The incentive scholarship level is increased as students enter and complete the first two years at Miami-Dade Community College. These earnings are matched by the Mitchell Wolfson Senior Foundation on a one-to-one basis. In effect, each student has the potential for earning $3,000 or more from high school through the college sophomore year. The second component is an articulation agreement that has been worked out with four-year colleges and universities that agree to participate in the program. Essentially, the

four-year postsecondary institutions have agreed to establish scholarship and/or financial aid assistance for those students who graduate from Miami-Dade and enroll in their respective institutions. The third component is a program that assigns a mentor to work with students individually and with their parents or guardians. This component is designed to increase positive group expectancy and role modeling to facilitate success. An individualized computerized program has been established to monitor each student's progress and to send letters to the students and their parents alerting them to any problems of academic deficiency.

The impact of the program at this writing is encouraging. Fourteen of the senior high school participants graduated in 1989. Two of the students chose to enter the military, and the remainder are enrolled in college. The remaining senior high school students are expected to graduate in 1990. All of the elementary population are still enrolled at the ninth grade level.

A Transfer Strategy. Rendón and Matthews (1989) report on a model minority retention strategy program that has proven to have a positive impact upon high-risk students. The model is referred to as the Middle School, carefully patterned after the Middle College High School at La Guardia Community College in New York. The Middle College embodies the concept of an alternative high school and two-year college. Only high-risk students in the tenth grade are recruited to attend Middle College. They are required to take the next three years of schooling at the college site. The following components are included as a part of the model: internship work experience, career planning, personal counseling, and the opportunity to repeat courses without stigma of failure. The program reports an 85 percent graduation rate and 75 percent attendance rate. The strong articulation between the high school and the college encourages smooth transfer.

Similarly, Elvin and Wood (1989) cite a unique model program in minority transfer. The program involves twenty-five two-year institutions paired with a similar number of four-year colleges and universities. The program is funded by the Ford Foundation and is called the Urban Community College Transfer program. It was developed out of national concern to increase the minority student transfer rate primarily between community colleges and four-year colleges and universities. The program focuses on an early identification of high-risk high school students with potential, emphasis upon academic preparation in the essential college preparatory disciplines, and formulation of articulation agreements between community colleges and four-year institutions.

A Retention Strategy. Mese and Spano (1989) describe a model retention program developed at Miami-Dade Community College/Medical Center Campus. The campus program is mainly in the nursing and allied health areas. Approximately 70 percent of the entering students require remediation in at least one of the basic skills areas. A rigorous curriculum is

in place to prepare each student to pass state-administered certification requirements. The program stresses a counselor/mentor relationship, an alert system to provide immediate student feedback on academic progress, an integrated system of academic support services to assist students in need, and personalized communication and a nurturing environment designed to remove emotional barriers to learning. The program has resulted in a 95 percent success rate on state certification examinations in the allied health areas.

These model programs in minority access set trends that have broad implications for improving minority enrollments and achievement in higher education. They will provide the basis for future minority access programs.

An Emerging Agenda in Minority Access

The issue of increasing minority access and achievement has emerged as a high-priority agenda item for the 1990s. Hodgkinson stresses the rationale for this urgency (1985, p. 7): "Most important, by around the year 2000, America will be a nation in which one of three of us will be nonwhite. And minorities will cover a broader socioeconomic range than ever before, making simplistic treatment of their needs even less useful." The meaningful participation of minorities in the social, political, and economic leadership of the nation will require that they persist in higher education. To accomplish this presents an exceptional challenge to community colleges, where the majority of minority students are enrolled. From a review of the literature, it is clear that certain trends will continue into the next decade and beyond.

First, it is clear that the issue of quality and access will continue to dominate the higher education agenda for the next decade. This observation is supported by Birnbaum (1987, p. 19): "The genius of American higher education is that it attempts to a degree not found elsewhere in the world, to support both quality and access. And indeed, in our educational system, neither quality nor access can survive alone; it is only in combination that they define our educational system." Second, although there is an important role for the federal government to play in the provision of minority access to higher education, the responsibility will continue to shift to the states as efforts to reduce the federal budget deficit grow. Focusing attention on the role of the states appears particularly appropriate in this decade and beyond. States recognize the reality of changing demographics as they seek to compete with each other and with other nations for new jobs and economic growth. Third, as states become more involved in the development of policy initiatives to improve minority access, they will require greater accountability through monitoring the progress of local educational institutions. Requirements for the establishment of more for-

malized partnerships among public secondary schools, two-year institutions, and four-year colleges and universities will increase. Fourth, there is a growing consciousness by some minority groups, especially blacks, that current programs in minority access only marginally enlarge their numbers in the higher education pipeline. As a consequence, black organizations, including churches, business associations, and civic and fraternal groups, are taking greater responsibility for minority student access (Phillips, 1988). This trend will continue into the next decade and beyond. Fifth, the private business community will become more involved in the development of quality and access programs for minorities.

The private sector views education as a capital investment for the future success of America within an increasingly competitive global economy. This observation is best exemplified in a statement by Donley ("Education: A Capital Investment," 1987, p. 92): "I am committed to education as a businessman because it is, quite simply, America's most important enterprise. The quality of our educational system translates, in large measure, into the quality of our people, our work force, the main engine that runs our industrial complex." Community colleges in America have an opportunity to position themselves at the leading edge of this emerging agenda.

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Recruitment of minority students centers less on issues related to academic preparedness and financial support than on questions related to institutional environment.

Minority Student Recruitment

Anne E. Mulder

An *open door*? A *closed door*? A *revolving door*? What term accurately reflects the efforts of community colleges in attracting minority students to their campuses? The question is being posed by community colleges across the country as they examine their effectiveness in attracting and assisting minority students in achieving their educational goals. Though the problems and the solutions for recruitment initiatives may vary, minority student concerns related to academic preparedness and financial resources, as well as issues concerning institutional climate, are found on each campus. And it is vital that community colleges confront these problems *now*. Preparing for the student body of the 1990s and into the twenty-first century demands identifying and analyzing the barriers to access and equity for minority students entering community colleges. Moreover, developing positive guidelines for recruitment initiatives that enhance rather than inhibit the open door philosophy is a necessity.

Identifying the Barriers

Much of the literature regarding minority access to and success in postsecondary institutions focuses on the four-year institution. Although the community college varies both structurally and philosophically from this setting, some insight can be gained from the available research. Unique variables may exist, but three general concerns for the majority of institutions have been identified: academic preparedness, the availability of financial resources, and the prevailing institutional climate. The success or failure of minority recruitment initiatives seems directly related to how well the institution assesses and addresses these concerns.

A variety of sources—definitive studies prepared by national and state commissions, academic journals, and popular magazines—have presented the predicament of unprepared or underprepared students entering college. Though the problem is not confined to any one ethnic group, the impact of the lack of preparedness may be most severe in the case of minority students aspiring to higher education. The issues involved may be examined from a variety of perspectives. These include differences in the academic opportunities of racial groups that can be traced to inadequate curricula, linguistic difficulties, and family concerns. A study carried out by a joint task force of the Michigan State Board of Education and the Michigan Equal Employment Opportunity Council (Michigan Department of Education, 1986) identifies areas such as inadequate math and writing instruction, improper counseling, and program placement, as well as racial prejudice, as barriers affecting the college admission of minority high school graduates. Differences in the quality of academic preparation of the white and black college-going population and an increasing percentage of black high school dropouts have been cited as reasons for the decline in minority enrollment. Problems are exacerbated for Hispanic students, who not only experience basic linguistic obstacles but are simultaneously confronted with having to function in specific content-area courses in a solely English environment (Edwards, 1986). Recent studies have pointed to the importance of self-image, family involvement, and expectations for success as essential components of academic preparedness (Kalamazoo Valley Community College, 1988).

A growing body of literature points to the general area of financial need as another barrier to minority student recruitment. Evans (1985) noted several converging factors, including the availability of and eligibility for federal financial aid, the lack of student confidence in the financial return on college investment, and movement away from affirmative action and civil rights initiatives at the federal level, as the basis of financial concerns. Ironically, current and potential minority college students are increasingly dependent upon financial aid at a time when the number of real dollars available is shrinking. The situation is further aggravated by the complicated procedures tied to financial aid applications, as well as by the prospect of greater student indebtedness as a result of growing emphasis on loans (Kalamazoo Valley Community College, 1988).

A final barrier to minority recruitment centers less on the reality of the student's experience than on the student's perception of the institution. Institutional environment is particularly germane to a student's college selection process. One study (Simpson, 1987) noted that blatant racial incidents have less impact upon the attraction and retention of minorities than other more subtle forms of racism, such as exclusion from study groups, insecurity about the admissions process, and the perception of nonminorities on campus that lower standards are used in the admission of minority students. Fleming (1984) cites several factors inherent in a

positive instructional environment: the opportunities for peer relationships and role models, the possibility of participating in campus life, the presence of other minority students, curricula relevant to the minority experience, and responsive counseling services. Clearly, most authors believe strongly in the effect of institutional environment on the ability of a college to attract the minority student.

For the community college, then, to become a truly barrier-free institution for the minority student, three factors must be carefully evaluated. First of all, the institution must determine its responsiveness to issues surrounding the academic preparedness of the students to be served. Second, the college must explore the availability of financing for the students desiring an education. Third, internal conditions that foster a positive climate must be assessed and created.

Overcoming the Barriers

In recruiting minority students, how can an institution respond to problems of academic preparedness? How can opportunities for financial aid be improved? How can a responsive institutional climate be achieved? Assuredly, many traditional approaches to these problems should continue Tutorial programs for at-risk students, increased scholarships directed toward minority students, and continuous audits of the institutional environment are essential. Recruitment initiatives, however, should recognize the conceptual and practical linkages within a student's intellectual, personal, and social development; hence, many community colleges are now developing creative early intervention programs designed to identify students from elementary and secondary schools who lack motivation or adequate preparation for college. These programs have been designed to provide additional assistance after school or during the summer. Some have featured early placement testing paired with specialized instruction. Others are geared toward specific curricula. All of them closely link parents, partnerships with the schools, and involvement with the community.

At Lake Michigan College in Benton Harbor, Michigan, two early intervention programs have been implemented. One of the programs, funded in cooperation with the Whirlpool Foundation, focuses on seventy-six inner-city youth who have been promised a scholarship to the college upon their high school graduation. Sixty-two of these children are black. An important aspect of the program is the sponsorship of individual students by volunteer faculty, staff, and community members. Sponsors are responsible for contacting their students at least once a month. The students spend time at the college and attend summer camps and various programs during the school year to complement their regular school activities. Now in its third year of operation, the program has been adopted by several other community colleges in Michigan and Illinois.

Another early intervention program entitled Mini-Met at Lake Michigan College is an offspring of the highly successful Michigan Educational Trust program (MET), instituted by the state of Michigan. The program provides a guarantee of today's tuition prices for tomorrow's education to parents who invest now. The college has modified the program for students in one of the rural school districts served by the college. In this predominately black district, only about 20 percent of the high school graduates now go on to college. Many of them could not afford the financial investment required by the state's program; however, some eighty elementary students have enrolled in the Mini-Met program, paying installments of $3 per week. The students' weekly savings are collected at the school, and a local bank serves as the holding agent. The program has worked out contingencies including refunds with interest for children who choose another college, receive a scholarship, or decide not to go to college at all. Furthermore, families can choose options such as completing their financial obligation early or purchasing two years of college instead of just one. Although the program may emphasize one institution, the students are still encouraged to think about college as an option and to keep that goal in mind throughout the remainder of their elementary-secondary-school years.

Other colleges are addressing compelling special needs in appealing to minority recruits. Wayne County Community College in Detroit, Michigan, has instituted the Urban Teacher Program, designed to recruit teachers from minority groups through partnerships between four-year institutions and community colleges. Currently, some seventy students, primarily older black adults, are enrolled. As part of the program's design to familiarize the participants with the urban classroom, the students will have completed several semesters of field work in Detroit-area schools under the guidance of mentor teachers prior to receiving their associate's degrees. Supported by grants from the Michigan legislature, the state education department's office of minority equity, and the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, the program will enroll some three hundred students by the end of its third year. Not only is it an innovative recruitment initiative, but the program also provides an opportunity for meaningful articulation between the community college and the four-year college while addressing the critical problem of the shortage of minority teachers.

Though early intervention programs and creative recruiting initiatives may assist specific minority students, a serious issue for many minorities resides in the financial obligations of college matriculation. The importance of finances appears even more pronounced for minority adults. A Kalamazoo Valley Community College study (1988) identified the cost of tuition and books, as well as a general inability to meet additional expenses incurred by attending college, as particularly significant to black and Hispanic students. Responsible recruitment initiatives must include financial counseling for minority students: colleges must provide information that

will prevent the students from making decisions about burdensome loan payments that may deter their remaining in school. Furthermore, colleges need to consider institutional policies that minimize a student's dollar investment. A simple review of the frequency of textbook changes and an examination of the cost of books for specific subject areas as compared to other local institutions might alleviate some financial difficulties.

As we have noted, a supportive institutional environment is essential to successful minority student recruitment. A minority presence on a college's board of trustees, within its faculty and staff ranks, and in an office or council specifically concerned with minority affairs provides a structural response to environmental concerns. Mentor programs that include student, staff, and community volunteers offer an opportunity for minority students to come into contact with role models. Campus activities that involve both minority and other students not only increase the participation of minority students, but they also enrich campus life in general. Staff in-service training focusing on ethnic and cultural diversity is mandatory for an understanding of minority concerns and perceptions about the institution. All these initiatives are essential for creating a positive institutional environment.

Developing Positive Guidelines

Faced with a growing number of minority students who need postsecondary education and, simultaneously, with an increasing array of issues confronting both students and institutions, community colleges must aggressively evaluate their minority recruitment initiatives. An institution truly committed to this endeavor can use five guidelines to assess their performance.

1. *Clarify the Motivation.* Institutions need to affirm why they believe minority recruitment is important. Placating a broader community concern, addressing social issues, developing a work force, and being morally responsible are all sound reasons, to be sure. But the reality is that the number of minority students attending community colleges has the potential to increase rapidly well into the twenty-first century. To survive, a community college must respond to that client group.

2. *Develop the Vision.* Developing vision is essentially heightening sensitivity to the needs of the minority students enrolled within the institution and creating an institutional environment where students are presented with a mandate to succeed, not the right to fail. Such a climate assumes attitudinal and structural changes within the institution. It assumes as well that diversity is viewed as healthy and that empowerment is the right of every individual, not a selected few.

3. *Audit the College Culture.* If the goal is to create an institutional climate that will attract minority students, then the first important step may be to determine what the present culture is or, equally as important, how it

is perceived by minority students. There is a great body of unspoken and unexamined assumptions, values, and mythologies that define an institution; thus, it may be difficult for a college to conduct a successful audit without outside assistance. An assessment should be a research activity that relies on extensive in-depth interviews and a lot of listening.

The operative institutional assumptions must be identified and evaluated, but they are sometimes terribly uncomfortable to confront. Institutional culture is like a tree. Its roots are assumptions about the college and about the world. Its branches, leaves, and seeds are the behavior manifested by students, faculty, and staff. The leaves cannot be altered without changing the roots: peaches cannot grow on an oak. Or rather, with the proper grafting, peaches *can* grow on an oak, but they come out much like acorns—small and hard and not appealing to eat. To grow good fruit, a tree must have the proper roots.

4. *Modify the Assumptions.* The real problem with the institutional culture tree is that terrible opposition occurs when fundamental change is attempted. Every culture, including that of a community college, has defensive elements that turn out in force every time a basic assumption is threatened. We cannot assume we are one big family; we cannot assume we are a melting pot; we cannot assume people are all motivated the same way or learn the same way. We must learn to embrace diversity both in the systems we create and in the people we recruit.

5. *Create the Responsive System.* The responsive system means, first of all, modifying existing structures. It means, as well, having in place models that emulate the vision, models that represent the culture. It means dealing internally with the root causes of prejudice and inequality. It means creating an environment that can develop the full potential of every student who comes to the institution. It means living with reality: diversity. It can be the greatest strength.

A Final Word

In a recent study by the Education Commission of the States and the State Higher Education Executive Officers, Callan focuses on the dilemma confronting recruitment, retention, and the graduation of minorities from postsecondary institutions. He points out that all too often, "The institutions which collect the data, the states which compile it and the federal government which reports it—have approached the issue from a 'compliance' perspective." He responds, "This is not enough. Commitment, not compliance will be needed to turn the American dream into an American reality" (Mingle, 1987, p. 8). Clearly, rekindling the minority student participation in America's community colleges will demand an unquestionable commitment. It will also demand, not the rhetoric of compliance, but the reality of action that assures that the open door remains open.

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Connecticut's recognition of the need to respond decisively to the challenge of minority recruitment has led to a comprehensive array of programs to attract minority students.

Minority Student Recruitment: A Connecticut Model

Ronald A. Williams, Mary Anne Cox

In many respects the problems that colleges face today in attracting black and Hispanic students are the same that they have encountered for the past two decades. Colleges still face the challenge of integrating black and Hispanic students into the fabric of the educational and social mainstream. Education is caught in the spin of expectations, both social and industrial. In the last few years two interrelated events have occurred: one is the increasing popularity of the concept of educating the total work force; the other is the slowdown in the growth rate of the American population. Given the demographic shift that is taking place—that is, the slowdown of the birthrate among whites and the expected growth of black and Hispanic people as a percentage of the American population—we can expect that black and Hispanic people will drive America's future industrial development in an unprecedented fashion.

Against this background, which is as true in Connecticut as it is in the rest of the nation, a number of initiatives were developed to ensure increased minority participation in higher education. In the draft of the proposed recommendations of the Education Commission of the States National Task Force for Minority Achievement in Higher Education (1990, p. 1), the first recommendation notes, "College and university leaders can improve minority participation and achievement through effective leadership, appropriate policy goals, sound management practices and through reflecting in their own membership the cultural diversity of the populations they serve. Strategic planning should be used to define goals, collect data, allocate resources and establish measures to assess goal achievement. Goals

should reflect the entire range of activities necessary for a systematic and coherent effort to increase both minority participation and achievement."

There appears to be a consensus that successful efforts to improve minority participation in higher education require a systematic approach proceeding from accepted policies to which the highest levels of institutional leadership subscribe. This is the approach which Connecticut has taken.

The Minority Enrollment Incentive Program

The Board of Governors for Higher Education, concerned about a downturn in minority college enrollments in Connecticut, created the Strategic Plan to Ensure Ethnic and Racial Diversity (1986). The plan's goal was to increase minority participation in Connecticut's colleges and universities by emphasizing minority recruitment and retention. In December 1986 the board of governors adopted the Minority Advancement Program, one component of which, the Minority Enrollment Incentive Program, will be discussed here.

The Minority Enrollment Incentive Program is intended to reduce by at least one-half the disparity between minority and nonminority enrollment and retention rates. Through the program the Department of Higher Education awards funds to public higher education institutions over a five-year period, based upon percentage improvements toward the achievement of the enrollment and retention goals. The total amount of incentive funding is fixed at $2.6 million. The total incentive payment during the five-year period takes into consideration the level of improvement necessary for the institution to reach its enrollment target, the institution's current level of black and Hispanic enrollment, and the total headcount enrollment of the institution. The actual payment is not on a per-student but on a percentage-improvement basis.

Minority incentive funds are used to offset counseling, admissions, and recruitment expenses; to provide remedial education or developmental programs; to pay for special programs for minority students in the college and at local public high schools; to provide student financial aid; and to cover indirect costs associated with the above. Each year, as part of the annual budget submission to the Board of Governors for Higher Education, each constituent unit must provide a report that describes actual award expenditures for each institution within its jurisdiction. According to the June 1989 Department of Higher Education report, Connecticut colleges and universities enrolled 18,644 minority students. This figure constituted 11 percent of the total student enrollment, the highest number and percentage in the state's history. Hispanic enrollment has increased almost by 30 percent and black enrollment by 17 percent since 1986.

Organization of Public Higher Education in Connecticut

In Connecticut public higher education is funded and controlled by the state. The Board of Governors for Higher Education has overall responsibility for the coordination of higher education policy for the state. Each constituent group of colleges—the University of Connecticut, the Connecticut State University, the Community and Technical Colleges, and the State Board for Academic Awards—has a board of trustees that governs the colleges under its jurisdiction. There are seventeen community and technical colleges, the presidents of which report to an executive director who reports to the Board of Trustees for Community-Technical Colleges.

Connecticut Community Colleges Long-Range Plan

The Board of Trustees for Community-Technical Colleges' approach to the challenge of recruiting and retaining minority students is comprehensive and inclusive. In 1988 the board adopted a long-range plan for the community colleges of Connecticut. The plan notes, "Central to our definition of excellence is our ability to provide services for all citizens of Connecticut. Our success must not be gained at the expense of access. . . . Clearly, if the Connecticut economy is to be adequately supplied with workers, the community colleges will be called upon to recruit, retain and graduate minority students in significant numbers" (Board of Trustees for Connecticut Community-Technical Colleges, 1988, p. 2). The long-range plan thus identifies a series of specific goals, with prescribed timelines and measures to achieve the larger objective of minority access. The programs described below constitute some of the initiatives undertaken by the plan.

Urban Marketing Initiative. The colleges recognize that it is not simply a case of providing prospective students with the information for choice among different institutions; rather, student interest must be awakened to the possibilities inherent in higher education. Recruitment is, therefore, a multifaceted campaign to make citizens aware of the community college and the college's creation of services and programs to respond to the multiple needs of the community's various populations. In order to accomplish this, a mass-media advertising campaign was initiated in spring 1988 to begin to increase the level of awareness about the colleges and their programs and to enhance the images of the colleges in the minority communities. Outdoor advertising began in 1988 and shifted in 1989 to transit ads in order to reach the urban population. One-minute radio commercials, using a testimonial format, were created, stressing the many benefits of college education to the minority audience. These were played on minority-oriented stations with statewide audiences. The other radio stations selected were those that also attract a large proportion of the minority

audience. Half-minute television commercials using minorities were also developed; in addition to being aired on the three network-affiliated stations in Connecticut during their regular broadcast schedule, the commercials were also run during minority and/or public affairs programming. Minority newspapers and major metropolitan newspapers were also used in the recruitment campaign. Beyond this mass-media strategy, other publications aimed at minority high school students were targeted for recruitment advertising.

These centralized recruitment activities were supplemented by the colleges in their individual service regions. This marketing approach has been very useful in helping the community and technical colleges to enroll 66 percent of all the minority undergraduates in higher education in Connecticut. The marketing and advertising thrust attracted minority students to the following programs designed specifically with minority populations in mind.

The VIDA Program. At Greater Hartford Community College, the Hispanic Family Support program, known as VIDA, has been developed specifically to respond to the needs of Hispanic students in the Greater Hartford area. Aimed at a primarily female audience, VIDA is designed to provide education and support services to make economic self-sufficiency a reality for Hispanic women, many of whom are single heads of households facing difficulties in obtaining employment.

The VIDA program operates in three twelve-week cycles, beginning in September, January, and April, with approximately twenty participants in each cycle. Math skills, Spanish literacy, conversational English, and life-skills training are offered. A primary goal of the program is to identify barriers to employment and to help the participants overcome them. Beyond the basic education and career-oriented training, the participants with preschool children also have the opportunity to receive training in parenting skills from trained child-care specialists. Counseling in areas such as financial planning, health and nutrition, housing, and employment is also provided to the students.

Pre-Nursing Program. The Greater Hartford Community College also houses another notable program designed specifically to serve minority students. This is the Pre-Nursing program, which was developed in 1980 by the college's nursing department in order to increase minority participation in health care programs. A one-semester developmental program offered each spring, Pre-Nursing prepares approximately twenty students in each session for admission to the college's associate degree in nursing program. Four components comprise Pre-Nursing: communication skills, mathematics, science, and an introduction to nursing course. It is a full-time, fifteen-week, five-day-a-week, noncredit, pass/fail program that uses a diagnostic/prescriptive approach to teaching. The students learn to overcome cultural barriers, to improve decision-making skills, and to develop a regard for academic achievement through the strong counseling that is integrated into the curriculum.

Financial support is provided to each pre-nursing student during

both the preliminary and the associate degree program. All course materials, uniforms, and physical examinations are furnished at no cost to the students, who in addition receive a stipend for living expenses. The program's budget also provides funding for financial emergencies and for additional nursing faculty to assist the students in both clinical and academic areas. Of the 108 students admitted to the program between 1980 and 1986, 98 students (91 percent) successfully completed Pre-Nursing and were admitted into the associate degree nursing program. Thirty-two of these students have graduated with the associate degree and are practicing registered nurses.

English-as-a-Second-Language Program. Several studies have noted that in the future new entrants into the work force will come from three groups—women, minorities, and immigrants. Many of the members of the immigrant groups will not have English as their first language; therefore, educational institutions will have to provide these students with the basic language skills they will need to function effectively in the work place. The English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) initiative at Norwalk Community College is a response to another minority population, mainly Haitian and Puerto Rican, which has grown in its service region. The program has grown, along with its ethnic population, over the years, increasing from forty students in 1973 to more than seven hundred students during 1989-90. These students are served at both the college's main campus in Norwalk and its Language Center in Stamford.

Reading, writing, speaking, and listening to English are emphasized in all courses, with special emphasis placed on writing as the critical skill for future success. Each level, from basic to advanced (four in all), builds on skills developed at the previous level. Entrance into the program is based on a special test that assesses reading comprehension and grammar. Writing samples determine placement level and the advancement for each student. One hour of language lab instruction is required each week in each course, and tutoring services are available as well.

The English Skills Development Center, an integral part of the ESL program, provides an essential immersion component in language instruction by offering an increased number of classroom hours spent with an instructor during the first two levels. Small-group communication and interaction and tutorial services are also available through the Development Center. Comprehensive audio laboratories and computer-based instruction offer support in vocabulary, grammar, and usage exercises and help to reinforce material presented in the classroom. The center's enlarged ESL library of videotapes, publications, and computer programs also supports ESL and enriches each student's learning experience.

High School Partnerships Program. In June 1987 the board of trustees adopted a policy for a High School Partnerships Program. This policy recognized that colleges could provide high school students with more

challenging educational experiences by expanding opportunities for them to attend accredited degree-granting institutions during their junior and senior years. The policy statement also noted that "in furtherance of the goal of expanded educational opportunity . . . [the program] is intended to go beyond traditional programs which concentrate primarily on serving gifted high school students. Rather, it is intended that the High School Partnerships Program be more expansive in providing an early experience to a more diverse group of high school students. . . ." (Board of Trustees for Connecticut Community-Technical Colleges, 1987). The program is operated under the following guidelines:

1. Each president enters into a written agreement with the superintendent of area school districts.
2. Commonly accepted admissions guidelines are established by the college and the school district.
3. The high school may offer concurrent or supplemental high school credit for courses taken at the college.
4. High school students admitted to the program will be eligible to enroll in a maximum of two college credit courses.
5. The college must make provision for academic advisement and other supportive services for the participants.
6. The college must attempt to schedule sufficient courses at times convenient for high school students to attend.
7. The college will pay the costs of tuition for the high school students participating in the program and will waive all fees.
8. The high school district and/or the student will be responsible for the cost of books and transportation. The college will encourage the school district to purchase the books.

South Central Community College in New Haven, Connecticut, has been particularly successful in attracting minority students using this program. Since the summer of 1987, the college entered into partnership agreements with school districts in its service region. During the fall of 1987, 142 students from eight high schools in four towns enrolled in thirty-four different courses. Almost 80 percent of the students were female (compared with the college's 70 percent female population), almost 46 percent were black (compared to 21 percent for the student body), and almost 8 percent were Hispanic (compared to 7.3 percent in the student body).

In the 1987-88 and the 1988-89 academic years, the community college system's High School Partnerships Program enrolled 608 students, of whom 438 successfully completed their course of study. To date, 53 students who participated in the program have enrolled as either full- or part-time students in the community colleges.

Minority Fellowship Program. As may be gleaned from the foregoing, the community and technical colleges of Connecticut have been very successful in attracting black and Hispanic students in large numbers. They currently enroll 662 of the state's undergraduate minority students.

The board of trustees recognizes that to serve these students well the colleges must provide role models for their students. In looking at the issue, the board of trustees quickly identified the need to attract more minority professionals into the colleges' staffs and faculties. Given the relatively small number of minority professionals available for positions, it was decided that if the college system was going to be successful in diversifying its work force, it would have to be more active in recruiting staff and faculty from minority groups and accept the responsibility for cultivating its own minority faculty. As part of the process of identifying and attracting minorities into the system, the board implemented the Minority Fellowship Program in 1988. This program is designed to identify minority graduate students who are at a minimum in the second year of a master's degree program, assign one to each college in the system, provide him or her with a mentor who is in the same academic discipline, and structure a significant teaching or administrative experience for each fellow. The fellow has to spend six to nine hours per week on campus and is involved in the regular activities of the campus, including attendance at departmental meetings and at professional development activities and orientations. The fellow also conducts a class under the supervision of the mentor. Each fellow is paid a stipend of $6,000 for the academic year, and the mentor is either awarded release time or undertakes the responsibility under the additional-duties clause in the contract. Because the colleges have the greatest need to diversify the faculty, only teaching fellowships have been authorized in the first three years of the fellowship program. Each fellow's application is reviewed by a screening committee that recommends the fellow to the president. The executive director has final approval. Two very interesting elements are worth noting about the program. It is jointly sponsored by the board of trustees and the professional staff and faculty union—the Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges—with the union providing $50,000 a year to support the program. Also, it has been agreed that a fellow can, at the discretion of the president, be offered a position in the college without a search if the following conditions applied: (1) a position and funds are available; (2) an affirmative action goal existed at the college for that category of employee; and (3) the fellow is given a satisfactory evaluation by the college.

The Minority Fellowship Program is in its second year, and recruitment is under way for the third year. In the two years the system has hired four full-time and three part-time faculty from this program, and it promises to continue to be a rich source of candidates for positions in the system.

Conclusion

The programs described above constitute a portion of the concerted activity in which the Community and Technical Colleges of Connecticut have been engaged in order to respond to the challenge of enrolling minority students in greater numbers. As many are beginning to realize and accept, finding solutions to the many social difficulties that minority students face is no longer merely a matter of humanitarianism but of national self-interest. Connecticut's planning and policy development and the activities of the system's seventeen colleges are designed to respond sensibly to this challenge.

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Although there have been numerous publications centered on the Hispanic and black student and a recent increase in articles concerning the Asian student, there is relatively little research focusing specifically on retention of the Native American student.

Minority Student Retention

James C. Henderson

The National Task Force for Minority Achievement in Higher Education, formed by the Education Commission of the States in June 1989, recommends that states establish "proportional enrollment and comparable achievement" as goals for higher education systems. The task force believes that every institution in a state is responsible for helping to ensure that minorities enroll in higher education in proportion to their representation in the college-going population and reach achievement levels in all fields of study comparable to nonminority students (Education Commission of the States, 1990).

The Native American Student

Although there have been numerous publications centered on the Hispanic and black student and a recent increase in articles concerning the Asian student, there is relatively little research focusing specifically on retention of the Native American student. A special report prepared by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1989) presents perspectives on the tribal colleges located on the reservations that serve an entirely Indian student population. There are also community colleges outside of the reservation that have had marked success in serving the needs of the Native American student. The components that lead to success for the Native American student can also be applied to other minorities, but there are some unique factors relating specifically to the Native American that must be considered.

Educational Perspective. Native Americans are underrepresented in most institutions of higher education today. Because of the isolation of the

reservations, the cultural differences experienced between the two worlds occupied by Native Americans, and the expense involved in pursuing higher education, the barriers for young Indians seeking a degree are formidable. Very few colleges have sought out Native Americans. Their history in higher education has largely been one of exclusion or forced assimilation (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990).

American Indians have the highest dropout rate of all minorities. In the National Center for Education Statistics Dropout Rates in the United States report for 1988, the American Indians' dropout rate is 35.5 percent, compared to 22.2 percent for blacks, and 27.9 percent for Hispanics. The report also shows that Indians represent 3.1 percent of all dropouts, despite the fact that they account for only 0.9 percent of all elementary and secondary students (O'Brien, 1990).

Although American Indians are considered one minority group, in fact, there is wide diversity among the three hundred tribes in the continental United States and Alaska, and some two hundred languages are spoken. Awareness of the unique issues involved with Indian education is increasing, and both former Education Secretary Cavazos and Interior Secretary Lujan recently announced major initiatives to study and improve Indian education. Cavazos announced the establishment of a task force to review existing data and analyze all government programs that affect Indian education. Additionally, a series of meetings involving Bureau of Indian Affairs educators is currently taking place to discuss important Native American educational issues.

At many of the tribal colleges, retention remains a problem. For those who do finish school, the level of academic preparation is often very poor. The poor academic preparation and low self-esteem contribute to the dropout rate for Native Americans. Overall, at least 60 percent of white students who enter college obtain a degree, but less than one-third of the Indian college students graduate (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1989).

The Community College Role. Community colleges across the nation are developing programs that address the needs of the increasingly diverse student population. The minority education initiative is the first priority listed in the mission statement of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC). "AACJC will assist colleges with the adoption of aggressive policies and practices to improve the recruitment, retention, and success of students, helping to guide minority students through a successful college experience" (AACJC Public Policy Agenda, 1990, p. 1). In *Building Communities: A Vision for the Future*, the community college is charged with the obligation to help students succeed in higher education. This is the central mandate of the report: "The community college must continue to offer all students an open door and reaffirm to minority students the promise of empowerment through education" (AACJC, 1989, p. 10).

As of 1988, over 93,000 Native Americans were enrolled at a variety of colleges, an increase of over 19 percent in just ten years, with the greatest growth (16 percent) occurring at two-year institutions (Evanlauf, 1988). Native Americans also earned 3,196 associate degrees from community colleges in 1986-87.

Yet for students who transfer to a four-year institution, a recent survey indicates that the matriculation rate is a mere 27 percent, with over half of the Indian students leaving at the end of their first year (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990). Nearly three out of four Native American college students fail to earn degrees because of poor academic preparation, inadequate financial aid, or personal problems (Wells, 1989). Moreover, though undergraduate enrollments are up, the number of Native Americans in professional schools has dropped by 22 percent. With the anticipated increase in Native Americans, enrollments in higher education will have to climb considerably merely to maintain the same proportion to tribal populations.

It will be the role of the community college to ensure that the Native Americans who enter these institutions are encouraged to remain in college to receive the academic, social, and individual support required for them to reach their full potential. The community college will be the institution that will increase the numbers of Native American students who successfully transfer to a four-year institution and obtain a degree.

Components for Success: San Juan College

Bridges to the Public Schools. In order to encourage minority students to begin thinking about college, bridges to the junior high schools and high schools have been built by New Mexico's San Juan College. The college operates an Area Vocational School for high school junior and senior students and has formulated two-plus-two articulation agreements with the four public school districts. Many minority students enter college with credits earned in high school that may be applied to certificate and degree programs. The high school-community college bridge is strengthened by high school counselors directing minority students to the two-year institutions. At the community college, minority students receive personalized instruction, tutoring services, and counseling, which assist in building academic success.

One of the most unique programs offered by San Juan College to assist its minority students is the Possible Dream Program. Most minority students at the college need financial assistance to achieve their educational goals. In addition to providing scholarships, grants, work-study opportunities, and loans, San Juan College has initiated a scholarship program for every eighth-grade student in the county. The college invites eighth-grade students to begin a $10-a-month, prepayment plan that will provide for

two years of paid tuition when they are ready to enroll in the college. The program combines the monthly savings plan with a $125 scholarship, academic counseling, and a guarantee that tuition (now $360 annually) will not increase for those participating.

This program was designed to attract first-generation college students, many of whom are minorities. Now in its fourth year, the program is not limited to minority students, but 90 percent of the over four hundred students enrolled are members of a minority group. The Possible Dream Program builds an attitude among students in junior high school that college is within their reach. It motivates them to apply themselves while they are in high school so that they will be prepared to enter college. Family participation helps support the students' commitments.

In connection with the Possible Dream Program, the college has developed a matrix that identifies courses needed in high school to prepare for a specific college major. Each four-year institution within the region was canvassed for its specific major requirements, and the high school students are provided early information about the courses they need to reach their goals. The Possible Dream students are brought to the college campus for special orientation programs that encompass college offerings and career choices. A counselor works specifically with the Possible Dream students and their parents to encourage successful completion of high school and enrollment in college.

Native American Program. San Juan College retains a full-time director for the Native American Program who assists students in the transition from the reservation to college. The director provides counseling, assistance with scheduling, and information on tribal scholarships and financial aid.

Another function of the Native American Program is sponsorship of the Indian Club, the most active club on the San Juan College campus. The club provides leadership training for Native American students, as well as social interaction. Research indicates that students who are involved with campus organizations are more likely to complete a program than those who do not participate (Rooney, 1985). Being part of a group gives the students support, develops pride and confidence, and encourages them to be actively involved in college-wide activities. The club helps to foster the participation of many Native American students in other student organizations that focus on academic or vocational programs. These students successfully compete on state and national levels and serve as officers in the organizations. This involvement helps increase retention rates of minority students.

Assessment and Advisement. Critical to retention are assessment and advisement programs that place minority students in appropriate programs and at the correct level. San Juan College has established a placement testing center utilizing the computerized placement tests; these allow immediate scoring and generation of test results to aid college staff in placing

students in suitable classes. The assessment results are organized and presented to the students in a manner that enables them to understand their readiness to do college-level academic work.

The assessment establishes the students' level in reading, writing, and math and their study skills. Upon completion of the assessment, students are assigned to a faculty adviser who helps develop a course of study suited to their abilities and goals. This faculty member also acts as a mentor for the student while he or she is enrolled at the college.

Renewal Center. If a student is experiencing difficulty in course work, tutoring is available at no cost. The Renewal Center also provides self-study materials, as well as specialized language programs, for students whose first language is not English. Additionally, the center operates Project Read, which teaches reading to Native Americans, including older adults—many of whom not only do not read in English but also may depend exclusively on spoken Navajo. The difficulties that Native American students often have with English are different from those experienced by native speakers of Spanish or other languages. For example, the Navajo language has no plural or tense, and English-as-a-Second-Language instruction provided to Native American students needs to reflect the basic differences.

Special workshops on financial aid, academic study skills, and basic tips for students returning to school are frequently held. Often some minor frustration that could have been corrected through better communication causes a student to leave the college. The Native American student tends to avoid conflict and may turn away from a problem rather than confront the issue or seek assistance in resolving it.

Outreach Programs. San Juan College has established a center located in close proximity to the reservation in which a variety of developmental, basic adult education, general education, and community service classes are offered. The director of the center is a Native American, as is the staff. The college also offers basic education classes in many locations on the reservation. Native Americans who may be too intimidated to come to the college campus feel more comfortable in a familiar setting. The attendance in these outreach programs has increased steadily and has led to students continuing their education at the college campus.

A unique program offered by the college is the Early Childhood Education Program, which offers college courses and individualized field training on site on the Jicarilla Apache and Navajo reservations. This program prepares candidates for the National Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. The college provides comprehensive training in a nontraditional, competency-based educational format. The training is provided to more than one hundred Native American Head Start teachers who have significant impact on the development of children living in geographically isolated areas of the reservation. Nearly 33 percent of the children in the county are Native American or Hispanic.

Building Success for Minority Students

Classroom Experiences. In a survey of San Juan College students, the Native Americans responded that one of the primary reasons for selecting San Juan College was the quality of education offered. The facilities and equipment available were also deciding factors. Students felt that they were being well prepared for employment or to transfer to a four-year institution. Other prime factors included low tuition and proximity to the reservation, although there is a branch of a tribal college close by.

Faculty Role. It is important to recognize that instruction in American college classrooms presumes certain Western cultural values. Student behaviors that instructors routinely reward and note as signs of student interest, effort, and intelligence are not necessarily behaviors that are rewarded in non-Western cultures. For example, many Native American students do not respond verbally in class, nor do they make direct eye contact, as both behaviors are considered impolite in their culture.

A diverse faculty is essential to a pluralistic campus. At San Juan College the Native American faculty members and staff are important to student retention. Quite often, it is these individuals who can help the Native American student gain the self-confidence required for academic success.

Beyond the Classroom. There are educational experiences that are especially beneficial to minority students that go beyond the textbook and the classroom. As previously mentioned, being actively involved in campus organizations and activities increases retention. Finding a peer group that is supportive, as well as faculty or staff members that can serve as mentors, gives the student the encouragement to remain and complete a degree.

Of great importance to minority students who have not had experience in the world of work is exposure to a business or industry setting. If a cooperative educational program is not available, two weeks of a semester spent in a work setting gives the student the opportunity to observe business practices before seeking employment. At San Juan College every student in the Business Education Program is assigned to a work station. The students set three goals to be completed during this period, and their assigned supervisor on the job evaluates their performance. For the minority students this may represent their first experience with real job practices. Human contact and personal development opportunities are also critical for success, especially among minority students, in dealing with other students and coworkers.

Empowerment. Students who succeed in the nation's community colleges and universities are those who feel committed to the pursuit of their education and who empower themselves to achieve by their demands for learning excellence. Minority students are no exception. Those students who are empowered possess several personal skills to achieve their goals. Among those skills are intellectual risk taking, culture-specific and cross-

cultural interpersonal communication (ability to work effectively in the student's own culture and the mainstream culture), self-confidence, self-reliance, healthy physical and emotional self, problem-solving capability, and leadership abilities to work effectively within an organizational system (Terrell and Wright, 1988).

Through development of these and other empowerment skills, minority students can feel comfortable interacting in all campus situations. These skills are later transferable, so that students can then interact comfortably in the work place (Terrell and Wright, 1988).

Employment. Once the student has received an associate degree and has transferred or is employed, the effect of the retention effort can be measured. Through follow-up surveys of former students, a great deal of information can be obtained concerning reasons for choosing the institution and the factors influencing the decision to remain at the college to complete a program or a degree.

Native American students who attended San Juan College were recently surveyed to determine the factors that contributed to their continuing at the college. The students were employed at a major power plant and had successfully worked there for a number of years. The majority of respondents replied that the location close to home and low tuition were the major factors influencing their decision to attend the community college. Also of importance were the quality of the program and the interaction with the faculty. After graduating, the respondents felt they were well prepared to enter the work force. In reference to the preparation for employment, one respondent stated that more emphasis should be placed on problem-solving, decision-making, and creative skills in the courses.

The Human Resources Director at the power plant has developed a program to encourage the Native American employees to continue to learn, to establish goals, and to grow. She stated that the Native Americans have difficulty in setting goals and in thinking of future advancement. Through workshops the employees have developed more ability in these areas, which will lead to greater upward mobility. Retention programs for minority students in community colleges should consider these factors.

Transition to the University. Transfer from the community colleges to the four-year universities represents an important avenue to the baccalaureate degree in most states with large numbers of minority students (Richardson and Bender, 1987).

When a community college student has completed an associate degree and must repeat courses at the four-year institution, the student is penalized and discouraged from pursuing a baccalaureate degree. The citizens of the state are also penalized, for they have to pay twice for that student's education through state tax. Community colleges and four-year institutions must work together to increase the number of minorities transferring to senior institutions. Community colleges and senior institutions must also

jointly develop and adhere to articulation agreements that facilitate transfer (Rendón and Taylor). However, there must also be serious commitment at the university level to create a climate that encourages minority student success.

Educating community college students to the changes that will be expected of them as they transfer to the university is essential. For the Native American student, this may be the first experience in a large urban setting. Bridge programs that offer university orientation at the community college level will help the student prepare for the transition. Moreover, the identification of mentors at the university to assist the transfer students before they leave the community college setting, during the transition period, and throughout the first year would improve the students' adjustment to a new environment.

States that have established articulation programs between the community colleges and the universities have increased transfer rates for minority students. Improving opportunities for minority student achievement requires institutional cooperation and the willingness to place state priorities for education above institutional interests (Richardson and Bender, 1987). As Parnell contends, "The Key is synergy. Different systems and different academic disciplines acting together with one accord to produce results greater than the sum of the parts" (Parnell, 1990, p. 225).

Conclusion

Through a mutual commitment by all educational institutions to increase minority student transfer, retention, and success, the numbers will grow. It is imperative that this commitment be instilled in the mission of each institution, for as minorities become the majority population their education may well affect the future of this nation.

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Effective retention programs must be designed to overcome minority attrition.

Minority Student Retention: The Prince George's Community College Program

David P. James

A number of community colleges and state boards have initiated retention programs and policy recommendations to deal with the problem of minority attrition.

Faculty and staff retention-mentoring programs have been shown to be positively related to minority persistence by the Illinois Community College Board (1989), Mendoza (1988), and Pulliams (1988).

The Jefferson Community College (1982) Recruitment, Retention and Attrition (RRA) program of 1978 has resulted in production of several pamphlets, including *Black Students—Special Problems/Special Needs for Retention*, designed to address the problem of black student attrition.

Background

During the past two decades, Prince George's Community College in Largo, Maryland, has experienced a dramatic increase in its minority student population, from only 9 percent in 1970, to the 54 percent current level. The enrollment of black students has increased from 552 in 1970 to 6,000 in 1989, representing 47 percent of the credit enrollment. Growing concerns with minority student performance prompted Prince George's Community College administrators to examine attrition patterns in the institution. Institutional data revealed consistently lower course-completion and retention rates for minority students, particularly blacks and Hispanics. Moreover, fewer than 16 percent of entering black students whose stated goal was to earn the associate in arts degree were doing so within a four-year period, an attainment level fully one-third less than that for white students.

Initial Retention Efforts

Between 1985 and 1987 the college developed a number of services intended to address student retention. These included a required system of assessment and advisement for newly enrolling degree-seeking students, tutoring in selected subject areas, and career assessment and planning programs. In addition, the Presidential Task Force was created in 1985 and charged with designing a comprehensive program for minority retention. In 1987 a collegewide committee was established to develop further retention efforts.

Yet despite these efforts, many black and minority students seemed to be unaware of these support services and did not participate in scheduled retention-related activities. In 1987 the task force proposed the College Success Project to increase the retention rate of first-time, full-time black male students. Black male students were targeted, based on the college's Office of Institutional Research and Analysis data on attrition, which clearly identified them as the students most at risk.

In 1987 the college received funding from the Maryland State Board of Higher Education to implement the College Success Program. Fifty first-time, full-time black males were selected for participation. Each student was assigned a mentor who assisted him in the development of college survival skills. Upon conclusion of the first year of grant funding, the Minority Advisory Committee was formed and recommended that the College Success Program be expanded to include first-time, full-time black females and renamed the Black Student Retention Program.

Present Institutional Models

Prince George's Community College secured state funding to implement the Black Student Retention Program. This funding proved to be a catalyst for a federal grant that enabled the college to develop a broad-based minority student retention program.

Objectives. The general objectives of the Black and Minority Student Retention Programs are (1) to increase the retention rate for first-time, full-time black male and female students, (2) to increase the retention rate for all other minority students (Asians, Hispanics, Native Americans), (3) to increase faculty and staff sensitivity and skills in working with minority student populations, (4) to improve minority student adaptation to the campus environment, and (5) to develop a comprehensive minority student retention program that is fully integrated within the college's organizational structure.

Support Services. The major supportive retention activities provided for both programs are the following:

- Mentors assigned to individual students
- Academic monitoring of all program participants during the third, fifth, and eighth weeks of the semester
- Career assessment and planning
- Personal-adjustment counseling
- Workshops and learning fairs focusing on college survival hints
- Tutorial services
- Parent/student/mentor orientation programs each semester
- Professional development activities to increase faculty and staff sensitivity and cross-cultural awareness
- Social and cultural activities promoting retention.

Selection Criteria for Students. Participation in the Black and Minority Student Retention Programs is voluntary. To be eligible for the support services provided by both programs, students are required to fill out an application. In addition, all applicants are required to sign the Mentee Agreement Form, which describes the responsibilities of student participants.

First-time, full-time black students are eligible for the Black Student Retention Program. All other minority students (Asians, Hispanics, Native Americans, and part-time black students) are eligible for the Minority Student Retention Program.

Mentoring. The major element of service for students in both programs is the individual support provided by mentors. All mentors are drawn from the college's full-time and part-time faculty, staff, and administrators. The mentors are selected by the project director based upon the following criteria: (1) successful record of working with students, (2) diverse backgrounds and interests, (3) professional training and experience, (4) academic and personal counseling skills, (5) knowledge of the college and its resources, and (6) desire to serve as a mentor (demonstrated by the application process). The mentor's responsibilities include monitoring participant academic progress, creating a supportive environment conducive to academic success, and initiating referrals to appropriate support-service units, such as the Writing Center, Tutoring Center, and Counseling Center.

Mentor-student matching is primarily based upon information listed on the student's application, including: (1) major or program of interest, (2) skills to be developed, (3) interest in student services such as tutoring, study skills counseling, and career assessment/planning, and (4) assistance needed to achieve personal and career goals.

All mentors participate in training workshops each semester. The workshops focus on effective techniques designed to assist mentors in developing positive relationships with minority students. Workshop training has also emphasized fostering supportive classroom environments for minority students and prescribing appropriate support-service referrals

within the college. In August 1989 eighty-six mentors took part in a workshop as part of the college's fall professional development program. Participants rated this program as outstanding.

Students selected for program participation also receive direct instructional support from trained staff members of the college's Tutoring Center, Writing Center, Counseling (Career Assessment) Center, and Vocational Support Services. Instructional support personnel (including tutors) selected to participate in the retention programs undergo training similar to that provided for the mentors.

Results and Outcomes

Student participation in the Black Student Retention Program has increased from an initial enrollment of 34 in spring 1988 to 346 in fall 1989. Participation in the Minority Student Retention Program has grown from an initial enrollment of 92 students in spring 1989 to 221 in fall 1989.

The number of mentors providing individual support to program participants in both retention programs has increased from 11 in spring 1988 to 86 in fall 1989.

Black Student Retention. The spring 1988 to fall 1988 retention of Black Student Retention Program participants was 71 percent, twelve percentage points above the average retention rate for black students. Participant retention from fall 1988 to spring 1989 rose to 80 percent. From fall 1989 to spring 1990, participant retention rose to 83 percent, which exceeds the average rate for any identifiable student population subset on the campus.

Minority Student Retention. From spring 1989 to fall 1989 retention of Minority Student Retention Program participants was 67 percent, five percentage points above the average retention rate for minority students. Participant retention from fall 1989 to spring 1990 rose to 69 percent.

Orientation programs have been developed to provide structure to the relationship of mentors to participants and their parents. The orientation program, which was tested initially during August 1988, focuses on the nature of the mentoring relationship, the definition of academic and career goals, collegiate classroom expectations, orientation to campus support-service resources, and individual student problem-solving skills. Participants at the August 1988 to 1989 orientations numbered over three hundred and included student participants, parents, and faculty/staff mentors.

Program Assessment

The Office of Institutional Research and Analysis conducted an evaluation of the Black Student Retention Program during the spring 1989 semester to determine whether or not the program had an impact on the performance

and retention of students who participated in the program during the fall 1988 semester. Outcomes were also calculated for two comparison groups: (1) first-time, full-time, degree-seeking black students who were not participants; (2) first-time, full-time, degree-seeking white students.

The highlights and findings of the report, *Assessment of the Black Student Retention Program: Program Evaluation PE89-1* (Prince George's Community College, 1989), were the following:

1. Sixty-six percent of the participants successfully completed 100 percent of their credit courses, equaling the percentage of the first-time, degree-seeking white group. In the black comparison group, only 51 percent completed 100 percent of their credit courses.

2. Eighty percent of the students who were mentees in fall 1988 returned to the college in spring 1989. Seventy-three percent of the black comparison group came back, and 83 percent of the white comparison group returned.

3. The average credit-hour completion rate of the groups were as follows: participant group, 81 percent; white comparison group, 81 percent; and black comparison group, 70 percent.

4. The average term grade-point average for each group was the following: participant Mentee group, 1.99; white comparison, 2.19; and black comparison, 1.58.

5. In addition, the report included the results of a survey of participants and mentors in the Black Student Retention Program. The findings were as follows:

(a) Ninety-one percent of the responding participants found the Black Student Retention Program helpful or very helpful;
(b) Ninety percent of the responding participants would recommend the program to a friend;
(c) Ninety-three percent of the responding mentors stated that their responsibilities were either clearly or very clearly defined;
(d) Eighty-eight percent of the responding mentors would like to continue as mentors.

In general, the indicators showed the participants performing on a level with or slightly below that of the first-time, full-time, degree-seeking white students. When compared with the black comparison group, the participants had a higher credit-hour completion rate, grade-point average, and fall-to-spring retention rate.

Conclusion

The implementation of the model Black and Minority Student Retention Programs has resulted in increased retention rates, decreased attrition

rates, higher course-completion rates, expanded faculty/staff development programs for mentors, improved orientation programs for student participants and parents, positive student and mentor evaluations of the retention program, and the integration of the Black and Minority Student Retention Programs in the college's organizational structure through the administrative appointment of a project director.

Each institution needs to examine its institutional policies to determine their impact upon minority retention. Institutional commitment and the development of effective programs that appeal to large numbers of minority students can contribute to improved minority retention rates and, ultimately, increased graduation and transfer rates.

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ENLACE has gained a national reputation for developing a model Hispanic community mentor program.

Minority Student Retention: ENLACE

Mauro Chavez, Margarita Maestas-Flores

The community college, which serves as a cost-effective system for entering higher education, must pay much closer attention to the impact of first-generation Hispanic college students and their underrepresentation in higher education. Retention studies reveal that in California, where the majority of postsecondary Hispanics attend community colleges, approximately 50 percent of these students drop out during their first semester. Several studies have examined low student self-esteem and low teacher expectations, noting that previous attempts at educational reforms for improved Hispanic participation in higher education have been unsuccessful because these conditions have remained unchanged. Unless alternative or nontraditional teaching and learning methodologies are adopted, Hispanics will continue to be blocked in their efforts to acquire a meaningful education. Further, educational programs that connect students with successful role models from the same ethnic background help develop in the students, teachers, and community a sense of what can be accomplished and leads to positive consequences (Cummins, 1986).

ENLACE

Enlace (en la ce), from the Spanish verb *enlazar*, means "to bind or connect," "to bring together," "to create community." The *enlace* concept is capable of producing an evolving network of educational and community professionals and can integrate knowledge, resources, and influence to effect change and result in educational success. Such a program exists at Evergreen Valley College (EVC). It serves educationally disadvantaged and underrepresented Hispanic students in San Jose, California.

A Shared Mission

Formerly the PUENTE Project at EVC, the program evolved from a statewide model into a comprehensive one that has created a more individualized campus and community-based approach to meeting EVC's student and local community needs. The faculty developed an all-Hispanic team consisting of an English instructor, a math instructor, a counselor, community mentors, a program/mentor coordinator, and an administrative supervisor. Three coordinating bodies were established to assist in the program's mission and goals: a college coordinating committee, a community mentor council, and a mentor math-advisory committee for the pilot math project. Hence, ENLACE, a program signifying "A Community's Investment in Education," was formalized at EVC in March 1989.

The faculty team at EVC understood that the success of Hispanics in the college's educational district would have to be based on the investment of the entire community. The team's task was thus to bind together teachers, counselors, administrators, students, mentors, community organizations, student organizations, and the corporate community.

The mission and goals defined by the ENLACE team involve the following measurable objectives:

1. To retain and matriculate Hispanic students in higher education
2. To enable Hispanic students to complete successfully the cognitive academic core (English and math)
3. To have Hispanic students effectively (and in a reasonable time) enter the general education/transfer/ occupational curricula
4. To enlarge the number of Hispanic students who graduate with an Associate in Arts or Associate in Science degree
5. To increase the number of Hispanic students who transfer to four-year colleges and universities.

The Cognitive Core. ENLACE emphasizes the successful completion of what is called the "cognitive core" areas of general/transfer education. As noted above, the core consists of English and math. ENLACE identifies the English and math disciplines as the "twin gates" of academic achievement because English (reading and writing) and mathematical skills lie at the heart of a student's academic success in the general/transfer education curricula. The English component at EVC consists of a two-semester course sequence, English 330/1A; and the math component is composed of a two-semester course sequence, Algebra I/II. Successful completion of the English 330/1A sequence prepares students to fulfill their social science and humanities requirements; Algebra I/II prepares students to fulfill their natural and physical science requirements within the general education curricula.

By developing a synergistic organization among team members, char-

acterized by feelings of mutual trust, effective communication, role clarity, rapid feedback, and creativity, ENLACE provides students with individualized, nontraditional counseling, writing/math instruction, and personal contact with Hispanic professionals (mentors), who donate many hours in advising and assisting students to continue studies and pursue their educational goals.

Community Mentorship Program. ENLACE has gained a national reputation for developing a model Hispanic community mentor program. Lee Noel, president of the Center for Institutional Effectiveness and Innovations, referred to the EVC program as "one of the most progressive minority retention programs in the nation" (1988, p. 5).

The ENLACE Mentorship Program links Hispanic community professionals directly to the classroom learning process. For example, as part of their classroom assignments (particularly in English), ENLACE students work with a mentor whose profession is as closely related as possible to the student's major/career interest. The mentor activity is completed in addition to regular course requirements. The mentorship process has four objectives for the student:

1. *To Enhance Communication Skills.* Through the process of writing a letter of introduction, placing a telephone call to arrange an interview, and conducting an interview, the student utilizes communication skills. The requirement of preparing a mentor paper for the English class further improves writing abilities. Students develop drafts in class with their peers and share the final paper with the entire class—building oral communication skills, self-concept, and self-confidence. A final requirement of this assignment allows the student to write a letter of appreciation to the mentor.

2. *To Enhance Mathematical Skills.* Mentors from professions such as engineering, computer science, medicine, accounting, and business management are invited to the class to lecture on applied math (algebra), to explain how math relates to their professional area, and to participate in small group problem-solving sessions with students.

3. *Career Exposure.* As a result of interviewing a mentor, seeing the mentor on the job, and pursuing other contacts, students are exposed to a career field and have the opportunity to observe personally aspects of their career interest/educational major.

4. *Ethnic Identification in a Professional Field.* The mentor assignment allows students to see Hispanic role models; to share in a mentor's life, educational, cultural, and professional experiences; to see what it takes "to make it"; and to discover qualities the student may share with the mentor.

Although the mentorship assignment requires only the activities listed above, mentors and students are encouraged to continue contacts beyond the interview and classroom activities. Several long-term relationships have developed, some lasting through the student's studies at EVC and as he or she continues on to a four-year institution.

Results

ENLACE's model of linking classroom learning, counseling, and mentor experiences has proven highly successful. A three-year comparative study by the program's faculty of 115 ENLACE students and 273 non-ENLACE Hispanic students at EVC revealed several significant findings.

Students taught through the ENLACE model were almost twice as likely to complete English 330 than other Hispanic students enrolled in that course (89 percent/46 percent), completed English 1A at a rate nine times higher than their counterparts (70 percent/8 percent), completed English 1B at a rate fourteen times greater (14 percent/1 percent), and were three times as likely to be retained at EVC (53 percent/17 percent).

Whereas ENLACE participants accounted for only 30 percent of the total number of Hispanic students enrolled in English 330 during the three years, they accounted for 45 percent of the Hispanics who completed that course; 80 percent of the total who completed English 1A; 89 percent of those who finished English 1B; and 56 percent of the total number of Hispanics retained at EVC who began at the English 330 level.

ENLACE math students who enrolled in the Algebra I pilot section in fall 1988 completed the course at an 86 percent rate, compared to 36 percent for Hispanics in seven other college sections. Of that fall 1988 group, ENLACE students completed the spring 1989 Algebra II section at a 50 percent rate, compared to 2 percent for the general college group.

At the EVC Honors Convocation of May 1988, ENLACE students were represented in nine of the twenty-two college categories for scholarships/awards (41 percent). One ENLACE participant was the recipient of five scholarships—the most awarded in number or monetary amount to any one EVC student; this student was also the recipient of the Chicana Foundation Scholarship, one of three such northern California awards.

In 1989's All-College Honors Convocation, ENLACE students were represented in 42 percent of all categories, received 51 percent of all scholarship monies, and constituted 86 percent of all Hispanic students recognized for scholarships.

In a January 1989 statewide report identifying six other community college programs that focus on Hispanic student retention and transfer, EVC's ENLACE transferred twenty-one of fifty-one students reported since fall 1987—41 percent of the statewide total.

The data derived from the three-year study, the academic achievements of ENLACE students, and the current progress of students in the math pilot course have significance for the college and for the San Jose Hispanic community in the following areas:

1. The ENLACE instructional/counseling/mentor model improves the academic achievement levels of Hispanic students.

2. The structure serves to move more successfully "developmental English/ math" Hispanic students into the general education curricula.
3. ENLACE students have significantly higher retention levels than their non-ENLACE Hispanic counterparts at EVC.
4. The potential to transfer to four-year institutions, as well as that to complete requirements for the AA/AS degree, is significantly improved.
5. The model maximizes the opportunity for Hispanics to meet the matriculation goals of the college district.

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Several states have created public policy intended to perpetuate the ideals of educational equity.

Minority Transfer: A National and State Legislative Perspective

Louis W. Bender

A cynic might ask, "What kind of society is it that declares the highest of ideals in its nation's Constitution, yet responds more to economics or perceived crisis as the motivator of social progress than to its idealism?" It is a paradox that the truths like equality that guided the nation's founding fathers in drafting the Bill of Rights—and now found in charters and mission statements of both state and national public policy—are not found in the reality and daily activities of social institutions. This is true of higher education institutions, where deeds frequently fall short of, or are even contradictory to, the declaration of educational equity.

Our cynic could document the power of economics, as well as of real or perceived crisis, in obtaining institutional (and even individual) response. When the U.S. Court of Appeals in 1973 (*Adams* v. *Richardson*) upheld Judge John H. Pratt's order to dismantle ten previously segregated state higher education systems, a new agenda began to appear from state legislatures. To do otherwise would have resulted in loss of all federal funds, in effect an economic sanction against the state.

It took over a decade for all of the specified states to submit desegregation plans that were certified by the Office of Civil Rights of the Department of Education to be in compliance and thereby be removed from Judge Pratt's order to address imbalances of populations served.

Pratt's order in 1973 appears to have influenced a few states beyond those directly affected. Within a year of his order, the California legislature (in Assembly Concurrent Resolution 151) called upon the public higher education system to reach out to underrepresented groups and to ensure

the system's students reflected the ethnic, gender, and economic composition of the state.

Several states have created public policy intended to perpetuate the ideals of educational equality. The Florida Equity Act of 1984 mandated: "Educational institutions within the state system of public education shall develop and implement methods and strategies to increase the participation of students of a particular race, national origin, sex, handicapped or marital status in programs and courses in which students of that particular race, national origin, sex, handicapped, or marital status have been traditionally underrepresented . . ." Illinois, New York, and Washington have comparable statutes.

Minority Transfer: A National Economic Issue

An optimist might predict significant progress on articulation/transfer issues and educational equity involving two-year and baccalaureate institutions over the next decade simply because economics is again rapidly emerging as the power source and motivator for action. The American citizenry, whether wealthy and influential or poor and disenfranchised, recognizes the challenge and danger implicit in competition within the contemporary and future global economy. When ours was an agrarian society, education was the appropriate and valued means to attain intellectualism and culture. Now the importance of all education to the nation's economic well-being has removed applied or practical education from the historic less worthy/less prestigious status and elevated it to the level of theoretical knowledge.

A concurrent evolution from the view of education as a privilege (pre-World War II) to education as a right has guided public policy. There is even a contemporary appreciation of the national need for each individual to be educated to his/her maximum capacity if our economic prominence in a global society is to be maintained. Regardless of socioeconomic status, race or ethnicity, gender, or handicapped or marital status, each individual is important to the economic health of the nation. It is inevitable, as Parnell (1990) predicts, that either our system of higher education will respond or society will create a new social institution that does.

The underrepresentation of ethnic minority groups among baccalaureate graduates has emerged as a national concern simply because the baccalaureate is the gateway to the professions. As studies have consistently shown that minorities are more likely to begin their postsecondary educational experience in a two-year college (Astin, 1985; Richardson and Bender, 1987; Wilson and Melendez, 1988), state legislatures are increasingly looking to articulation and transfer between two-year and four-year institutions as a vital link.

The perception of the public and its elected representatives is that

transfer from two-year institutions to baccalaureate colleges and universities is a natural and free-flowing continuum. A central premise undergirding state systems of higher education as they have evolved during the era of open access is that students can freely move among institutions having significantly different missions, program emphases, and admissions criteria.

Studies of state coordinating-board policies too often fail to interpret or include institutional-level practice. The attitudes of faculty, relationships among key institutional administrators, and the magnitude of administrative bureaucracies influence the degree to which coordinating-board intentions become operational in the transfer experience. Furthermore, rarely are such studies disaggregated by race or ethnicity.

With nearly one-quarter of our land and resources now owned by other nations, the American public is looking for action from the national and state legislative policymakers. In turn, their policies are calling for higher education to deliver.

Problems of Legislation

A subtle but significant problem of legislation concerning ethnic-minority transfer students is the mislabeling by educators of certain legislative policies as minority initiatives. This practice can be verified easily by unobtrusively questioning administrators or faculty about the ethnic-minority-targeted services their institutions offer. Typically, among the answers will be assistance in overcoming academic deficiencies, financial aid policies, and advising and counseling practices (ranging from career, to academic, to "early alert" systems). In reality, such services are required by any student who arrives at the institution with deficiencies. Socioeconomic status is a better indicator that a student will need support than race or ethnicity.

A national longitudinal study of the activities and experiences of the 1980 class of high school seniors revealed that high socioeconomic status (SES) students were more than three times (61 percent) as likely to enter baccalaureate programs as were low-SES students (19 percent); low-SES students were also twice as likely to withdraw after entry as the high-SES entrants (National Center for Education Statistics, 1984). (SES was determined by the parents' education, family income, father's occupation, and household items.) Moreover, the participation rates of middle-SES students were consistently closer to the high SES group than the low SES group. Because minorities are disproportionately found to have lower SES, their transfer-program entry and success pattern mirrors their socioeconomic status and leads to the inaccurate generalization that academic support programs are minority initiatives.

Since the mid 1980s, the environmental factors that impede or serve as barriers to minority success have been identified by the American Council on Education, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teach-

ing, and researchers Allen (1986), Tinto (1987), Richardson and Bender (1987), and Boyer (1987). The educational environment, perceived or real, can be the determining factor in retention and success. Attitudinal factors, as well as behaviors, have increasingly emerged as critical elements of the campus and classroom atmosphere Research has also consistently verified the central role faculty play in creating the environment and addressing the problems of transfer and articulation.

Existing Idealism

Our mythical cynic could point to an abundance of declarations from national and state leaders appealing to the idealism of institutions and faculties. For example, the Task Force on Minority Student Achievement of the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) stated, "As educators, we can simply no longer content ourselves with the progress for minorities that is episodic, grudging and vulnerable to quick reversal at the slightest hint of benign indifference. What is needed is a level of commitment that produces change so fundamental that the risk of retreat is forever banished" (1987, p. 1).

The Ford Foundation has made a grant to the SHEEO organization to support a project to improve minority baccalaureate achievement through grants that will enable a number of states to strengthen collaboration, transfer policies, support mechanisms, and retention and to improve the campus environment, with the state coordinating agency playing a central role. The Ford and Mott Foundations, as well as several other philanthropic foundations, are increasingly directing resources to support minority transfer/articulation projects in response to an idealism that could result in substantive practices and change.

State master plans for higher education also establish priorities for institutions to achieve the ideal of educational equity and student success by translating words into deeds. Illinois, Maryland, New York, Florida, and California include provisions on minority-transfer success in their statewide master plans and periodically review the actual performance of the public institutions in achieving declared goals.

Even our cynic might become optimistic when observing the array of national organizations that have now established minority transfer as a national priority. The American Council on Education, supported by a Ford Foundation grant, has undertaken a project to foster educational equity with emphasis on transfer and articulation between two-year and four-year institutions. The American Association of Community and Junior Colleges adopted minority student success as one of its major public policy goals in 1990 and declared 1991 The Year of Transfer and Articulation. These national actions can contribute to awareness, open-mindedness, and commitment to action at the campus level.

Yet the key to success remains the human element on each campus, especially the faculty. Baccalaureate faculty are in a position to dictate the nature and level of cooperation, for they have ultimate authority over their curriculum. If they choose to remain in their ivory towers and be judgmental, articulation will not improve. But if they accept and respect two-year faculty as professionals and honor the integrity and appropriateness of their different institutional missions and cultures, then face-to-face faculty collaboration will assure minority student success.

A Policy Framework

Knoell (1990) and Bender (1990) agree that collaboration between two-year and four-year faculties represents the single most important element to be created if institutional response is to be positive and timely. Knoell advocates voluntary efforts, whereas Bender believes that legislative mandates are necessary in order to realize the necessary change in faculty attitudes and behaviors. Bender went so far as to advocate that Congress study the injustice to federal financial aid recipients and the cost to taxpayers that occurs when public institutions require such recipients to repeat course work that had already been successfully completed. Using the constitutional welfare-clause authority, Congress should enact legislation that would deny federal funds to states that do not correct such injustices.

Bender also recommended that Congress determine whether regional or professional accrediting bodies violate the rights of federal financial aid recipients when they impose requirements that are essentially barriers to transfer and articulation between two-year and four-year programs. Only one regional accrediting agency was identified in Bender's study as treating transfer and articulation in the same manner as affirmative action policies.

But the ultimate solution to the problem of education equity and minority transfer will emerge from each state's establishment of a policy framework for prioritization and action. Although individual states may have already enacted some or many of the provisions recommended below, none have provided for a comprehensive, systematic framework.

First, the legislature, governor, and higher education boards (whether coordinating or governing and representing each sector or all sectors of the postsecondary system) must make a commitment to policies and programs that insure an educational environment of fairness and responsiveness for each student, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or economic circumstance.

Second, an independent task force representative of each state's ethnic composition should be established to determine at both state and campus levels the status of educational equity and minority-transfer success.

Third, each public institution should be required to develop campus policies that foster an appreciation of all individuals, regardless of heritage and background, and that include provisions for preventing, reporting,

monitoring, evaluating, and responding to acts of prejudice, hatred, and violence.

Fourth, the legislature should provide incentive programs to financially support or reward institutions that cooperatively conduct early outreach programs, summer bridge programs, and dual-enrollment programs focused on underrepresented minority-student populations. Furthermore, legislatures should provide incentive differential funding for upper-division institutions that formalize recruitment, admissions, orientation, and other support of minority associate-degree-graduate transfers. Research has conclusively verified the significant enhancement for completion and grade-point-average success when students complete associate degree requirements before transferring.

Fifth, legislatures should offer incentive funding for initiatives designed to increase minority enrollment in fields where minorities are underrepresented. Two-year and four-year institutions should also be rewarded when they establish goals and measurable objectives to increase the number of minority students who transfer.

Sixth, legislatures must also provide special funding or incentive grants for programs promoting sensitivity training for college professional and support personnel on issues of race, class, and culture. Faculty senates or comparable faculty governance bodies should be called upon to establish policies and programs that support multicultural understanding and educational equity.

Seventh, every state needs an information system with data bases that furnish a clear picture of transfer activity, including facts about the flow of transfer and a record of student progress after transfer. The information system should also assess the effectiveness of transfer policies and procedures by identifying the problems encountered by minority students when transferring, as well as other barriers that inhibit minority transfer.

Eighth, the information system should be comprehensive and support the transfer process by including computerized course-equivalency information, course prerequisite/requisite requirements for majors, and electronic transcripts.

Finally, legislatures should require a biannual report on progress and problems in achieving true education equity from both the coordinating or governing boards of the institutions, as well as from the task force on educational equity.

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We need to focus on transfer as an activity that students undertake, not simply as institutional actions to assist transfer students.

The Many Faces of Transfer Education

Judith S. Eaton

When faculty and administrators at various community colleges begin to talk about transfer, it quickly becomes apparent that they mean a variety of quite different institutional functions. *Transfer*, for the purposes of this chapter, refers to a particular form of behavior in which students seek to move from a two-year school to a four-year institution. Yet if we visited any number of community colleges throughout the country, we also would find transfer identified with articulation agreements, the liberal arts curriculum, a counseling and advising center, or institutional research efforts.

When we talk about transfer in terms of diverse institutional operations, what we mean is less than clear. This circumstance contributes to a further confusion in our thinking in that we treat transfer as something colleges do as distinct from something that students do. If we seek to define a desired institutional role and to identify transfer success and failure, we need to focus on transfer as an activity that students undertake, not simply as activities by institutions to assist transfer students.

The transfer function, in the minds of some, is not a matter for individual institutions alone. Transfer involves the relationship between and among different kinds of institutions and, as such, calls for forms of control and management that supersede the authority of any single college. Transfer issues are then described in the language of course-equivalency guides, through pages in college catalogues, and other written agreements, perhaps for regions or consortia. At times, this approach involves bilateral or multilateral institutional arrangements. In other instances, it involves state-elected officials, state bureaucracy, or state agencies. It may concern interested constituencies or various interest groups, such as community-based organizations or those concerned with the implications of transfer for

women and minorities. At yet other times, institutional commitment to transfer is affected by the prevailing policy position of national organizations. To the extent that community colleges allow themselves to be led by the policy preferences and values of those outside their institutions or even geographic areas, they are failing to meet an institutional responsibility and important educational obligation.

When we begin to probe the phenomenon of transfer, we find ourselves dealing with a surprisingly complex academic and political issue, going well beyond the apparently common-sense notion with which we are familiar. Examining transfer reveals touchy political dimensions within an institution, arising from faculty involvement, academic preferences, and the politics of the curriculum. Addition[illegible]e transfer function is viewed as problematic with community college [illegible]tors who are sometimes uncertain of how it fits within the polymorphous mission of their institutions. Finally, effective transfer involves grappling with difficult academic and organizational decisions, such as the question of sanctioning early transfer, the support of career transfer, developmental education and transfer, and equity issues.

Underlying the various approaches on the part of community college educators to transfer—whether discussed in terms of regulation, contribution to baccalaureate education, or, as will be further discussed, data and definition—are broad and emotionally charged issues of community college mission and purpose. Those who view community colleges as comprehensive value the transfer function, but not too much. Educators who see the efforts of community colleges as primarily directed to vocational students are apprehensive about the current emphasis on transfer. Some are even threatened; they perceive community colleges as being urged to return to a junior-college status and to renounce a successful vocational emphasis. Finally (and for reasons not at all clear), when transfer is probed as a measure of institutional effectiveness, it is viewed as a challenge to fundamental community college worth in a way that similar scrutiny of, for example, occupational education enrollments would not be. Perhaps the reason is that transfer education is the primary means whereby community colleges assert themselves academically within higher education. Perhaps transfer education is viewed as collegiate in a way that occupational and developmental education are not. Perhaps the reason is related to an anti-intellectualism that is reflected in the thinking of many community college practitioners.

This chapter examines the complexities of transfer education in community colleges today. Although we acknowledge that there are important issues in transfer education involving four-year schools, the role of these institutions is not discussed. Rather, the chapter focuses on various treatments of transfer education in community colleges: transfer as defined by student behavior, transfer as described by institutional or organizational

behavior, and transfer as described by academic practices. It ends with a recommendation that we pay especially close attention to academic practices and an academic model of transfer education as a particularly valuable conceptual approach to the improvement of transfer education in community colleges.

Transfer as a Matter of Student Behavior

In 1989 and 1990 we saw a number of reports and books issued that focused attention on the transfer function of community colleges. Their analysis of transfer activity was based on quantitative descriptions of student behavior. For the most part, these works were based on two data sets, the National Longitudinal Study (NLS) of 1972 high school graduates and the High School and Beyond (HSB) data collected on high school graduates beginning in 1980, as well as on work done in various states such as New York and California.

Although there was virtually no agreement about a definition of transfer, critics such as Pincus and Archer (1989), Brint and Karabel (1989), Lee and Frank (1989), and Dougherty (1987) found community colleges to be relatively ineffective agents of educational, and thus socioeconomic, mobility. Their observations were grounded in two concerns: the limited extent to which community colleges were assisting students, especially minority students, to move into baccalaureate institutions and, as a consequence, the limited extent to which community colleges were effective catalysts in the redressing of social inequality.

Observers who were less disparaging of community college efforts, such as Grubb (1990), Adelman (1989), and Cohen and Brawer (1989), differed from the critics not so much in the quantitative descriptions of transfer activity but in their judgments about whether these descriptions reflected effective or ineffective transfer commitment on the part of community colleges. They did not rush to judgment about community college transfer success or the lack thereof. Transfer rates, as described by critics and observers alike, ranged from 5 percent to 30 percent of the community college student population, depending on the source and the definition of transfer.

The analysis of the NLS 1972 data base by Adelman (1989) provides significant information on transfer education in community colleges. NLS has several advantages: it is based on transcripts as well as surveys; it provides a sixteen-year profile of students education (as compared with information generated about community college students only four or six years after their high school graduation); and it can be compared to surveys of student self-reporting about their educational activity in order to confirm the accuracy of these surveys. It also has some disadvantages: the transcripts are for only 12,600 students; substantive judgments have to be

made about the meaning of some inconclusive transcript data; and the relationship between the transcript data and the survey data is not always clear.

Nonetheless, as Adelman indicates, NLS data tell us a good deal about the transfer behavior of the 1972 group. The data indicate that one in seven students in the NLS attended a community college. Approximately nine percent (8.9 percent) of 1972 high school graduates who entered postsecondary education attended a community college and went on to earn a baccalaureate degree. Half of this nine percent earned an associate degree as well. Six percent of the students in the NLS attended both a community college and a four-year institution, with one-third of them earning an associate degree but not the baccalaureate.

Adelman's analysis confirms that transfer from and degree acquisition in community colleges are limited activities for the NLS 1972 population. He further maintains that community colleges function as occasional or intermediary or testing-ground institutions; that community colleges serve curricular purposes in the areas of health, business, engineering, and general studies more readily than the traditional liberal arts; and that community colleges will continue to serve majority students in significantly greater numbers than minority students.

Pincus and Archer, relying on work by Cohen and Brawer, Bensimon, and Palmer, suggest that community college transfer activity is limited to 15 to 25 percent of the general student population and to 20 to 30 percent of those who state an intent to transfer. Lee and Frank, using High School and Beyond data four years out, puts the transfer rate at 24.3 percent. Although Pincus and Archer and Lee and Frank do not establish benchmarks of transfer success on either an institutional, state, or national basis, they do conclude that the community college transfer experience involves too few people, especially (according to Pincus and Archer) too few blacks and Hispanics. Grubb compares transfer and baccalaureate attainment for those in the NLS study and the HSB studies four years out of high school and concludes that transfer activity in community colleges, as measured by either associate degree acquisition, baccalaureate degree acquisition, or transfer without a degree, is declining. Brint and Karabel conclude that the limited transfer activity of the community college is essentially a product of the ethos of vocationalism, an ethos that they contend was forced on community college faculty and students by national community college leadership.

Studies of transfer rates are largely confined to a few sophisticated community college states such as Florida, Illinois, Texas, and California. Here, the absence in many cases of any consistently applied definition of transfer, as well as pressure to meet the concerns and criticisms of legislators and education policymakers, results in uneven and inconclusive state reporting. The absence of institutional capacity to collect longitudinal data

on transfer students and the institutional failure to define transfer consistently are in part responsible for this situation.

At least two national efforts are under way to define transfer and develop data by the Center for the Study of Community Colleges (CSCC) and the National Effectiveness Transfer Consortium (NETC). Both focus on first defining transfer and then establishing institutional transfer rates. To date, CSCC has worked with forty-eight institutions and NETC with twenty-eight colleges. The American Association of Community and Junior Colleges is not engaged in any major study of transfer activity at this time but has urged that the transfer issue be framed less in terms of rates and more in terms of student intention to transfer and of the extent to which community college education was part of the prior education experience of baccalaureate-degree holders.

Transfer as described by student behavior, then, involves a variety of definitions and descriptions of numbers of students transferring. To understand the effectiveness of the transfer function, what counts as transfer success, and the strength of transfer education in community colleges based on analysis of student behavior, we will at some point need to arrive at some agreement about the manner in which we quantitatively describe transfer activity in our institutions.

Transfer as a Matter of Regulation of Organizational Behavior

Some observers do not focus on the extensiveness of transfer activity but on the governing relationships associated with transfer. Knoell (1990), Kintzer (1989), and Bender (1990) all concentrate their efforts on articulation agreements, laws, or regulations associated with transfer. They do not approach the issue from a quantitative perspective, or by attempts to define transfer, or by use of student transfer traffic as a basis for determining transfer success or failure. As a group, these researchers' underlying assumption appears to be that if we have effective agreements about elements of transfer (such as course-equivalency guides, registration, and honoring of the associate degree), we can consider our institutional effort successful without having to count transfer students.

The notion here is that such arrangements make transfer possible for whoever is interested and that we should not have preconceptions regarding transfer success defined by an arbitrary rate. This group of observers places considerable confidence in the impact of state regulation. Those pursuing this approach to transfer education distinguish among law, guideline, and regulation used at the state level to govern transfer. Kintzer identifies thirty states involved in monitoring transfer through at least one of these strategies. Bender points out that the designation *community college* covers a multitude of kinds of two-year institutions and that any evaluation

of the nature of state control must be considered in light of this fact. Bender also urges that we focus on institutional leadership, faculty involvement, and the role of accrediting bodies in order to improve transfer. He suggests that there be federal- and state-level scrutiny of student and institutional assistance programs in order to avoid duplication of financial assistance, that federal and state governments influence accrediting agencies to ensure that barriers to transfer do not exist, and that transfer and articulation become major agenda items for the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges.

Knoell's major study of the past twenty-five years of transfer and articulation, funded by the Ford Foundation, is global; it makes recommendations for government, institutions, and faculty, aimed at further structuring transfer activity. Knoell appears uncomfortable with linking transfer success to transfer rates. She looks to the strengthening of transfer through increasingly careful governing of key elements of transfer relationships, such as student flow, the policy preferences of elected officials, admissions practices, and systemwide regulations. The works of Knoell, Bender, and Kintzer do not address the evidence about whether government interventions make a difference: there are states in which there are articulation agreements and evidence of significant transfer activity and also states with fairly elaborate articulation structures and limited transfer activity. Abundant transfer activity is not always accompanied by state regulatory behavior.

Transfer as a Matter of Academic Practice

The traditional academic approach to transfer involves assuring that full-time associate-degree seekers match their two-year program with a baccalaureate program. This practice can work well when there are some shared understandings about course content and academic standards. This cooperation is most likely to occur when a community college has been able to sustain strong college-level academic programs for reasonably well-prepared students. When community colleges have populations of significantly underprepared students who are working, who are part-time to the point where they have no recognizable program, or who are in nondegree programs, transfer is problematic.

Transfer education poses additional academic challenges. Most community college students who transfer do so early, prior to earning an associate degree. Yet we have not organized and structured the transfer experience for these people. Some states like California or Texas emphasize transfer independent of earning a degree, thereby rendering associate-degree status as essentially irrelevant to the baccalaureate.

Transfer education is generally identified with liberal arts or general education students in community colleges. However, there are significant numbers of career education students in community colleges who transfer.

Transfer education in many community colleges is not adequately connected to developmental programs so that remedial students can focus on longer-range educational goals. Finally, transfer education is still predominantly described as if students attended school full-time. There are few models for part-time, working, community college students who still wish to structure a transfer education.

The National Center for Academic Achievement and Transfer, funded by the Ford Foundation and the American Council on Education, is attempting to strengthen transfer education in community colleges, especially for black, Hispanic, and disadvantaged students, using primarily an emphasis on academic practices accompanied by evaluation of transfer effectiveness based on quantitative analysis of student behavior. It stresses an academic model in its approach. The National Transfer Center is engaged in several major activities, including a national Partnership Grant Program in which approximately $2,000,000 will be invested in bringing two- and four-year institutions together to redesign curricula, address issues of academic standards, and scrutinize pedagogy. In that it builds upon an academic model of effectiveness, the National Transfer Center differs from other major efforts to improve transfer through articulation or student service programs. An academic model is founded on the idea that dealing with teaching and learning issues is central to effectiveness, as indicated either by students transferring in numbers considered to indicate success or by the ease with which students in whatever numbers are able to successfully navigate interinstitutional transfer waterways. Faculty agreement about course content and expected performance of students is essential to the academic model as well.

An academic model of successful transfer calls for institutional examination of the courses and programs students use for transfer purposes, whether full- or part-time, degree or nondegree. The model requires consideration of the fit—in content and in requirements—between this community college course work and the four-year curriculum. It stresses that faculty at two- and four-year institutions work together to ensure that curricular substance and expectations regarding students' skills are consistent; and, therefore, that students are able, upon transfer, to handle successfully baccalaureate work. The academic model goes beyond the premise characteristic of articulation efforts that courses or programs already in existence will complement one another, to the actual collaborative development of curriculum content and academic performance. It places primary emphasis on the building of curriculum used for transfer as a shared enterprise between two institutions and as a fundamental mechanism to assure that community college students engage in learning activities that will be of greatest benefit in a four-year setting.

The critical point is the emphasis on shared curriculum and pedagogical development, as distinct from an approach where faculty try to coop-

erate after teaching and learning decisions have been made at their respective institutions. The academic model urges collaboration in the development of the transfer experience as distinct from reconciliation of already established and different transfer expectations at two- and four-year institutions.

The academic model is not an easy approach. It must take into account the politics of the curriculum, both within and among institutions. It forces us to confront differences of opinion about important academic issues such as general education, liberal arts distribution requirements, and institutional performance standards. It calls for cooperation concerning curriculum that is extraordinarily difficult to achieve in even one college or university, compounded by the need to bring two institutions together. The academic model also suggests that meaningful change takes place neither easily nor quickly: the politics of curriculum development result in a pace of change that is slow and deliberate, reflective of the inertial character of department and faculty politics.

The academic model moves us immediately into the difficult arena of varying approaches to academic standards, alternative visions of an educated person, varying ideas about curricular content, and sincere differences of opinion regarding access and achievement in higher education. The academic model involves confronting the most fundamental intellectual values of the community college.

In summary, an academic model for transfer education is built upon two obvious yet powerful assumptions about academic life: the greatest amount of a student's time on campus is spent with faculty in the classroom, and institutional expectations about transfer are based on academic decisions about course substance and academic standards. Students who transfer do so on the basis of agreements about academic content and standards. The academic model stresses the collaborative development of responses to critical questions of course substance, desired pedagogy, and academic standards as distinct from unilateral development of courses and standards within individual institutions to be followed by efforts to find areas of agreement with other institutions. The academic model focuses on the academic competence and capacity needed by students for baccalaureate-level work, stresses the creation of shared understandings and expectations between the academic faculty and administrators at two- and four-year institutions, and emphasizes agreement about curriculum content and levels of academic performance.

The academic model is enhanced by attention to student behavior as a means of identifying the extent of transfer activity and establishing benchmarks of transfer success. Here the Cohen and Brawer definition of a transfer rate, emerging from the Ford Foundation-funded Transfer Assembly, is especially valuable. Cohen and Brawer call for establishing a transfer rate based upon institutional data on community college students who are

followed longitudinally through their respective academic careers. Cohen and Brawer define transfer rate from analysis of that population of students (1) with no prior college experience, (2) who have completed at least twelve college credits in the community college, and (3) who, within five years of entering the community college, took at least one credit course at a four-year school. The forty-eight institutions with which they have worked using this definition identified a transfer rate of 23 percent. The institutions willing to undertake this approach to transfer have a twofold task: to establish a research program to ensure longitudinal data collection and, based on their information on transfer rates, to establish benchmarks of institutional transfer success or failure. It is one thing to have information concerning an institutional transfer rate; it is another to identify indicators of effectiveness based on careful consideration of institutional purpose and context.

Conclusion

The transfer function in community colleges to date has taken on many forms and is guided by a decidedly diverse set of assumptions about the purpose of community college education. It is unlikely that any one view of transfer education will prevail. What is probable is that we will see increased concentration of attention on the various transfer issues with a twofold result: we will do a better job of describing and analyzing transfer activity within our institutions as measured by the numbers of students transferring, and transfer students' success in attaining the baccalaureate will increase. The transfer function of the community college—its skill at assisting and enabling students to move successfully into four-year institutions—will emerge enriched and strengthened.

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Community colleges trying to strengthen the transfer function must not ignore the central importance of curriculum for empowering minority students to achieve educational goals.

A Model in Community College Transfer Programs

Aram L. Terzian

Strengthening the transfer function of community colleges centers on two fundamental and closely related tasks. The first of these is the responsibility to provide a coherent and appropriate educational experience for students. Richardson, Fisk, and Okun (1983) identified the lowering of literacy norms in the community college classroom and student failure to pursue a coherent program of study as major impediments to the upward mobility of community college students. Cohen and Brawer (1987) have been concerned that colleges surrender their authority over the scope and direction of student learning in the liberal arts when they promote and certify indiscriminate student course taking. They have perceived recent curriculum efforts in community colleges as moving towards effective sequencing and program completion, academic acculturation, and a renewed interest in social justice.

The second task for strengthening transfer is providing a supportive academic environment that encourages and motivates students to take themselves seriously as learners. This task can be accomplished by developing a special kind of academic community around the curriculum that provides the support and encouragement students need, both to see transfer as an option and to successfully move on to four-year colleges. Rendón and Nora (1988) pointed to a variety of student and institutional attitudes that weaken the possibility of minority students transferring to four-year colleges. Their interpretation of studies of student behavior suggests that although most students plan to transfer, they are not integrated in the social community of the college, are not encouraged to seek transfer as an option, and have few contacts with faculty outside of the classroom.

Tinto (1987) found that students' willingness to continue in college, when other things are equal, is related to their daily interactions with faculty outside of the classroom.

The story at Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) is one example of a college's efforts to approach the task of improving transfer opportunities through altering classroom practices, enriching the curriculum, and developing a supportive academic community. The college's approach also includes a strong faculty and student network between CCP and the major transfer institutions.

Building a Coherent Curriculum

The narration begins in 1983, when several deans of academic divisions and a small group of faculty attempted to address the seemingly incoherent course-taking behaviors of large numbers of students enrolled in the college's General Studies Program. This program developed in an atmosphere similar to many urban community colleges, where primary attention was given to access. Cohen and Brawer have described this preoccupation with access as resulting in students using the community college experience in ways that did not foster progression towards the baccalaureate.

Of equal concern to this group of professional staff at CCP was the intellectually limiting classroom practice of employing passive learning and requiring students merely to recall bits of information accumulated from classroom lectures and assigned readings. Understanding the problem as one that could not be resolved solely by redistribution of courses or by improved support services, this small group sought to use the power of curriculum as the centerpiece of any effort to improve transfer. Their effort resulted in the college's being one of six community colleges across the country to be awarded a Transfer Opportunity Grant from the Ford Foundation.

The Transfer Opportunities Program. A central element for the faculty of the Transfer Opportunities Program (TOP) is the common recognition that many students come from backgrounds that have not prepared them to appreciate or identify with academic life. They come with an understanding of education as simply a credentialing device earned by the accumulation of a defined number of credits. Their previous learning experiences leave them without adequate models of intellectual activity, and they often experience cultural conflicts when exposed to academic discussion requiring controversy and debate. Perhaps most importantly, many of the students come to the college lacking the community resources and educational prerequisites important to their chances for successful transfer.

The Transfer Opportunities Program offers students in General Studies an alternative to viewing college as "banking" a number of courses and credits and using whether or not they transfer to four-year colleges as the

sole criterion. TOP sees the real educational task as preparing students to perform well at their transfer institution by replacing the independent, three-credit course with a twelve-credit unit of instruction staffed by a core group of faculty large enough to offer a vital intellectual community for students. The pedagogical approach mixes lectures with seminars, small-group discussion, "writing across the curriculum," and other activities that draw faculty and students into closer contact. Students can only take themselves seriously as learners if they enter into and experience the academic culture. Once they view themselves as members, they will be empowered to pursue academic goals beyond the community college.

Initially, TOP faculty engaged in three semesters of staff development activities. During the first semester, faculty teams met together to review texts and materials that were being proposed for use in the twelve-credit cluster. During the second semester the faculty team taught the cluster experimentally. The third semester was used as a reflection and refinement semester for evaluating the efforts of the second semester and for recommending changes.

Faculty teaching in TOP are required to renegotiate the norms of literacy by agreeing on the types of writing assignments, the uses to be made of primary texts, and the manner in which such texts are to be interpreted by students. As can be imagined, such agreements do not come easily and require weekly meetings to discuss student assignments and their relationship to learning objectives. They also require a special type of faculty member who is able to move beyond the confines of his or her individual classroom and consider teaching from the requirements of a broader curricular perspective.

During the first semester of study, full-time students are enrolled in a twelve-credit program, either *Introduction to the Social Sciences* or *Introduction to the Humanities*. During the social science semester students are scheduled as a group with four faculty members, three from the social sciences and one from English. In addition, student groups meet in counseling-mentoring seminars, team taught by a social science instructor and a counselor. During the humanities semester, four faculty work together with similar groups of students.

TOP is now ending its fifth year and has established itself as a small learning community within the broader General Studies Program. Since its inception in 1984, TOP has been serving between 70 and 160 students each semester with from three to five faculty teams. Preliminary study of the outcomes for minority students has been encouraging, but further, more in-depth analysis of both the quality of the educational experience and the longer-term outcomes is needed to help give future direction to the effort.

The TOP effort is only the beginning of the story of curriculum change at CCP. The most difficult challenge for any academic organization is moving forward from a small pilot effort at curricular reform to actually making significant changes for large numbers of students. The task is

difficult enough when the focus is on the introduction of a new set of course requirements but becomes extremely complex when faculty are being asked to examine their classroom practices and agree to share a common pedagogical perspective. Add to this complexity the need to offer such a curricular experience for all learners—part-time and full-time, both on-campus and at community service sites—and the organization is faced with a monumental challenge.

From TOP Project to General Studies Curriculum Reform

In the summer of 1987, CCP began to mobilize its faculty with an intensive five-week planning seminar to design a coherent curricular structure for General Studies based partially on the experiences in the TOP and partially on those of other faculty engaged in the Humanities Enrichment Program funded by the National Endowment of the Humanities. The group agreed to the following basic principles of classroom practice that would be incorporated in any course developed or revised for the General Studies Program: use of original texts whenever possible, use of inquiry and interpretive skills, and requirement for critical writing and revision assignments.

At the urging of the college's president, the board of trustees agreed to provide institutional funding for staff and curriculum development over the five years of the project. Although the exact nature of the new curriculum is still being considered by the faculty at large, the General Studies Curriculum Committee is recommending the following elements as central to the curriculum:

Requirement to take a certain number of courses developed for General Studies and identified as critical thinking and writing courses
Core of courses required of all General Studies students to be selected from among various disciplines
Strong recommendation to take English composition and an entry-level math course upon entry into the college
Two semesters of the same science
Inclusion of national and international perspectives to help students broaden their vision to the global community
A coherent sophomore-level course of study to facilitate transfer
A summative seminar experience to foster the academic behaviors needed for successful transfer.

Building a Supportive Academic Environment

Equally as important as the development of a coherent curriculum to facilitate transfer is the involvement of students in a broader academic commu-

nity. At CCP a supportive academic environment will start with the development of learning communities within the General Studies Curriculum. These communities will include students, counselors, faculty mentors, and learning-laboratory professionals all working together. Students attending full-time, for example, may be block-scheduled during the morning hours to accommodate their work schedules. They will be assigned classes with faculty in General Studies and will have access to other support professionals concerned about their learning. Students attending part-time in the evening at one of the regional centers will be encouraged to select General Studies courses over three or four semesters and will work with an identified group of faculty and students.

Building Curricular Bridges for Students. Encouraging students to enroll in four-year colleges and universities can be facilitated by providing a network between CCP and the transfer institutions. This network is being established by directly engaging CCP faculty and students with faculty from four-year institutions in several important ways.

Bucknell University and CCP have jointly undertaken a six-week summer program for predominantly minority at-risk CCP students. This program, modeled on the pioneering effort by LaGuardia Community College and Vassar College, brings twenty-five CCP students to the Bucknell campus. They take courses jointly developed and team-taught by faculties from both institutions. A similar program is operating between CCP and Beaver College. Again, this program serves predominantly minority students and is team-taught at the Beaver campus with faculty from the two colleges. CCP students attending either Bucknell University or Beaver College receive scholarships covering tuition, and room and board for the six-week programs of study. The goal of both these programs is to encourage minority-student transfer by providing a rich and rewarding summer experience.

A different approach to a summer-student experience is being carried out at Wilkes College in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Four CCP minority students were recruited for a bridge program taking place over two summers on the Wilkes College campus. Students receive scholarships covering tuition, and room and board, and have opportunities for work-study jobs. The goal of this program is to recruit minority students from CCP for their junior year at Wilkes College by providing summer experiences to prepare them for transfer. Similar programs are being planned for CCP students with the state universities in Pennsylvania.

A grant from the Ford Foundation is enabling CCP to develop a series of seminars among two- and four-year college faculties to address introductory courses in the disciplines. These efforts have enabled CCP faculty to share their thinking with four-year faculty about courses being developed for the new General Studies curriculum core. The discussions have also opened the possibility for creative articulation agreements between CCP and the transfer institutions. Perhaps most critically, they have started

cross-institution dialogues among two- and four-year faculty promising a new appreciation of the CCP student's academic and social needs and for the quality of the educational experience students are receiving at CCP.

The Central Role of Curriculum

The experiences of Community College of Philadelphia point to the central role of curriculum for improving transfer opportunities for students. Minority and other nontraditional students entering community colleges cannot be viewed simply as unadjusted or underprepared persons who need to be "improved" by support services so that they can enter the traditional classroom. The curriculum itself must be reformed to integrate the learning needs and cultural backgrounds of these students with professional notions of what constitutes an educated person. This reform can best be done when teachers, academic support staff, and students see themselves as part of the same community working towards shared understandings of learning goals. It calls for these same professionals to reconsider the nature of their work, and asks students to think differently about their involvement in and commitment to learning.

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Progressive businesses have begun to take the diversification of their leadership seriously. Community colleges must follow suit.

Diversifying Leadership in Community Colleges

J. Richard Gilliland

Most countries of the world utilize only a small fraction of their human potential. Parts of Northern European countries, Canada, and the United States have begun to make use of the diverse leadership capabilities of women and persons of color and to recognize that they can and should play other than subordinate roles in responding to a planet consumed with the need for people who can create, organize, manage, and lead.

According to the report of the Commission on the Future of Community Colleges (Armes, 1988), new leaders for our institutions will require many of the skills previous leaders of community, technical, and junior colleges have had. In addition, they must be coalition builders, must be able to inspire others, and must have a well-developed and articulated sense of vision. Neither traditional leaders (older males in the United States and most of the rest of the world) nor any one subgroup of our diverse society possesses the full arsenal of leadership capabilities needed to face the challenges we now experience at the local, regional, national, and world levels.

This chapter covers five major areas:

1. Practical theory behind work force diversity
2. Ways that leadership diversity strengthens an organization
3. Progress currently being made with the diversification of leadership, both in higher education and in the private sector
4. Stages of the leadership-diversity cycle
5. Description of activities and progress toward accomplishing leadership diversity at Metropolitan Community College.

Practical Theory: Work Force and Leadership Diversity

First, within the more specific context of higher education, it is utterly senseless not to promote women and persons of color to roles of leadership at our institutions. The majority of community college students are women; should not women logically play a significant, even majority, leadership role in these institutions? Second, given the immense challenges our country faces, is it not good public policy to take advantage of as many diverse human resources as possible?

The inclusion of people with different gender and ethnic backgrounds in educational leadership and management roles provides added diversity to our institutions. In general systems theory, diversity is a natural property that allows for creativity and for the testing of new ideas. Pathways for program development and institutional innovation exist so that experiments can be evaluated against desired results, with the results being an even more diverse system.

More creativity and innovation result when the same logic is extended to include culturally varied people; people from a range of age groups, countries, and work experiences; people with differing sexual preferences and personality types. Most of us have not thought seriously about how our population differs or about what a wealth of backgrounds and experiences can offer to organizational leadership if unleashed. Such profound diversity is consistent with natural ecosystems (including human ones) that maximize what they do or create. The more points of view and the more references of experience there are, the more options that appear. Consequently, the more diverse the leadership team becomes.

The Value of Leadership Diversity to an Organization

Susan Wilke, the manager of internal affirmative action at Proctor and Gamble in Cincinnati, relates an example from the game Trivial Pursuit that describes in rather straightforward ways how valuable diversity can be to "winning" (personal interview, Oct. 1987). A demonstration she and others at Proctor and Gamble use to illustrate the power and potential of diversity involves playing Trivial Pursuit with two very different teams.

One team is selected with the criterion that its members be as homogeneous as possible. Team members are typically white, male, middle-aged, and similar in work and educational backgrounds. The competing team is as heterogeneous as possible—men and women, young and old, all possible racial and cultural backgrounds, wide differences in personality types, and greatly varied education and work experiences. The ensuing Trivial Pursuit game quickly shows that the diverse team brings much wider talents, experiences, and outlooks to the game. Collectively, the members know more and demonstrate a much stronger creative talent. They *destroy* the "sterile

monocultural" team. Although this example perhaps oversimplifies the value of diversity, it provides a clear and concrete illustration of the importance of staff diversification to any organization.

Diversity produces stability, which is the ability of the system to withstand stress and to identify and respond to opportunities. In natural systems an example of stress might be an outbreak of corn-eating insects in a corn field. A corn field is a monoculture of plants, analogous to a white-male monoculture. The result for the corn field is near destruction of the entire ecosystem. An outbreak of an insect that eats one plant species in a rain forest will have very little effect on the entire ecosystem; a rain forest is the most diverse ecosystem known, analogous to a diverse social system. The rain forest is stable and dynamic; the corn field is not. Similarly, the diverse leadership team is both stable and dynamic; the monoculture is not. The diverse system has links to all parts of society, it has feelers out everywhere; it senses new needs, societal changes, problems, and opportunities.

Within community colleges, on the one hand, there are examples of institutions that have responded to the decline in numbers of recent high school graduates by diversifying their service spectrum. Community colleges that have widened their horizons and broadened their services to include customized training and programs and services for nontraditional populations have generally done well, as measured by enrollment stability and growth. On the other hand, community colleges that have not changed with the times, such as some private junior colleges, have watched with dismay as their student numbers and corresponding financial resources have dwindled.

A senior community college administrator, reflecting upon the continuing decline in student numbers at his institution, commented, "We have no new populations to pursue. The only new people here are from Indochina, and they don't speak English." Perhaps this administrator could have considered starting some English-as-a-Second-Language courses in order to begin the effective development of this new population that could benefit so much from a good community college.

For their part, public and private businesses and organizations have to a large extent committed themselves to affirmative action but have failed to understand the concept beyond affirmative action/equal employment opportunity programs (AA/EEO). As a result, qualified and capable persons of color and women may be hired but infrequently move up and too frequently leave, even after institutions have developed complex, expensive programs to recruit them in the first place.

In the office of Susan Wilke at Proctor and Gamble is a sign that states, "Convert Diversity from an Obligation to a Value." But as Roosevelt Thomas of the American Institute for Managing Diversity says, "It sure isn't easy" (personal communication, Sept. 1987). What is needed is an

expanded vision of affirmative action that includes an appreciation of real cultural diversity as a strength and a richness characterizing the best leadership teams. This is easier said than done. Old ways of thinking have not considered the value of diversity. For example, Americans have grown up with a "melting pot" idea that implies a fusion of values, customs, languages, and cultures, rather than an appreciation for the qualities that make them different. The full potential of educational and business institutions will be realized more fully as they move beyond previous self-imposed limitations and benefit from real leadership diversity and richness.

Demographics may be a major factor in encouraging leadership diversity in the future, too. Nearly all the new work force in the next fifteen years in the United States will be women, people of color, and immigrants; at least 75 percent will come from these populations. An organization may not survive if it is still trying to force its employees into a narrow mold with traditional structures and rules; it may have to become multicultural.

Current Status of Leadership Diversity in Higher Education and the Private Sector

What kind of progress is being made on implementing leadership diversity? Most of the accomplishments are occurring in the private sector. Progressive companies are saying, "Diversifying leadership gives us a competitive edge. It's good business." However, this concept has not yet been recognized as a basic value in educational organizations.

The report of the Commission on the Future of Community Colleges calls for increased diversity of community college leadership. Although 35 percent of current administrators are women, only 10 percent of community college chief executive officers are women. According to the report, "Blacks and Hispanics are underrepresented among all administrative and faculty groups" (Armes, 1988, p. 42). Intensive recruitment of women and persons of color is called for, along with a long-term strategy of offering mentoring to new recruits.

Even businesses have a long way to go. In the private sector, Honeywell is considered highly progressive. Yet staff at the company's Minneapolis headquarters say that although Honeywell is addressing work force diversity, they believe much more needs to be done. Further, their perception is that no organization has met the mark. In many cases the organizations that have allowed the most change have done so only after what might be called "galvanizing" events. A class-action lawsuit or a takeover attempt is often the impetus for rapid cultural change. Using education, exposure, awareness, and behavior-modification techniques, Honeywell is hoping to alter employee attitudes (Copeland, 1988).

Companies and institutions attempting to diversify their work forces

have at least two problems: (1) there are few experts to help because the field is new, and (2) there are few tools, except programs about topics such as Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) laws and how to do an interview without violating EEO principles.

At Metropolitan Community College (Omaha, Nebraska), recognition of the importance of diversity evolved in a fairly logical way:

1. The leadership team worked hard at the basic AA/EEO activities and had some good initial successes.
2. Questions arose about how, with a student population consisting of 19 percent people of color and 58 percent women, MCC could effectively serve without similar demographics reflected in both faculty and staff.
3. The issue of fairness for women and persons of color was discussed.
4. These discussions led to more systematic thinking (inspired by the idea of diversity in natural ecosystems) and to corresponding applications to MCC's organizational systems and leadership directions.

Reviewing the literature and visiting companies that are diversifying their leadership have also helped develop our actions.

Before describing what Metropolitan Community College (MCC) has done, it is helpful to describe various steps that have been observed within other organizations attempting to create leadership diversity. Roosevelt Thomas of Morehouse College has studied organizational progress relating to this question; some of what follows is based on his observations.

Stages of the Cycle: Creating Leadership Diversity

Thomas (1986) describes some typical stages that have been observed in public and private institutions and organizations. First is the stage of problem recognition. Organizations find that a problem exists with their figures for either affirmative action or equal employment opportunity. The simple response they find is to increase the number of persons of color and women who are in the pipeline. Substantial outreach efforts are undertaken to find and hire women and ethnic minorities for available jobs, and increases do occur in employment of both populations in the entry-level manager positions. Significant evidence exists that these efforts will achieve the desired responses to the AA/EEO problem.

But then frustration begins. Company managers perceive that many of the new ethnic minorities and women employees do not seem to fit in well and are not becoming assimilated into the company or institutional culture. Apathy sets in. For the most part, women and persons of color simply accept the lack of professional movement; they sense that nothing can be gained by raising issues or concerns. Executives are quiet because they are baffled about the lack of organizational progress. In some cases crisis

occurs. Governmental intervention and external special-interest-group pressure, combined with internal unrest on the part of women and persons of color, take place. Executives remain baffled. They feel that they have made a big effort and that all they have achieved is internal turmoil, the resignations of women and persons of color who were originally hired, and external pressures from regulatory agencies.

Thomas suggests new ways to break this cycle, a cycle that is observed too frequently. He encourages managers and executives to expand their focus and to begin the process of learning the values of employee diversity. He suggests clarification of the vision of where the organization needs to go. It is especially critical that the chief executive officer develop and expand his or her understanding to incorporate progressive thinking in regard to the diversification of leadership. This heightened sensitivity is extremely important to the success of organizations wishing to break the cycle of failure.

One area in the United States that has been seriously overlooked is that of developing acute intercultural listening skills. Thomlison (in press) describes tools and techniques that are quite useful to the practitioner who understands the need to work effectively with an expanding multicultural work force or student population. His ideas on multicultural listening skills are also of great value as we interact more and more with an increasingly sophisticated global economic and political environment.

Thomlison suggests that understanding some major components of culture can help improve intercultural listening, which includes such areas as values and beliefs, language, nonverbal codes, and cognitive processing. Although one's own cultural heritage cannot be set aside during cross-cultural encounters, communications and understanding can be greatly enhanced if there is awareness of some of the major dysfunctions and difficulties that may be present during intercultural communication. The ultimate goal of the cross-cultural communicator is to reduce uncertainties and misunderstandings whenever possible.

Changes in political, transportation, technology, and mass-communication systems bring people into more contact with those from other subcultures, cultures, and countries than at any other time in human history. The global community is shrinking, and intercultural contact is increasing in frequency as a result. Within the United States immigrants are arriving in greater numbers than ever before; two-thirds of the people in the world who are emigrating from one country to another are entering the United States.

Although it is not the purpose of this chapter to delve deeply into the subject of intercultural listening, the importance of developing this form of sensitivity to people different from ourselves should be emphasized. Kohls (1984) suggests starting with an understanding of the differences between typical values in the United States and those in other countries. Table 1 below provides some useful comparisons.

Table 1. Comparison of Values in the United States and Other Countries

Values in the United States	*Values in Other Countries*
Personal control over the environment	Fate
Change	Tradition
Time and its control	Human interaction
Equality/egalitarianism	Hierarchy/rank/status
Individualism/privacy	Group welfare
Self-help	Birthright inheritance
Competition	Cooperation
Future orientation	Past orientation
Action/work orientation	"Being" orientation
Informality	Formality
Directness/openness/honesty	Indirectness/ritual/"face"
Practicality/efficiency	Idealism/theory
Materialism/acquisitiveness	Spiritualism/detachment

Source: Kohls, 1984.

Related to the heightening of sensitivity and the development of intercultural listening skills is the process of creating an environment where no individual is either disadvantaged or advantaged because of race, gender, creed, sexual preference, or any other classification. The development of tolerance and openness are key characteristics to be sought in the creation of a progressive environment.

Current employees who may be predominantly middle-aged, white, and male must also be assisted to deal with the dynamics of pioneering. The development of an executive leadership and employee-diversity program involves the process of change. Such change will not occur overnight; thus, tenacity and planning are essential in order to achieve long-term positive results. Another important part of the process is the establishment of mentoring and nurturing processes for new employees. The problems experienced by organizations that approach leadership diversity in traditional ways—and thus limit the upward-mobility of their minority and women employees—result in part from the failure to create institutional programs and services, including ongoing staff development activities that help both new and long-term employees feel appreciated regardless of their cultural differences. To perpetuate an organization that does not value differences but encourages everyone to be alike is counterproductive. Such an approach dismisses the fact that different people bring a variety of values to an organization and are productive in different ways. Institutions must recognize that the greatest value individual employees can bring is their own special values, talents, and culture. Thus, the process of change should celebrate employee differences and find ways to capture and nurture these differences, to the benefit of both the organization and each individual.

Activities on Leadership Diversity

The following are programs or activities that were the initial building blocks of MCC's leadership diversity efforts. These approaches have been useful and effective at this institution, but each organization must develop its own programs to fit the specific needs and characteristics of its organizational climate:

1. *Formal Workshops.* There are a growing number of professional consultants who deal with issues of leadership and cultural diversity. Combined with talent within the institution or organization, such outside experts can be very important catalysts in bringing current issues to the attention of an organization's employees.

2. *Relevant Professional Meetings and Publications.* An increasing number of seminars and professional meetings are focusing on leadership and cultural diversity. The *Chronicle of Higher Education* is a good source of information, as are promotional mailings from meeting organizers.

3. *The Copeland-Griggs Videotapes.* This three-tape series, although designed for the private sector, is also quite appropriate for community colleges. Called *Valuing Diversity*, the series demonstrates many ideas that work. Four new tapes have been added recently (L. Griggs, personal interview, June 1989).

4. *Commitment by the Chief Executive Officer to the Values of Leadership Diversity.* Challenges to organizations, including community colleges, suggest a critical need for leaders who both understand and promote leadership diversity. A program to develop diversity will not get off the ground unless its values are espoused by the CEO and unless he or she perseveres in its acceptance and implementation. Both the requirement for new areas of competence in our leadership and the real impact of emerging demographics in the United States suggest strongly that community college leaders must embrace and value leadership diversity.

5. *Participation of Staff Members in Discussions Currently Under Way.* During the last two-year period, MCC staff have attended and/or participated in over twenty-five different programs targeting community college leadership and diversity. Important national and regional meetings are scheduled in the months ahead on this subject; these represent opportunities for leaders to learn more.

6. *Familiarity with Available Information.* Books, articles, speeches, and even surveys are now available on the subject of diversity. The serious community college leader must become familiar with this growing body of literature.

7. *Development and Promotion of Comprehensive Staff and Personnel Development Activities.* Most community colleges have formal staff development programs. Metropolitan Community College has used these planned periods for major activities on cultural and leadership diversity. Many sessions, both

small and large and using internal as well as outside resources, have helped to modify attitudes among most faculty and staff substantially.

The significant need for creative, new kinds of leadership strengths can be addressed by building a strong commitment to developing leadership diversity in organizations and institutions, including America's community colleges. Every available leadership resource must be utilized to assure the continued dynamism and relevance of America's community colleges. As we have already noted, the fact that at least three-fourths of the new work force will consist of women, persons of color, and immigrants suggests that demographic pressure will also compel diversification of leadership of our institutions.

In a recent issue of the *Daily Californian*, Brian Hill (1990, p. 3) wrote, "A tool box of only screwdrivers is not a good tool box no matter how excellent those screwdrivers may be." Community colleges face this challenge. Will they learn genuinely to value leadership diversity and implement processes and programs that will nurture a celebration of differences? It is clear that they must.

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The college that does not make efforts in orientation and support will probably lose more minority faculty in the 1990s than it will gain.

Ten Steps to Successful Minority Hiring and Retention

Dale V. Gares, Exalton A. Delco, Jr.

It has been predicted that during the mid-1990s qualified faculty—and in particular, minority faculty—will not be available to fill teaching jobs at community colleges and universities. During this period, half the nation's professors will be approaching retirement, postsecondary enrollments will have increased, and minority students graduating at the master's and doctoral level will persist at the lower 10 percentile level (Mooney, 1990). The California community college system alone predicts it will need to hire eighteen thousand new faculty by 2005. Prospects for maintaining, not to mention increasing, minority faculty participation in the community colleges appear very bleak. Hiring minority faculty members in such areas as the physical sciences, engineering, and the life sciences will become even more difficult as a small percentage of the doctoral graduates in these fields are minorities (Carter and Wilson, 1989).

Over the past five years the Austin Community College (ACC) District in Austin, Texas, has executed a ten-step action plan aiming to hire minority faculty members in numbers proportionate to the central Texas ethnic populations. The program has been distinctly successful. Whereas the number of full-time minority faculty was 12 percent in 1985, by 1990 it had grown to 20 percent. These numbers are most impressive when we note that the number of minority faculty at ACC grew by 8 percent in five years while the national average for total full-time faculty at community colleges is 10 percent.

The district's success in minority recruitment, hiring, and retention is based on ten action steps.

Step 1. The first step has three parts. It starts with the *board of trustees.* The board must endorse the concept of affirmative action, pass a meaning-

ful affirmative action policy, and then provide the necessary budgetary support to allow implementation. The second factor is administrative support, specifically, that of *the president*. Without the direct support of the president's office in monitoring the process, minority hiring practices are doomed. The president must be directly involved to see that the process works. Finally, support must come from the general *academic administration* of the college. These personnel must recognize the value of faculty, as well as student, ethnic diversity. The academic arm must be committed to the affirmative action policy as passed by the board and implemented by the president. This requires that the vice president of academic affairs, as well as the deans and the academic council, promote policies that will make it possible to recruit, hire, and train minority faculty and to conduct staff development for these faculty once they come on board.

Step 2. The second important step is the establishment of *a college plan*. The goals of this plan must be clearly stated, and they must be realistic. They must be objectives that most people can identify and recognize. The entire college personnel will know what the expectations are for affirmative action, will lend their support to those expectations, and will develop an atmosphere that is conducive to fulfilling the plan.

Once the plan is under way, a follow-up will be necessary. Follow-up should be on an ongoing basis designed to give timely feedback at regular intervals so that the college personnel on interview teams will not see large gaps between the time that a plan is implemented and goals are attained. Follow-up should be conducted at all stages of the hiring process, including orientation and staff development. College personnel should know what the hiring progress is, what the pitfalls are, and what has changed in the climate of the college or within the community or within the nation that would bring about a change.

It is important for administrative, as well as faculty, support groups to evaluate the progress of the college plan and ascertain the outcomes resulting from the affirmative action process. Just as important is the dissemination of those results so that the college personnel will know exactly how the plan is functioning, where it is both on and off track, and what their roles in the success have been.

Step 3. The third requirement is for *faculty support*. As long as the faculty are at odds with either the affirmative action plan or the college plan, neither will work. The affirmative action plan must be shared with faculty even before presentation to the board for approval; this participation will allow faculty to embrace the plan and attribute progress to their own efforts. They will be charged with the responsibility at the division or department level to see that their part of the plan is in accord with the college's commitment to minority faculty hiring. As part of the process, faculty will be responsible for formulating interview groups that will include minority faculty, a practice that will improve the hiring process.

Faculty will begin to see the payoff in higher minority-student retention and greater diversification, which is what the affirmative action plan should do for the college. The faculty will then support the plan even more than originally. The results, however, must be continually presented to the faculty. This feedback will permit faculty to recognize that there is progress and that there are advantages to having developed the plan.

Step 4. The fourth component is that of *recruiting*. Recruiting is now more important than ever because there are fewer qualified faculty, particularly minority faculty, for positions than there have been in the past. Increasingly, institutions are raiding each other's faculties for sought-after instructors, particularly minority members. For example, the California system has a minority hiring process funded by a state-created competition—both within and out of the state—for the same minority faculty. To deal with this situation, colleges must develop pipelines of direct access into college and university placement centers. Direct pipelines into graduate programs will allow administrators to talk individually with the instructors within those programs and with potential faculty members during their first year of graduate school. Administrators can begin to cultivate minority graduate students prior to their graduation by building a good relationship. This course of action depends on strong administrative support, a well-developed college plan, and faculty support for the affirmative action plan—all of which results in minority faculty being comfortable accepting positions at the college. The new minority faculty will inform other minority students (potential faculty) back at the colleges from which they were recruited. This approach continues to strengthen the pipeline.

A second element of recruiting is use of advertising, specifically, careful selection of those instruments that will provide coverage within the minority community, throughout the nation, and particularly within the college's region and state. To get the greatest advantage for the dollars spent, administrators must target specific publications. Advertising in one or two national publications such as the *Chronicle of Higher Education* is not sufficient. And administrators must be prepared to readvertise until the college obtains a representative pool containing minority applicants. A mistake often made is that of attempting to gain minority representation within the faculty with a nonrepresentative applicant pool. Of course, every pool does not have to be perfectly ethnically balanced, but consistent failure in this area will mean that the college will not meet its designed goals through the recruitment process.

A final consideration in recruitment is *personal communication:* direct contact with people who can put administrators in touch with qualified minority candidates. The value of this personal contact must not be underestimated At Austin Community College the president, as well as the vice president of academic affairs and other top administrators, have traveled to many colleges, including historically black institutions and Hispanic

colleges and universities. These trips were made to gain personal contact with prospective candidates and to encourage them to apply for faculty positions at the college. Local media resources are used to let individuals know of ACC's program, not only during the search process, but also on a continuous basis.

ACC uses the media to demonstrate gains and report its results. Public feedback can become an important recruiting tool later on to show that the community is supporting the college's effort. This helps to make applicants feel secure in joining the faculty ranks.

Step 5. The fifth step to hiring minorities is the *screening* of potential applicants. Many times minority individuals do not present themselves well on application forms. Committee members must carefully scrutinize specific qualifications for a job and not be misled by qualifications ancillary to the major thrust of the position being offered. The development of proper forms can keep the committee on track and individual members oriented to specific qualifications and guidelines to avoid screening people out on technicalities or inappropriate items. Committee members must be able to assess applicants based on relevant material and must seek those whose qualifications meet or most nearly approximate those needed for the faculty position. The committee should try to increase the minority participation within the pool of those to be interviewed, making it as heterogeneous a group as possible. Such a practice will enhance the chances of the college to reach its affirmative action goal.

Step 6. The sixth step is *the interview* itself. Requiring a teaching session during the interview has proven a sound strategy. First, it allows the committee to evaluate the person as a communicator, as a teacher, and as a knowledgeable individual. Second, it allows the individual to demonstrate skills in an area in which he or she is really prepared: that of being a teacher able to impart information to students. The committee can serve as students while the applicant presents a mini-teaching session.

Every question that is to be asked during the interview should be carefully reviewed by the entire committee. The questions should meet the criteria of the college's plan. The committee's consensus will ensure that interview questions assess more than one item of concern. Interview questions are often peripheral, trivial, and not clearly designed to analyze individual qualifications. The questions and the mini-lesson presentation allow an individual the freedom to demonstrate his or her ability in a nonthreatening environment.

During the interview process committee members must be aware of ethnic differences—those that surface as the applicant presents ideas or concepts. The committee must not judge an applicant inappropriately, based on its own expectations of appropriate Western cultural responses. The committee must make sure that it is not ruling applicants out because of perceptual differences. Finally, interviewers should seek to create an

atmosphere that makes applicants feel welcome, at ease, and able to express who they are.

Step 7. The seventh step is *selection*. The selection process should not result in a rank ordering of the applicants. The selection committee should forward at least three names of qualified individuals that it feels would be assets to the teaching faculty at the college. The top-recommended applicants should then be reviewed by the academic deans and the vice president of academic affairs, who will then pass their names to the president with a recommendation for hiring. The president may or may not elect to interview the individuals but would have the ultimate authority to make the final decision. The process will have been fair, and the selection will have been representative of the applicant pool.

Reference checks should be carefully conducted. Bearing in mind the criteria used during the interview process, one then obtains a clear picture of the abilities, skills, and competence of an individual applicant.

The final stage of selection involves the president's decision. As a way of showing interest in the process, the president retains the final authority for selecting the person to be employed. This practice does not mean that the committee's recommendations do not count; the president simply keeps control so that he or she has the authority to indicate that the process did or did not meet the original goal. It may even be necessary to start over with a new search. In cases where the process must be repeated, those involved become aware that the president is truly committed to seeing that the college achieves its affirmative action goals and to using all reasonable means to increase the minority composition of the college's faculty.

Step 8. The eighth step is *orientation and support*. Immediately on arriving at the college, new faculty members should go through an orientation that exposes them to the college's culture, operations, and organization. New faculty should be assigned a seasoned faculty mentor who will help them through the first year. It is very important that the new faculty know the philosophy of the college, that they feel that it is a healthy atmosphere in which to work, and that they are comfortable within that environment.

Shortly after being assigned a mentor and undergoing orientation, all faculty members should be invited to a reception with the president and the academic officers of the college. The reception honors the new faculty and lets them know that they are important and welcome. New faculty members learn what their roles are and what expectations the academic community has. They learn subsequently of assignments to serve on committees that reflect their expertise or their disciplines. Quick assignment onto committees involves the new faculty immediately within the governance of the institution and facilitates their transition to the college. This orientation and support are a critical part of retaining faculty members. As hard as it is to recruit minority faculty members, retention can be an even

greater problem. The college that does not make efforts in orientation and support will probably lose more minority faculty in the 1990s than it will gain.

Step 9. The ninth vital component is continued *staff development*. A staff development program based on faculty evaluations and addressing deficiencies reinforcing strengths, and targeting special-interest seminars is essential. The college should also promote professional development for its faculty, particularly encouraging new faculty to attend conferences and workshops that build on their instructional strengths and upgrade and renew their skills.

Step 10. The final requirement for increasing minority representation within the faculty is *perseverance*. The institution must continually monitor its progress. A plan—no matter how noble—does not drive itself. The minute that anyone involved in implementing the plan lets up, the numbers will drop!

These ten steps to minority hiring and retention have been very successful for the Austin Community College District. If other colleges use them as we have, they will increase their minority participation and improve the quality of their instructional program.

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What American higher education needs in the 1990s is to move the issue of rekindling minority participation to the top of our national, state, and institutional agendas.

Revitalization Efforts

Dan Angel, Adriana Barrera

In the late 1980s American higher education came to a disturbing realization: postsecondary institutions were simply not doing the job in terms of minority participation.

A 1986 report from the Education Commission of the States found that the "progress toward full participation of minorities in higher education has become distressingly stalled" (Mingle, 1987, p. 44). Wilson and Justiz noted in 1987 that the "once promising gains in minority recruitment at all levels of higher education had evaporated" (1987, p. 10). Robert H. Atwell, president of the American Council on Education, stated flatly that "we have hit the wall on minority participation. Since the early 80s we had seen a steady downturn in Black participation in education at every level after high school graduation and a snail paced growth in the abysmally low level of Hispanic participation" (American Council on Education, 1988a, p. 6). Finally, the Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life concluded that "the picture of stalled progress is dramatically clear. During the period when the pool of minority high school graduates was becoming bigger and better than ever, minority college attendance rates initially fell and have remained disproportionately low" (American Council on Education, 1988a, p. 11).

Leadership in isolating the issue of minority participation in higher education and focusing on ways to rekindle interest in it has largely come from three national higher educational associations: the American Council on Education (ACE), the Education Commission of the States (ECS), and the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC).

American Council on Education

Although the ACE had established an office of minority concerns in 1981, it was not until February 1987 that the ACE's board of directors declared minority participation a priority issue and began a special minority initiative. Joining with the Education Commission of the States, the groups established the Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life. Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter served as honorary co-chairs of the distinguished 37-member, blue-ribbon committee.

By May 1987 the committee released its report, *One-Third of a Nation*. This document did not equivocate: "America is moving backward, not forward, in its effort to achieve the full participation of minority citizens in the life and prosperity of the nation. . . . We deeply believe that now is the time for our nation to renew its commitment to minority achievement" (1988b, p. vii).

Also in 1988, the ACE Commission on National Challenges in Higher Education released its Memorandum to the 41st President of the United States (1988c). The document outlined critical decisions facing the incoming president of the United States. A key element of the report was the need for full minority participation.

In 1989 ACE published *Minorities on Campus: A Handbook for Enhancing for Diversity* (Green, 1989). The handbook was full of data sounding the alarm:

Between 1975 and 1985, black participation in higher education dropped from 48 percent to 44 percent

College attendance for Hispanics fell from 51 percent to 47 percent during that same decade

In 1985 only 16 percent of all college students were minority

Also in 1985, only 10 percent of the faculty and 12 percent of administrators were minority.

The handbook highlighted what ACE had learned about increasing minority participation in higher education over the previous two years as part of its minority initiative and provided practical suggestions and models of excellence for institutional use. Speaking of "lost momentum," the handbook urged colleges and universities to conduct an internal audit of their diversity climate. The handbook is a major breakthrough in its analysis of recruitment, retention, transfer, and related minority-participation issues.

Two other ACE publications in a series format have been instrumental in identifying, tracking, and urging action to revitalize minority participation. *Campus Trends, 1989* (El-Khawas) was the sixth in a series of higher education reports begun in 1984. Unlike prior reports it has a section entitled "Minority Initiatives" that lists some progress and some cause for alarm:

Four in five higher education institutions reported some level of activity to increase the enrollment and retention of minority students
Eight in ten administrators reported that activities were under way to improve the campus climate for minority students, but only half of the institutions regularly monitored attrition rates for minority students
Six in ten administrators rated their institutions as fair or poor in attracting black students
Seven in ten rated their institutions as poor in attracting Hispanic students.

The best source for anyone interested in the plight and progress of minority higher education is the annual series *Minorities in Higher Education*, prepared by the council since 1982. The eighth report (Carter and Wilson, 1989, p. vi) noted, "Despite the efforts of some institutions and a number of states to expand access to higher education for underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, we can only identify some pockets of success."

Education Commission of the States

When the ECS joined with ACE in 1987 to create the Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life, the organization began a minority initiative of its own. ECS produced two major studies in association with the State Higher Education Executive Officers: *Focus on Minorities: Synopsis of State Higher Education Initiatives* (State Higher Education Executive Officers, 1987) and *Focus on Minorities: Trends in Higher Education Participation and Success* (Mingle, 1987).

The first report presents model initiatives in thirty-three states targeted at minorities. The second report chronicles the progress toward full minority participation in higher education over a thirty-year period; it concludes that "despite progress since the days of near exclusion, the full participation of minority students in our nation's colleges and universities remains unrealized" (p. v). The second report also notes that college participation immediately after high school fluctuates greatly among minority groups. College attendance rates were 70 percent for Asian Americans, 51 percent for whites, 46 percent for blacks, 38 percent for American Indians, and 37 percent for Hispanics (p. 9).

In 1988 ECS released two more studies dealing with minority participation: *Serving More Diverse Students: A Contextual View* (Richardson, 1989a) and *Institutional Climate and Minority Achievement* (Richardson, 1989b).

The most significant ECS report from the community, vocational, and technical-college point of view was released in June 1990: *Responding to Student Diversity: A Community College Perspective* (Richardson, 1990). This report reaches the both perplexing and challenging conclusion that "com-

munity colleges are part of the pipeline problem as well as the potential contributor to a solution" (p. 2).

In June 1989 the Education Commission of the States began an eighteen-month study of ways in which state governments could do a better job of recruiting and educating minority students. New Mexico's governor, Garey E. Carruthers, and Ohio's governor, Richard F. Celeste, co-chair the 24-member committee that will provide an action plan by 1991 (Cage, 1989).

American Association of Community and Junior Colleges

America's community, vocational, and technical college network has easily outdistanced the four-year universities in minority attendance. In 1988 44 percent of blacks and 54 percent of Hispanics began their higher education in a community college (American Council on Education, 1988d). Yet a comparison of fall 1976 and 1987 (see Table 1) enrollments indicates that the community college network has been more successful in gaining numbers than percentages (*Community College Times*, Jan. 31, 1989, p. 15).

Aware of the constancy of the percentages, the AACJC has been at work on the issue in a number of ways. In the summer of 1989, the fifty participants at the President's Academy in Vail, Colorado, listed the ten top challenges facing community, technical, and junior college leaders in the 1990s. The issue of minority concerns was second only to that of faculty development (Parnell, 1989). When the AACJC Board listed its six priorities for 1990, the need to launch a minority education initiative was at the top of the list (American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, 1989). Actually, the prominence of the minority issue was the result of several other efforts conducted by the organization. The AACJC's Minority Business

Table 1. Minority Enrollment in Community, Technical, and Junior Colleges, 1976 and 1987

	Fall 1976		*Fall 1987*	
Ethnic Groups	*Number*	*Percentage of Total*	*Number*	*Percentage of Total*
White	3,227,131	79	3,944,808	78
Black	449,348	11	505,745	10
Hispanic	285,948	7	354,021	7
Asian	81,699	2	202,298	4
American Indian	40,850	1	50,574	1
Total	4,084,976	100	5,057,446	100

Source: U.S. Dept. of Education and AACJC, 1987 ("AACJC Data File," 1989).

Enterprise Project, conducted in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Commerce, has granted more than $300,000 to campuses across the country. The AACJC also released an excellent report, *Minorities in Urban Community Colleges* (1988).

In 1990 the AACJC established a minority education initiative with an initial budget of $150,000 over a three-year period. Texas state representative Wilhelmina Delco chairs the thirteen-member commission. The commission met for the first time in May 1990 and decided to concentrate on a seven-point work plan: (1) Priority will be given to ethnic-minority students, faculty, and administrators. (2) Priority will also be given to college curriculum and staff development issues. (3) The December-January issue of AACJC's *Community, Technical, and Junior College Journal* will be devoted to ethnic minority concerns and will highlight exemplary practices at local colleges. (4) The commission will develop an action-oriented report. (5) The commission will conduct a hearing at the April 1991 AACJC Convention. (6) Coalitions will be developed with other organizations. (7) An awards program will be established to recognize selected individual colleges for exemplary minority programs (Commission on Improving Minority Education, 1990).

Councils and colleges affiliated with the AACJC are also involved in other efforts at securing more minority full-time faculty. In May 1989 the National Council of State Directors of Community and Junior Colleges published *The Dry Pipeline: Increasing the Flow of Minority Faculty* (Linthicum, 1989). According to this national study, only 10 percent of the faculty at two-year colleges in 1985 were minority: 4 percent black, 4 percent Asian, and 2 percent Hispanic, and Native American, respectively.

Another encouraging effort by the League for Innovation in the Community College and the Community College Leadership program at the University of Texas at Austin aims to develop ethnic-minority faculty members into mid-level college administrators. That multiyear effort is funded by a $926,000 grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

Quality Education for Minorities Project (QEM)

One other national study deserves mention among the leading efforts to revitalize minority participation in higher education: the QEM Project, initially based at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Under the chairship of former U.S. secretary of labor Ray Marshall, the project issued a 130-page report, *Education That Works: An Action Plan for the Education of Minorities* (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1990). Putting key emphasis on math, science, and engineering, the aim of the plan is to have minority students enroll in college in proportion to their share of the college-age population. That would mean at least one million more minority college entrants.

Encouraging Numbers

In the fall of 1988, total United States college enrollment topped 13 million for the first time in history. Minority enrollment hovered at 2.4 million (Evangelauf, 1990). Certainly these numbers are encouraging, but they cannot conceal the fact that the college attendance rate of black and Hispanic high school students has continued to trail that of whites.

The enrollment of various racial groups in two- and four-year institutions over the past decade is shown in Table 2 (Evangelauf, 1990, p. 1).

Demographics indicate that the number of minorities in the American population will increase dramatically in the future. One-third of the nation will be members of minorities by 2000; yet with all best efforts to date, only 18.4 percent of minority populations are enrolled in America's colleges.

As our research indicates, the history of the last decade is one of stalled progress and lost momentum. In the 1990s American higher education needs to move the issue of rekindling minority participation to the top of our national, state, and institutional agendas. With total rededication and a full commitment, we can go where we have been unable, unwilling, and undetermined to go before.

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El-Khawas, E. *Campus Trends, 1989*. Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1989. 84 pp. (ED 310 700)

Evangelauf, J. "1988 Enrollments of All Racial Groups Hit Record Levels." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 11, 1990, pp. A1, A36-A46.

Table 2. College Enrollment Trends by Race, 1978-1988

	1978	*1980*	*1982*	*1984*	*1986*	*1988*	*10-year Change (in %)*
American Indian:							
Four-year	35,000	37,000	39,000	38,000	40,000	42,000	+ 20
Two-year	43,000	47,000	49,000	46,000	51,000	50,000	+ 16
Asian:							
Four-year	138,000	162,000	193,000	223,000	262,000	297,000	+ 115
Two-year	97,000	124,000	158,000	167,000	186,000	199,000	+ 105
Hispanic:							
Four-year	190,000	217,000	229,000	246,000	278,000	296,000	+ 56
Two-year	227,000	255,000	291,000	289,000	340,000	384,000	+ 69
Black:							
Four-year	612,000	634,000	612,000	617,000	615,000	656,000	+ 7
Two-year	443,000	472,000	489,000	459,000	467,000	473,000	+ 7
White:							
Four-year	6,027,000	6,275,000	6,306,000	6,301,000	6,337,000	6,582,000	+ 9
Two-year	3,167,000	3,558,000	3,692,000	3,514,000	3,584,000	3,702,000	+17

Source: Evangelauf, 1990.

Green, M. F. (ed.). *Minorities on Campus: A Handbook for Enhancing Diversity*. Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1989.

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Parnell, D. "School Is In at President's Academy Workshop." *Community, Technical, and Junior College Times*, Aug. 1, 1989, p. 4.

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This chapter offers an annotated bibliography of ERIC documents and articles.

Sources and Information: Minority Participation in Community College Education

Grace Quimbita, Anita Y. Colby

Social trends, demographic changes, and labor-force development needs have revitalized efforts to increase minority participation and success in higher education. This chapter provides an annotated bibliography of the most recent ERIC literature dealing with minority recruitment and retention in American community colleges. Focusing on literature added to the ERIC database since spring 1989, the bibliography lists articles and documents concerned with minority access to education, student recruitment, programs and services designed to promote academic persistence, efforts to improve transfer rates and success, and state-level initiatives.

Access

Andrew, L. D., and Russo, R. "Who Gets What? Impact of Financial Aid Policies." Unpublished manuscript, 1989. 25 pp. (ED 309 717)

Focusing on changes in student financial aid, this article considers (1) the changes that have been made, (2) their effect on federal funding allocations and obligations, (3) ways these changes may have contributed to the growth of proprietary schools at the expense of community colleges, and (4) ways the changes may have resulted in the decline in Hispanic and African American participation in higher education.

Boyer, P. "The Tribal College: Teaching Self-Determination." *Community, Technical, and Junior College Journal*, 1989-90, *60* (3), 24-29. (EJ 404 259)

This article describes the growing number of community colleges chartered by American Indian tribes, located on reservations, and specifically designed to meet the educational and cultural needs of the American Indian community. The colleges' provision of culturally relevant curricula and training for cultural needs is highlighted, and the increasing need for state and federal support and for professional development is stressed.

California Community Colleges, Office of the Chancellor. *Annual Report on Extended Opportunity Programs and Services.* Sacramento: California Community Colleges, 1990. 15 pp. (ED 313 095)

This report to the state legislature by the Office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges evaluates the services provided by Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS). It also provides background on the twenty-year history of EOPS and identifies significant trends in EOPS enrollments, in student characteristics and goals, and in the utilization of program services.

DeLoughry, T. J. "For Junior College in Texas, U.S. 'Trio' Dollars Are Crucial. How the Billions of Dollars in the President's 1991 Budget Translate into Bread and Butter Issues at Six Colleges and Universities." *Chronicle of Higher Education,* February 7, 1990, pp. A25-26. (EJ 404 046)

This article recounts Southwest Texas Junior College's struggle to recruit and retain students from its impoverished service regions by stretching the federal dollars available through Upward Bound, Student Support Services, and other Education Department programs for disadvantaged students.

Kanter, M. L. "An Examination of Demographic, Institutional, and Assessment Factors Affecting Access to Higher Education for Underrepresented Students in the California Community Colleges." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, Mass., Apr. 16-20, 1990. 48 pp. (ED 317 239)

This 1987 study investigates the extent to which demographic, institutional, and assessment factors affect the access of Hispanics, blacks, Native Americans, and students with disabilities to college-level courses. The study findings show that demographic and institutional characteristics related to race/ethnicity affected students' eligibility for transfer courses, associate-degree-applicable courses, or precollegiate basic-skills courses.

Rendón, L. I., and Taylor, M. T. "Hispanic Students: Action for Access." *Community, Technical, and Junior College Journal,* 1989-90, *60* (3), 18-23. (EJ 404 258)

This paper discusses the demographic and educational trends posing challenges at the nation's colleges and presents a ten-point plan to increase

the participation, retention, and academic progress of Hispanic and other at-risk students.

Williams, C. "Broadening Access for Black Students." *Community, Technical, and Junior College Journal*, 1989-90, *60* (3), 14-17. (EJ 404 257)

This article focuses on the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges' Minority Education Initiative, which was based on an assessment of recent trends related to access, retention, and graduation rates of blacks in the educational pipeline. The article considers governmental issues, the teaching environment, the teaching and learning processes, and institutional effectiveness.

Recruitment

Anglin, L. W. "Preparing Minority Teachers for the 21st Century: A University-Community College Model." *Action in Teacher Education*, 1989, *11* (2), 47-50. (EJ 399 713)

This article describes a plan to recruit minority community college students into university-based teacher-preparation programs in order to address the nationwide shortage of minority teachers. The goal is to prepare thirty teachers per year to respond to local and national minority teacher shortages.

Arellano-Romero, O., and Eggler, J. *Recruitment, Retention, and Innovative Instructional Strategies for Culturally Diverse Minority College Students: A Review of the Literature.* Santa Barbara, Calif.: Office of Instruction, Santa Barbara City College, 1987. 77 pp. (ED 318 523)

This literature review focuses on the recruitment, retention, and teaching strategies for the culturally diverse student body at Santa Barbara City College in California. Chapters review the growing concern for the underrepresentation of Hispanics, blacks, and Native Americans in California's higher education systems; make recommendations concerning the recruitment and retention of minority students; feature innovative teaching strategies and curriculum case studies; and suggest areas for further research in learning assessment and audio-visual units.

Henninger, M. L. "Recruiting Minority Students: Issues and Options." *Journal of Teacher Education*, 1989, *40* (6), 35-39. (EJ 403 223)

This article examines selected basic assumptions that relate to minority-student recruitment into teacher education. Four categories of minority recruitment endeavors are discussed, and examples of each are provided.

Retention

Harris, Z. "Institutional Commitment to Cultural Diversity." *Community, Technical, and Junior College Journal*, 1989-90, *60* (3), 35-37. (EJ 404 261)

This article argues that the impact of growing cultural and ethnic diversity nationwide will have a pervasive impact on community colleges, and it emphasizes the importance of institutional reform and commitment to ethnic diversity. The characteristics shared by ten predominantly white colleges that have successfully retained and graduated large numbers of minority students are highlighted.

Miller, C. "Minority Student Achievement: A Comprehensive Perspective." *Journal of Developmental Education*, 1990, *13* (3), 6-8, 10-11. (EJ 405 825)

After reviewing statistics on current minority involvement in higher education, this article presents components of effective retention strategies. These include administrative commitment, financial resources, student services, curricula, personnel, and timeliness of intervention. A comprehensive approach to improve minority achievement and redefine matriculation expectations is suggested.

Riggs, R. O., Davis, T. M., and Wilson, O. H. "Impact of Tennessee's Remedial/Developmental Studies Program on the Academic Progress of Minority Students." *Community/Junior College Quarterly of Research and Practice*, 1990, *14* (1), 1-11. (EJ 405 829)

This article examines the impact of statewide mandatory testing and placement in Tennessee's community colleges on the retention and academic progress of minority students. It reports that attrition is higher for developmental students than for college-level students and higher for minority students than for white students. Few blacks enroll directly in college-level courses, and fewer still persist for three quarters.

Transfer

Ackerman, S. P. *An Analysis of Two UCLA Transfer and Retention Programs: The Transfer Alliance Program and the Supergraduate Program.* Los Angeles: Office of Academic Interinstitutional Research, University of California, Los Angeles, 1989. 38 pp. (ED 310 810)

A description is provided of the Transfer Alliance Program (TAP) and the Supergraduate Program, two transfer and retention efforts operating between the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) and local community colleges. TAP was created to promote the community college as a viable option for students seeking a baccalaureate degree and to encourage stronger academic preparation and curriculum planning in community colleges. The Supergraduate Program targets low-income and minority students in their junior year in high school and motivates and prepares them to pursue a college education.

California Postsecondary Education Commission. *Update of Community College Transfer Student Statistics, 1988-89: University of California, the California*

State University, and California's Independent Colleges and Universities. Commission Report 89-23. Sacramento: California Postsecondary Education Commission, 1989. 93 pp. (ED 313 073)

This report on the flow of transfer students from the California community colleges to the University of California and the California State University systems and to independent colleges and universities in the state focuses on transfer and articulation policy issues, trends in transfer among ethnic groups, and enrollment rates.

Farland, R., and Anderson, C. *The Transfer Center Project*. Sacramento: Office of the Chancellor, California Community Colleges, 1989. 42 pp. (ED 309 801)

This report describes California's Transfer Center Project, which was initiated to increase the number of community college students who transfer to four-year institutions, with particular emphasis on students from historically underrepresented groups. The report includes a description of the project, including information on transfer-center goals and operations, findings of an external evaluation, and a list of activities to be undertaken by the chancellor of the California Community Colleges to promote transfer.

Lieberman, J. (ed.). *The Pew Charitable Trusts: Center for At Risk Students*. Long Island City, N.Y.: LaGuardia Community College, 1989. 12 pp. (ED 315 107)

Three activities of LaGuardia Community College are described: the formation of the Center for At-Risk Students; the college's International High School, a collaborative program that serves high school students who are at high risk because of their limited English proficiency; and Exploring Transfer, a two-year/four-year college collaborative effort to increase the number of urban and minority transfer students.

Pincus, F. K., and DeCamp, S. "Minority College Students Who Transfer to Four-Year Colleges. A Study of a Matched Sample of B.A. Recipients and Non-Recipients." *Community/Junior College Quarterly of Research and Practice*, 1989, *13* (3-4), 191-219. (EJ 402 823)

This article describes factors promoting and inhibiting transfer and the attainment of bachelor's (BA) degrees. Findings are reported from interviews with forty-eight minority scholarship recipients who transferred from two-year to four-year colleges; BA recipients are compared with nonrecipients. Study findings are related to research on the importance of social integration into college life.

Watkins, B. T. "Community Colleges Urged to Bolster Liberal Arts to Help Students Transfer to Four-Year Institutions." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 1, 1989, pp. A35, 38. (EJ 399 257)

According to a report called *Bridges to Community* by the Academy for Educational Development and the College Board, between 15 percent and 25 percent of community college students transfer to four-year institutions. This article advocates that community colleges must make liberal arts programs their top priority if they are to help black and Hispanic students transfer.

Watkins, B. T. "Two-Year Institutions under Pressure to Ease Transfers." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 7, 1990, pp. A37–38. (EJ 404 042)

This article emphasizes that community colleges are being pressed to eliminate barriers that keep many students, especially minority students, from transferring to four-year institutions. The article mentions that over the last fifteen years community colleges have stressed occupational education and have not placed sufficient emphasis on academics.

Leadership

Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. *Contract Faculty Hiring Procedures: A Model Based on Assembly Bill 1725*. Sacramento: Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, 1989. 9 pp. (ED 315 140)

This policy statement on contract-faculty employment includes sections on hiring philosophy, affirmative action, position identification, search procedures, selection-committee procedures, and statement review and revision. The report lists qualifications desired in applicants, including sensitivity to and understanding of the diverse academic, socioeconomic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds of community college students.

Sheehan, M. C. *Faculty and Staff Diversity Update: A Report*. Sacramento: Office of the Chancellor, California Community Colleges, 1990. 32 pp. (ED 313 093)

This quarterly report by the Faculty and Staff Diversity Unit of the chancellor's office of the California Community Colleges presents the 1988–89 objectives of the unit and the actions taken to meet them. The progress report provides information on expenditures, increases in underrepresented group applicants and hires, colleges targeted for recruitment efforts, districts' self-evaluations of outcomes, ongoing funding requirements, and specific activities that did and did not have expected results.

Vaughan, G. B. "Black Community College Presidents." *Community College Review*, 1989, 17 (3), 18–27. (EJ 407 346)

This article discusses survey responses from seventeen of forty-eight black community college presidents who were polled regarding their paths to the presidency, their job interviews, the assets and liabilities associated with being a black candidate for the presidency, affirmative action, mentors and role models, negative role models, and racial aspects of the presidency.

Vaughan, G. B. *Leadership in Transition: The Community College Presidency.* Riverside, N.J.: American Council on Education/Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989. 146 pp. (ED 311 960)

This book examines issues currently facing community college presidents and argues for a change in leadership to meet the needs of a new era in higher education. Two chapters draw from survey data to consider the special problems and advantages of women, black, and Hispanic presidents.

Vaughan, G. B. *Pathway to the Presidency: Community College Deans of Instruction.* Washington, D.C.: American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, 1990. 228 pp. (ED 318 526)

Written to enhance the understanding of administrators, faculty members, and board members regarding the position of dean of instruction at community colleges, this book reports and analyzes study findings on the background, preparation, and roles of people in this position. Included is a separate survey of female, black, and Hispanic deans.

Revitalization

American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. "1990 AACJC Public Policy Agenda." *Community, Technical, and Junior College Journal,* 1990, *60* (4), 45-47. (EJ 407 338)

This article presents the six goals adopted by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges as priorities for 1990: minority education initiative, leadership development, institutional effectiveness, human resource development, international/intercultural education, and federal relations.

Connecticut State Board of Higher Education. *Recruitment and Retention of Minorities in Connecticut Higher Education: A Status Report.* Hartford: Connecticut State Board of Higher Education, 1989. 22 pp. (ED 311 759)

Connecticut's Strategic Plan for Racial and Ethnic Diversity was created in 1985 to increase minority participation in the state's higher education system through recruitment and retention. This report presents a model for examining the progress in the implementation of the plan. It also includes data on specific minority-group enrollments and percentages of minorities at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels. Degree awards to minorities are tracked. The report concludes that the state is exhibiting progress in minority recruitment and that the improvement of retention should be further emphasized.

"Eight States Develop 'Bold' Programs to Increase Minority Graduation Rates." *Black Issues in Higher Education,* 1989, 5 (23), 1, 10. (EJ 399 903)

A national competition for the design of model programs to help more minorities graduate from four-year colleges and universities has resulted in grants to Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Massachusetts, Montana, Ohio, New York, and Tennessee. This article outlines state plans to develop articulation agreements, transfer, computerized tracking, cooperatives, and financial incentives.

New Mexico Commission on Higher Education. *Planning for the Class of 2005: A Vision for the Future. The Strategic Plan for Higher Education in New Mexico.* N.p.: New Mexico Commission on Higher Education, 1988. 61 pp. (ED 313 072)

This long-range plan for higher education in New Mexico is a guide for decision making rather than a plan for individual colleges. Introductory sections explain the development of the plan; planning principles and assumptions; conclusions about economic development, demography, and education in New Mexico; and goals, priorities, and the future. Among the plan's thirty-two policy statements are directives for the improvement of minority participation in higher education, including statements on financial incentives for improved participation; on professional shortages; on costs, tuition, and financial aid; and on developmental education, diversification of the delivery of education, and statewide course articulation.

Wittstruck, J. R., Hess, R. J., and Stein, R. *Challenges and Opportunities: Minorities in Missouri Higher Education.* Jefferson City: Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education, 1988. 57 pp. (ED 310 821)

An overview is provided of the issues related to the participation and retention of minorities in higher education in Missouri and across the nation. The appended paper, "Trends and Issues of Minority Participation in American Higher Education," examines high school graduation and college participation rates, the transition from high school to college, minority enrollment in undergraduate and postgraduate education, community college transfers, recruitment and retention in four-year institutions, minority-faculty role models, campus climate, institutional support services, and faculty recruitment and retention trends.

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The authors of this volume of *New Directions for Community Colleges* have provided firsthand information on issues affecting minority student participation in America's community colleges. Comprehensive descriptions are included of programs and services aimed at providing access to community college education for affected minority groups and of recruitment and retention activities. Further, particular attention has been given to issues concerning minority-student transfer to four-year postsecondary institutions and the professional development of minority staff.

Effective communication between students and lecturers: Improving student-led communication in educational settings

Hannah Lena Merdian & John Kyle Warrior

This study investigated students' communication preferences in educational settings, resulting in an empirical model of effective communication between students and lecturers. Students from a psychology department at a UK university were asked about their preferred communication tool for academic purposes, including social networking, emails, university-internal virtual learning environments, and face-to-face communication. The data was analysed using methods of exploratory data analysis and cluster analysis. Students clearly expressed a preference for social networking sites when communicating with peers due to their frequent and widespread use, fast response rate, and ease of access, but preferred face-to-face meetings when sufficient time was available. When communicating with lecturers, students had a preference to use email. The findings also showed that students preferred to attend lectures over reading lecture slides online. Based on these results, an empirical model of students' communication preferences in educational settings was developed aimed to aid in the effective management of student-lead communication. The study concludes with a critical evaluation of ways students and lecturers can improve communication between each other and how this can positively contribute to students' university experience.
Keywords: *communication; social networking; face-to-face learning; Virtual Learning Environments.*

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION is the key to human interaction. The systematic study of human communication established itself as a topical area in the 1950s, initially focusing on the impact of communication on decision making (Littlejohn, 1999). However, since the last decade, traditional communication theories are challenged by the up-take of mass media and information technology, which has substantially changed the ways people communicate with each other (Chen, Pedersen & Murphy, 2011). For example, Social Presence Theory relates to the experience of one another that impacts and defines social communication (such as through facial expression or posture; Rice, 1993), but is dependent on the context of both the interrelationship and the communication (Walther, 1992), as well as the individual communicators (Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997). However, with the introduction of technology-based communication, all aspects of social presence have been moderated (e.g. use of emoticons instead of facial expressions), requiring an operational reconceptualisation of Social Presence Theory (Lowenthal, 2010; Tu, 2000).

Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) is defined as 'communications, mediated by interconnected computers, between individuals or groups separated in space and/or time.' (Luppicini, 2007, p.142) and includes email exchange, instant messaging, live video chatting, and the usage of social networking sites, such as bebo or Facebook. According to Merdian and Reid (2013), 'social networking sites invite internet users to create an online profile (containing various amounts of personal information, photos, etc.) and to engage in social exchange with other members of the social networking site. Users can become 'friends' with other users, send and receive messages (public or private), comment publicly on

another person's profile site, and create specific subgroups with each other' (p.29). While research has shown an interaction between online and offline communication (e.g. Boyd & Ellison, 2009; Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007), CMC remains on the rise; in 2012, 84.1 per cent of British people had access to the internet, with 74 per cent of them reporting to have an active Facebook account ('Usage Patterns,' 2013). Consequently, the use of the internet and CMC has also entered traditional learning environments in recent years, ranging from university degrees offered through online learning to the inclusion of CMC and the internet within traditional university environments (Luppicini, 2007). This has sparked developments in higher education, such as *The Virtual Pedagogy Initiative* (Senior et al., 2008) who introduced the term 'digital natives' (p.18) to refer to contemporary student cohorts as a learner group with different communicative needs and skills than traditional learners.

One of the most popular forms of CMC is email exchange, with 7.2 per cent of all internet usage in the UK being related to email ('Social Networks', 2013). For the past two decades, email has been the online communication method of choice for both formal and informal conversations in professional environments such as the university (Judd, 2010). Tolmie and Boyle (2000) stated that the introduction of email into learning environments increased effective communication between students and lectures, through provision of a communication platform outside of the time-related and geographical constraints of the university and through provision of a potentially less threatening communication tool for students who find it difficult to communicate in group settings. This is also supported in Light, Colbourn and Light's (1997) study on computer mediated support in university tutorials which showed that whilst male students were more dominant in a face-to-face environment, this gender inequality disappeared in the online exchange. In addition, the email exchange provides a written record of what has been said, making email an ideal medium for positive conflict solving (Tolmie & Boyle, 2000). However, research is emerging on the negative effects of email interruptions on work place productivity (e.g. Jackson, Dawson & Wilson, 2001), but this has not yet been explored for academic settings. Nevertheless, Judd (2010) found that the use of email in university settings declined by 30 per cent between 2005 and 2009, paralleled by a rapid increase in use of Social Networking Sites (SNS) from three per cent to 38 per cent. There has been some research on the benefits of SNS usage in educational settings. Pilgrim and Bledsoe (2011) explored the advantages of Facebook groups between educators and students, which allow members to add posts with information and questions for all members to see and to respond and interact with each other regarding the posting. Using a similar format, Cain and Policastri (2011) invited guest experts who were not affiliated with the school onto the Facebook groups, which students perceived as a great opportunity to learn from a broad range of educators. They also found that the informal structure of Facebook made the students feel more comfortable communicating with the experts. Finally, Selwyn (2009) researched the benefits of using Facebook for academic purposes in student to student communication and reported on a number of university-related themes on their wall posts, for example, discussing content of lectures and assignments, as well as passing relevant course information onto each other.

Besides communicating on groups and wall posts, SNS also allows for social exchange via instant messaging or online chatting. Nicholson (2002) and Farmer (2005) reported that students frequently used instant messaging for communicating about educational topics, and that it was perceived as a positive tool. Instant messaging is already used as a supporting communication pathway between lecturers and students in distance learning courses but has

yet to be integrated into regular universities where it still appears to be viewed as a socialising rather than an educational tool (Madge et al., 2009).

Whilst the use of SNS in universities has been limited mostly to student to student communication, universities have begun to utilise online communication and learning through Virtual Learning Environments (VLE), such as Blackboard or Moodle (Dillenbourg, Schneider & Synteta, 2002). VLE allow students and lecturers to communicate and discuss educational topics on a closed, institution-based system that can be monitored; they enable the use of forums and emails, and to post learning material on bulletin boards (Hollyhead, Edwards & Holt, 2012). Hollyhead et al. (2012) found that both students and educators appreciated the convenience of VLE due to the unrestrained access to learning content and the ability to contact or ask questions to their peer group and educators simultaneously in one closed forum. However, research by Sweeney, O'Donoghue and Whitehead (2004) reported a lack of student support for VLE, relating to comparatively slow responses to queries, which gives students a sense of feeling alone and not considering themselves as part of the group. Another disadvantage of VLE was reported by Hollyhead et al. (2012), who identified the lack of instant messaging as causal to the lack of social presence online. However, despite the underutilisation of VLE, Hollyhead et al. (2012) viewed them as a good option for students to communicate with educators and educators with students in a more formal setting than on social networking sites. Increasingly, multi-user virtual environments such as Second Life are also used as educational platforms (Warburton, 2009), especially in medical and other health-related subjects (Boulos, Hetherington & Wheeler, 2007).

In summary, the research to date shows that computer-based communication has changed the ways how educators and students communicate for academic purposes, but shows some shortcomings in the implementation of these tools. In their research on distant education courses, Swan (2001) and Richardson and Swan (2003) identified the online interaction with lecturers and peers as a key component for students' satisfaction with the academic programme. This finding has also been confirmed for traditional university-settings (e.g. Hostetter & Busch, 2006; Lowenthal, 2009, 2010). However, the research in this area is still in its infancy in terms of how CMC is integrated in a traditional university setting, how this relates to and expands upon traditional communication theories, how the different communication forms are implemented and perceived by their users, and how they compare in their effectiveness. The current study was thus aimed to investigate four modes of communication available to undergraduate psychology students at an English university, namely, face-to-face, email, VLE (i.e. Blackboard), and the most commonly used SNS Facebook, exploring which of these communication methods students prefer, which they find most helpful, why they prefer or dislike a particular method, and what aspects of the communication they find helpful or unhelpful. A broader aim of this research was to help universities to connect and communicate effectively with their students, based on the student-lead perception of academic communication.

Method

Participants

Participants were either current undergraduate psychology students or students who had graduated from the university in 2011 or 2012 with an undergraduate degree in psychology. Overall, 98 of 123 participants completed the study (80 per cent completion rate); of those, only 18 participants (18 per cent) were male, with an age range from 19 to 35 years (M=21.22; SD=3.64), with the 80 female participants being aged between 18 and 44 years (M=20.88; SD=4.01).

Instrument and procedure

An online questionnaire was designed on SurveyMonkey, based on Tu's (2002) measure of students' perception of social presence and their ease of use. Items were developed specifically for this study, concerning four modes of educational communication modes: (1) Face-to-face, for example, 'I prefer meeting with lecturers face to face rather than using email.'; (2) email, for example, 'Using university email is an excellent way of interacting with lecturers.'; (3) VLE (Blackboard), for example, 'Reading slides on Blackboard is just as beneficial as attending lectures.'; and (4) SNS (Facebook), for example, 'I would prefer to use discussion boards over Facebook if they were used by more people'. Students were asked to rate their agreement on a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree – strongly disagree). Participants were recruited via Facebook, through the university email system, and face-to-face by giving them a link to the online questionnaire. The study was designed and conducted according to the ethical guidelines by the British Psychological Society and received ethical approval from the university.

Data analysis

As part of the exploratory data analysis, descriptive analysis and item content analysis was conducted to identify patterns in the participants' responses when judging preferential communication mode. The focus of the second part of the data analysis was dimension reduction, in order to identify groups of items as a potential explanatory model for students' declared communication preferences. The most common methods of variable reduction in exploratory research are Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and Cluster Analysis (CA). PCA is used to simplify a variable set to its latent principal components (Johnson & Wichern, 2002). Cluster Analysis (CA) is a way of combining variables into groups according to their similarity, which is based on a distance matrix between items (Afifi, Clark & May, 2004). Both dimension reduction techniques can reveal relationships that were not previously assumed (Johnson & Wichern, 2002), and have been used for variable selection (Jolliffe, 2002; Silverstein, 1985). However, PCA introduces a new structure level beyond the data while CA remains on the variable level, thus inherently is a classification rather than dimension reduction method (Bortz, 2005). Thus, CA was the preferred method of choice. This was further supported given the assumption that pre-grouping of items was expected due to the split into different communication modes and the mixed intercorrelation matrix resulting from this.

Results

Participants' responses for each mode of communication can be seen in Tables 1 to 4.

Overall, it appeared that most students expressed a preference for communication via social networking (67.3 per cent), followed by face-to-face (60.2 per cent), emails (48 per cent), and discussion boards (26.5 per cent). There was a gender difference observed in the preferred communication method, however, this did not reach statistical significance (Fisher's exact test, n.s.). Females expressed the strongest preference for social networking (71.3 per cent vs. 50 per cent of males) while male students reported their strongest preference for face-to-face meetings (72.2 per cent vs. 57.5 per cent of females). Preference for email communication was varied (55.6 per cent of males vs. 46.2 per cent of females) and VLEs remained the least preferred option amongst both genders (33.3 per cent of males vs. 25.7 per cent of females).

As part of the exploratory data analysis, item order and item content of participants' responses was analysed in the context of the preferred communication method.

Face-to-face communication. In analysing the responses provided for face-to-face communication, it appeared that lecture attendance was widely preferred over self-inducted

Table 1: Participants' agreement to items relating to face-to-face communication, in total and separated by gender.

Item	Percentage of Agreement (Strongly Agree/Agree)		
	Total (*N*=98)	Male (*N*=18)	Female (*N*=80)
Attending lectures is more beneficial than reading slides on Blackboard	87.7	100	85
Reverse: Face-to-face meetings with lecturers waste time which could be better spent	66.3	55.6	68.8
Meeting with course mates for revision sessions helped more than using social networks	63.3	66.6	62.5
Meeting with course mates inspires me more to do work than communicating online	60.2	72.2	57.5
Having meetings with lecturers is more helpful than exchanging emails	58.2	72.2	55
I prefer meeting with lecturers face-to-face rather than using email	35.7	77.8	26.3
Reverse: I prefer using the internet to interact with course mates and lecturers rather than face-to-face meetings	25.5	44.4	21.3
Median Agreement	**60.2**	**72.2**	**57.5**

Note: For reverse items, it is displayed how many participants (strongly) disagreed with the item.

Table 2: Participants' agreement to items relating to communication on discussion boards/Blackboard, in total and separated by gender.

Item	Percentage of Agreement (Strongly Agree/Agree)		
	Total (*N*=98)	Male (*N*=18)	Female (*N*=80)
I feel discussion boards are underused	86.7	88.9	86.3
I would prefer to use discussion boards over Facebook if they were used by more people	64.3	94.4	57.5
Reading slides on Blackboard is easier than attending lectures	30.6	33.3	30
Discussion boards give me a fast response from both lecturers and students	22.4	27.8	21.3
I prefer using discussion boards over Facebook groups	21.4	33.3	18.8
Reading slides on blackboard is just as beneficial as attending lectures	18.4	16.7	18.8
Median Agreement	**26.5**	**33.3**	**25.7**

Table 3: Participants' agreement to items relating to email communication, in total and separated by gender.

Item	Percentage of Agreement (Strongly Agree/Agree)		
	Total (*N*=98)	Male (*N*=18)	Female (*N*=80)
Using university email is an excellent way of interacting with lecturers	88.8	83.3	90
I find emailing subject related questions to lecturers gives me more useful responses than posting on Facebook	65.3	83.3	61.3
When time is available I prefer to email lecturers with my questions on their subject	60.2	77.8	56.3
Reverse: I feel embarrassed to email lecturers topic related questions	52	61.1	50
Reverse: Lecturers often do not help when emailed	43.9	50	42.5
I email relevant lecturers topic related questions before posting my queries online	31.6	33.3	31.3
Reverse: When emailing lecturers I worry I will be wasting their time	21.4	33.3	18.8
Reverse: When emailing lecturers I worry about annoying them	21.4	33.3	18.8
Median Agreement	**48**	**55.6**	**46.3**

Note: For reverse items, it is displayed how many participants (strongly) disagreed with the item.

learning. In terms of other forms of information dissemination, emails and face-to-face contact were both used; however, students preferred face-to-face contact for situations with a stronger intensity, for example, for in-depth preparation or where peer-support was needed. Especially male students expressed a strong preference for face-to-face contact with lecturers and peers.

Email exchange. Content analysis of the questions revealed that the moderate popularity of email exchanges was based on two factors: the value of the information provided, and personal inhibitions to approach a lecturer via email. It was generally found that email exchange was useful for specific enquiries as well as when time was available to await a response. However, students reported that they checked other resources before emailing their lecturers (e.g. only 31.6 per cent reported lecturers as the first point of contact before posting their query online), and reported some embarrassment in approaching the lecturers (48 per cent of students did not disagree that they experience embarrassment when emailing lecturers topic-related questions). Overall, while the pattern of preference was similar for both genders, males were more likely to employ email communication with lecturers.

Virtual Learning Environments. VLEs, for example, Blackboard, were reported as the least preferred communication mode, and content analysis revealed some context to its low popularity. Students reported a clear preference for lecture attendance rather than online learning. In terms of exchange between peers and lecturers, students

Table 4: Participants' agreement to items relating to social network communication, in total and separated by gender.

Item	Percentage of Agreement (Strongly Agree/Agree)		
	Total (*N*=98)	Male (*N*=18)	Female (*N*=80)
I get faster responses when asking questions on Facebook compared with subject discussion boards	77.6	50	83.8
When time is not available Facebook is a faster option	77.6	61.1	81.3
I find it easier to ask questions on Facebook rather than subject discussion boards	69.4	61.1	71.3
I prefer to ask questions on Facebook rather than subject discussion boards	67.3	38.9	72.5
I found instant chat (Facebook chat, Skype, etc.) useful when interacting with course mates	60.2	66.7	58.8
It would be a big help if lecturers were able to monitor Facebook groups and answer questions	51.0	50	51.3
Reverse: Facebook groups often give wrong answers to questions	31.6	33.3	31.3
Median Agreement	**67.3**	**50**	**71.3**

Note: For reverse items, it is displayed how many participants (strongly) disagreed with the item.

strongly agreed that VLEs were underused and thus often neglected towards other forms of social media due to the slow and unreliable response rate. However, participants, especially the male students, reported they would prefer VLEs over social network usage for academic purposes if they were used more widely.

Social Networking. Social networking, for example, Facebook, was the most preferred option for academic exchange beyond lecture attendance due to its fast response rate, lack of psychological barriers to ask questions, and the perceived quality of responses. Females expressed a stronger preference for exchange via social networking than did male students. Interestingly, both genders were non-committal towards lecturer membership on social networking groups.

Summary

Overall, it appears that there are three main themes emerging in the data that defines how students decide their preferred communication choice: (1) The type and depth of content of the exchange (e.g. lecture, specific request, study preparation; high intensity vs. low intensity); (2) addressee of the exchange (lecturer vs. peers); and (3) the time available until a response is needed (short vs. long). Face-to-face meetings are preferred for lectures and other types of information-intense exchanges. Lecturers are preferred to be emailed for direct requests or seen face-to-face, while peers are preferred to be seen for study preparation but are preferably contacted via social media. Social media are usually the preferred mode of communication if there is only a short time available until a response is needed. The study identified some psycho-

logical barriers towards communicating with lecturers, and students seem more likely to check other modes of information before they approach a lecturer directly.

A hierarchical CA using Squared Euclidean Distances between variables (recommended distance measure for variable selection; Izenman, 2008) resulted in five distinct clusters of items. As CA is a procedure sensitive to outliers (Afifi et al., 2004), hierarchical clustering was repeated with a fixed cluster number (100 per cent identical classification of variables). However, it should be noted that the agglomeration matrix revealed a varied merging process between the variables, suggesting a potential lack of stability in the cluster solution. Replication of the cluster structure using different distance methods (Pearson's correlation, Cosine) and using only three quarters of cases validated the current cluster solution with the exception of items belonging to Clusters 2 and 3. This communicates a strong interrelationship between the two clusters, which explains the lack of stability identified before. The final cluster structure is displayed in Table 5; again, caution is warranted when interpreting Clusters 2 and 3.

Cluster 1 contains six items clearly relating to the positive nature of social networking, and was labelled *Preference for social networking*. Facebook groups are identified as a fast, reliable, and well-used mode of communication. This cluster communicates that there is a group of students who have a clear preference for using social networking for academic purposes.

Cluster 2 and 3 are very similar and express a clear preference for directed and contained ways of academic communication. Face-to-face meetings are preferred for more intense information exchange, such as study preparation with course mates or lecture attendance. Email is used for more direct requests. These two clusters show that students require a certain level of exchange with their lecturers and peers, and are ready to use a range of communication modes for that purpose. A desire for a stronger use of VLEs is expressed.

Cluster 4 contains two items, identifying those variables (and thus participants) who prefer online learning towards lecture attendance, and was labelled *Preference for online learning*. The fact that they are singled out from the previous cluster confirms that students who prefer online learning are very different in their communication needs than students who prefer lecture attendance.

Cluster 5 is not a genuine cluster but only consists of one item, addressing the need for lecturers to monitor Facebook groups. The fact that this item remained separate from the other clusters, especially from Cluster 1, shows that this view is not shared by regular social networking users.

The cluster solution confirmed the value of the three main themes identified above, that the preferred communication method is dependent on the type and content of the exchange, the addressee, and the time frame available. It also showed clearly that social networking is a preferred method of communication but is perceived differently by the students from other modes of communication. Thus, it has some merit as a peer-only exchange forum for academic purposes. The data point clearly to the potential value of VLEs as a cross-over communication tool between peer-only social exchange and direct lecturer-student communication.

The information from the exploratory data analysis and the cluster analysis was then summarised into the empirical model of students' communication preferences in educational settings (see Figure 1).

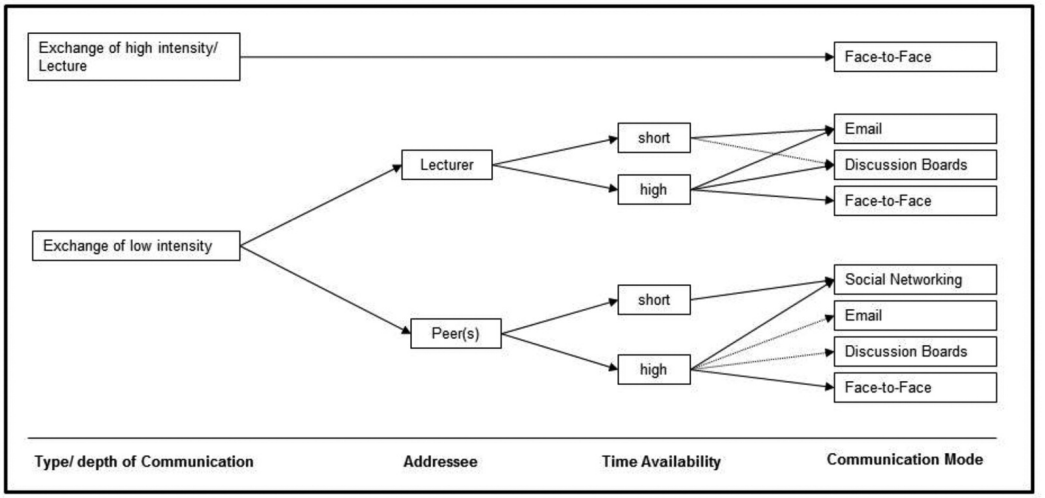
Discussion

Students at a psychology department at a UK university were tested on their preferences of four different methods of communication, face-to-face, email, Virtual Learning Environments and Social Networking Sites. The finding showed that one's preference in communication mode is reliant on three aspects, the type and depth of the information exchange, the addressee, and the amount of time available to the students.

Table 5: Five-cluster solution resulting from hierarchical cluster analysis on items.

Cluster	Item
Cluster 1: Preference for social networking	I prefer to ask questions on Facebook rather than subject discussion boards I find it easier to ask questions on Facebook rather than subject discussion boards I get faster responses when asking questions on Facebook compared with discussion boards or emailing lecturers *Reverse item:* Facebook groups often give the wrong answers to questions When time is not available Facebook is a faster option I found instant chat (Facebook chat, Skype ect.) useful when interacting with course mates
Cluster 2: Preference for direct and contained forms of communication	I feel discussion boards are under used *Reverse item:* I feel embarrassed to email lecturers topic related questions *Reverse item:* Lecturers often do not help when emailed I find emailing subject related questions to lecturers gives me more useful responses than posting on Facebook I would prefer to use discussion boards over Facebook if they were used by more people When time is available I prefer to email lecturers with my questions on their subject Using university email is an excellent way of interacting with lecturers Meeting with course mates for revision sessions helped more than using social networks (Facebook, etc.) Having meetings with lecturers is more helpful than exchanging emails Meeting with course mates inspires me more to do work than communicating online *Reverse item:* Face-to-face meetings with lecturers waste time which could be better spent Attending lectures are more beneficial than just reading slides on Blackboard
Cluster 3: Preference for directed academic conversation	I email relevant lecturers with subject related questions before posting my query online I prefer using discussion boards over Facebook groups Discussion boards give me a fast response from both lecturers and students *Reverse item:* When emailing lecturers I worry I will be wasting their time *Reverse item:* When emailing lecturers I worry about annoying them I prefer meeting with lecturers face-to-face rather than using email *Reverse item:* I prefer using the internet to interact with course mates and lecturers rather than face-to face-meetings
Cluster 4: Preference for online learning	Reading slides on Blackboard is easier than attending lectures Reading slides on Blackboard is just as beneficial as attending lectures
Cluster 5:	It would be a big help if lecturers were able to monitor Facebook groups and answers questions

Figure 1: An empirical model of students' communication preferences in educational settings.



This model was developed based on exploratory data analysis and cluster analysis to questionnaire items with *N*=98 students. A straight line indicates that a relationship was emerged directly in the data. A dotted line indicates that the relationship was deducted based on the available data.

A Cluster Analysis confirmed the significant role of these aspects in students' preferred communication choice. It further showed that there is a subgroup of students who prefer online learning in comparison to attending lectures, and that these students have very different communication needs. In addition, it appeared that social networking is a preferred communication mode for peer-exchange only. Both parts of the data analysis point to the potential value of VLEs as a contained academic discussion tool.

These findings are in agreement with Swan (2001) and Richardson and Swan (2003) who reported that, despite the increase of virtual learning opportunities, face-to-face meetings remain to play a major role in student satisfaction. Interestingly, the current study confirmed the gender bias observed by Light et al. (1997) that male students seem to prefer a face-to-face learning environment in comparison to female students (72.2 per cent vs. 57.5 per cent). The findings further suggest that in terms of in-depth discussion and preparation students prefer the presence of their peers which is used as a motivator that cannot necessarily be obtained through online media. However, it also became evident that online social presence has a key role in students' communication (Hostetter & Busch, 2006; Lowenthal, 2009, 2010).

The current study also showed that email is a frequently used choice of communication between students and lecturers, especially for direct information exchange with low intensity. The high popularity of email exchange may also be explained by Tolmie and Boyle's (2000) suggestion that email may be especially preferable for shy or nervous students who may be inhibited in face-to-face environments. However, there appears to be some hesitance before doing so, with about 70 per cent of participants failing to reject that 'When emailing lecturers I worry I will be wasting their time' or that 'When emailing lecturers I worry about annoying them'. Many students also reported that they would check other sources of support first before emailing their lecturers.

An interesting finding of the current study is that virtual learning environments, such as Blackboard, are perceived as appealing by the students but are widely perceived as being underused. This outcome is in line with previous studies that reported a lack of social presence on academic VLEs (e.g. Hollyhead, Edwards & Holt, 2012; Sweeney, O'Donoghue & Whitehead, 2004). The responses of the current survey show that VLEs could be utilised more to help students and indicate, similar to the findings by Sweeney et al. (2004), that students would prefer interacting on a discussion board that is monitored by lecturers. Browne, Jenkins and Walker (2006) found that VLEs such as Blackboard were deployed in 98 per cent of universities in the UK; however, all reported difficulties in their uptake due to their infrequent usage. This may explain the considerably high popularity of social networking sites that could be redirected towards a more contained, purely academic online forum. In addition, using discussion boards may also add in reducing some of the lecturers' email load, especially when information requested by a number of students is shared, and may allow students with inhibitions towards emailing their lecturers to request and receive the information in a more anonymous context. However, it appears that, for this particular department, Blackboard is not frequented enough to trust in reliable and fast information transmission.

Overall, social networking was considered the most popular communication tool amongst students. This finding supports Cain and Policastri (2011) and Pilgrim and Bledsoe (2011) who pointed to the increasing influence of Facebook for communication in education. Participants in the current study referred to the ease of access, along with the fast response rate which makes Facebook a convenient forum to propose questions and queries, especially when under time pressure. Thus, if the university could find a way to utilise Blackboard in these ways, students are likely to find it a helpful communication tool, amongst them as well as concerning student-lecturer exchange.

Limitations

While the current study aims to explore students' preference in any educational setting, the findings are limited to its sample of psychology students from one specific UK university. The reported findings are undoubtedly influenced by the current usage of communication mode at the university, specifically within the School of Psychology, and students' communication needs might also vary depending on the academic programme students undertake. In addition, the sample accessed was gender-imbalanced (82 per cent females) which is a representative sample for a psychological undergraduate degree but further hinders generalisability across other study programmes.

In addition, as the survey was conducted online, it meant that students who use the internet more were more likely to participate in this project. The study was advertised through the university email system as well as posted on Facebook, which may explain the high popularity of Facebook in the current study.

Finally, students were asked to rank preset statements, which did not allow for more detailed feedback by the participants. It would benefit the area of study if future research was to conduct a qualitative study with a wider range of students from different universities across the country to increase its reliability and validity. Two areas from this study that should be researched further are: (1) why students worry about 'annoying lecturers' and 'wasting their time', which could help universities in increasing effective communication between lecturers and students; and (2) explore the popularity of social networking in more detail.

Conclusion

Overall, whilst computer mediated communication and social networks in particular are becoming a major part of student-lead communication, this study has shown that students still have a need for the face-to-face aspect of academic learning and teaching. It should be noted, though, that this study

focuses purely on student preferences. To date, there has been little research into the preferred communication method of lecturers and academics, an area of pedagogical research that would add to the current study.

Based on the outcomes of this research, a number of suggestions follow on how lecturers and students could improve their communication, which may result in higher student satisfaction and potentially improved academic efforts.

Suggestions for lecturers and the university as a wider organisation:

- Promote the use of virtual discussion boards for both academic exchange and dissemination of information.
- Encourage students to contact lecturers directly if they have specific questions or queries.
- Communicate expected time frames for email response or face-to-face appointments, and clearly communicate other sources of information to avoid repeat emails (e.g. where lecture notes are found).
- Inclusion of instant messaging on discussion boards could increase its usage and popularity amongst students. Advise students of realistic response time frames and how posts are going to be monitored.
- Time availability is a major part in the communication preference, and thus time management could be a useful skillset to be taught to students.

Suggestions for students:

- Arrange to meet up in study groups to motivate each other to do more work and be more efficient.
- Promote discussion boards amongst friends and peers on your course. The more people that start using the facility the more helpful it will be and response time will get faster.
- Be patient. Understand that lecturers cannot always reply on the same day, therefore, accommodate yourself enough time for a response.
- Set out specific hours each day for doing university work to avoid falling behind and therefore not having time to email or meet lecturers.

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The influence of internal communication satisfaction on employees' organisational identification: Effect of perceived organisational support

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Abstract

Aim/purpose – This paper bases on the social exchange and social identification theories with the purpose of understanding if the internal communication helps to improve organisational identification, supplemented by the effect of perceived organisational support. The exact aim of this research is to gain a better understanding of the internal communication process from the employees' perspective, and to explore how the satisfaction with internal communication influences employees' attitudinal and behavioural responses. Specifically, this study tends to examine the effect of the satisfaction with internal communication on organisational identification. Subsequently, it also aims to investigate the mediating role of perceived organisational support.

Design/methodology/approach – This study is operationalised through quantitative approach. The hypotheses were tested in a cross-sectional survey which was completed by 132 employees working in a variety of jobs and organisations in Portugal, mostly in the sector of transportations and storage. The research focused on employee satisfaction with the internal communication of the organisation for which they are working, measured with the Internal Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire. The research model was analysed using SmartPLS, a structural equation modelling tool.

Findings – The results suggest that the importance of how an organisation communicates internally is important to encourage the employees' organisational identification. The results indicate also that there is a significant relationship between satisfaction with internal communication and perceived organisational support which mediates the relationship of internal communication and organisational identification.

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Research implications/limitations – This research is cross-sectional, which limits the causality of its findings. Additionally, the use of filter-question caused a significant reduction in the reached sample size.
Originality/value/contribution – This paper addresses the internal communication to investigate the employee-based perceptions. It proposes a conceptual model and supports it with empirical findings. As a result, this study addresses concerns that are the current management fads and addresses the research gap, as only a few empirical studies have previously examined the internal communication as an antecedent of organisational identification.

Keywords: internal communication; internal communication satisfaction; perceived organisational support; organisational identification.
JEL Classification: M3; M5; M540.

1. Introduction

Although previously neglected in organisational identification literature, the interest in internal (or employee) communication has been growing in the last years. Internal communication is important tool in the corporate strategies' formulation and it is recognised by many authors as a key factor in increasing employees' organisational identification and building a culture of transparency that can involve employees in the organisation's goals (e.g. Smidts, Pruyn, & Van Riel, 2001; Verčič, Verčič, & Sriramesh, 2012; Welch & Jackson, 2007).

Managers and researchers have long agreed that communication processes influence the organisational success (Neves & Eisenberger, 2012; Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974). Researchers investigating the work environment and organisational climate normally focus on individual employee perceptions of fairness, stress, leadership or job commitment (Allen, 1995; Chen, Silverthorne, & Hung, 2006; Falcione, Sussman, & Herden, 1987; Trombetta & Rogers, 1988). However, as employees constantly filter information and unconsciously seek for benefits at their workplace, Allen (1992; 1995) linked the communication and organisational commitment with a perceived organisational support as a mediating factor. To support those postulates, Allen (1992) operationalised the employee perceptions regarding the top management-employee communication relationship, the quality of top management's communication and superior-subordinate communication in a cross-sectional study of university employees. The findings of this primary research indicated that perceived organisational support was influenced by the top management-employee communication relationship and the quality of co-worker's and top management's communication, while perceived

support mediated the co-worker communication-commitment relationships. Later (Allen, 1995) empirically tested the relationship between communication concepts and perceived organisational support to also include the role of organisation-wide messages on employee perceptions anchored in organisational climate (shared perceptions of the psychologically important aspects of a work environment).Those postulates were grounded on previous study by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa (1986) who introduced the perceived organisational support concept focusing on an employee's perceptions of the supportiveness existing within the employee-organisation relationship. These employee perceptions include the extent to which organisation values their contributions, cares about their well-being, and is fair in rewarding efforts and loyalty. Also, Smidts et al. (2001) in their study on the impact of employee communication and perceived external prestige on organisational identification, claimed that "how an organization communicates internally is even more vital than the question what is being communicated" (p. 2) and examined the consequences of internal and external communication in relation with organisational identification. More recently, Neves & Eisenberger (2012) used a cross-lagged panel design to examine the relationship between management communication and perceived organisational support, as well as its consequences for performance and found that perceived organisational support fully mediates the relationship between management communication and both in-role and extra-role performance. Accordingly, there is strong evidence that different aspects of organisational communication are positively related to employees' organisational identification and performance.

Despite the growing interest, research to understand the individual employee perspective of internal communication and employee organisational identification, is still scant. Consequently, the aim of this research is to gain a better understanding of the internal communication process from the employees' perspective, and to explore how the satisfaction with internal communication influences employees' attitudinal and behavioural responses. Specifically, this study tends to examine the effect of the satisfaction with internal communication on organisational identification. Subsequently, it also aims to investigate the mediating role of perceived organisational support.

As for the structure, this paper: first, provides the theoretical background presenting the underlying theories; second, it defines the internal communication and highlights the importance of internal communication satisfaction for organisational identification and introduces the concept of perceived organisational

support; third, it describes the methodology applied in the empirical study; finally, it tests the relationship that internal communication has with the perceived organisational support and organisational identification, as well as the mediating role of perceived organisational support.

2. Literature review

2.1. Theoretical background

There are a few dominant theories underlying this research. First, this study is supported by social exchange theory, which is considered to be one of the central theoretical paradigms used to understand and explain workplace relationships (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Social exchange theory explores social exchange relationships through values of perceived support between individuals or groups and serves to understand workplace relationships and employee attitudes (DeConinck, 2010). More importantly, research highlights the perceptions of exchange quality as a predecessor of employee's willingness to return effort (Sluss, Klimchak, & Holmes, 2008). Nonetheless, research on social exchange relationships has not contemplated another essential feature of an employee's professional life, namely their sense of belonging and identity (Sluss et al., 2008). To overcome these limitations, we additionally employ the social identity theory and, perceived as its complementary, self-categorisation theory.

The tendency of individuals to associate themselves with groups that share common qualities has been referred in the literature as social identification (Mael & Tetrick, 1992; De Roeck & Delobbe, 2012). Social identification theory has its roots in social psychological theory and studies the role of self--conception and associated cognitive processes and social beliefs in group processes and intergroup relations (Abrams & Hogg, 1990). Formulated in the early 1970s (Tajfel, 1970), its core belief is that group behaviour follows a shared sense of social membership. From the employee perspective, the social identity can also affect their satisfaction, loyalty, and commitment (and as a result – a firm performance) (Maxwell & Knox, 2009). Social identity theory explains the individual engagements in social settings – such as organisations or workgroups (Korte, 2007; Maxwell & Knox, 2009).

Organisational identification theory resembles to a specific form of social identification where individuals develop a feeling of belongingness to an organisation and may induce employees to act in harmony with the company's identity

and overall strategy (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Identification has been also widely recognised as important to create employee satisfaction, loyalty and effectiveness (Mael & Tetrick, 1992). Strong employees' organisational identification may lead to superior performance and can positively contribute to a company's success (Smidts et al., 2001).

Social identification theory can follow two mechanisms: 1) self--enhancement (based on the distinctive image that serves to boost self-esteem); and 2) self-categorisation, which assumes that individuals differ in their opening to join a group as it depends on their readiness, fit and the group's accessibility (De Roeck & Delobbe, 2012). In the process of categorisation, individuals estimate the accessibility of a group and the potential of adopting to the standards of a specific group (Korte, 2007). In adopting the identity of the group, the individual personality withdraws to the background, seceded by the group identity. While embracing the beliefs, values, and norms of the group, individuals react to organisational circumstances from a particular group-centred position. The above theoretical background creates solid foundations for this study.

2.2. Internal communication

The survival of organisations depends on their ability to communicate (Buckley, Monks & Sinnott, 1998; Chirtao, 2014). Effective internal communication is crucial for successful organisations, as it affects their ability to engage employees and achieve objectives (Welch & Jackson, 2007). There are several authors (Allen, 1992; Hargie, Tourish, & Wilson, 2002; Welch, 2011; Verčič, Vokić, & Ćorić, 2017), who have previously explored the concept of internal communication and focused on its relevance to the academic and business fields. However, despite its importance to research and practice, there are still some considerable gaps in internal communication investigation which can be explained by the complexity and multidimensionality of the phenomena.

The concept finds many alternative terminologies in the literature. Some studies consider the following terms: 'internal relations' (Kennan & Hazleton, 2006), 'internal communications' (Cornelissen, 2004; Welch & Jackson, 2007; Ruck & Welch, 2012), 'corporate communication' (Cornelissen, 2004), 'employee relations' (Grunig & Hunt, 1984), 'internal public relations' (Wright, 1995), 'strategic communication' (Botan & Soto, 1998), or 'staff communication' (Van Wezel Stone, 1996). This study opts to use the term 'internal communication' throughout this paper, which is closer to corporate communication theorists (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007; Welch & Jackson, 2007).

Internal communication is generally seen as a multidimensional construct. Indeed, it perceives interdisciplinary functions, integrating elements of human resource management, communication and marketing (Verčič et al., 2012). Many authors approach internal communication as a significant and independent function of public relations which plays two fundamental roles within organisations: 1) covering the provision of information – the dissemination of information; and 2) creating a sense of community in organisations (e.g. Karanges, Johnston, Beatson, & Lings, 2015; Verčič et al., 2007). Internal communication is often analysed from the stakeholder's perspective, as the communication between strategic managers of an organisation and its internal stakeholders, which is designed to promote the employees' commitment to the organisation and greater understanding of the company's objectives (Welch & Jackson, 2007).

Since its inception, the concept of internal communication has undergone numerous changes. In 1984, Daft & Weick (1984) defined it as a complex and interpretive process through which employees coordinate the work processes essential for the functioning of any organisation. Since then, several other definitions have emerged. Internal employee communication is defined by Frank & Brownell (1989, pp. 5-6) as: "the communication transactions between individuals and/or groups at various levels and in different areas of specialization that are intended to design and redesign organizations, to implement designs and to coordinate day-to-day activities".

Welch & Jackson (2007) defined internal communication as the communication between the strategic managers of an organisation and its internal stakeholders, designed to promote the employees' commitment to the organisation, to awaken in them a sense of belonging, the awareness of the permanent changes in the environment, and understanding of the company's objectives. In a more recent study, Welch (2012) indicated that internal communication can also pose a threat to organisational relationships, as poor communication can be counter-productive. The author claimed that "beneficial internal communication relies on appropriate messages reaching employees in formats useful and acceptable to them" (Welch, 2012, p. 248). Therefore, the new research interest lies at discovering the employee preferences for amount, channels and types of information.

In order to further explain internal communication, we shall also look at the overall organisational communication which recognises the implications of both 'external' and 'internal' communications as communication activities often involve both external and internal functions beyond their traditional boundaries. Cheney & Christensen (2001, p. 231) argued that "internal and external commu-

nication no longer exist as separate fields since they have been superseded by the notion of fuzzy organizational boundaries". Nevertheless, in their study on organisational identity linkages between internal and external communication, the authors used the term 'external organisational communication' and defined it as "public relations, marketing and issues management" (Cheney & Christensen, 2001, p. 231). Subsequently, the internal communication was defined as "employee relations, statements of mission and organizational development" (Cheney & Christensen, 2001, p. 231).

The importance given to concept of internal communication has been increasing and the way it is exercised in organisations has also undergone some significant changes. There is a clear awareness that effective internal communication is central to business success (Hargie et al., 2002) by promoting employee engagement (Welch, 2012). It can constitute a pillar of organisational effectiveness, contributing to positive internal relationships and allowing better communication between employees and managers (Welch, 2012). Internal communication is thus a key factor for organisational effectiveness (Welch, 2012). Relatedly, Rego (2007) considered organisational communication to be critical to the success and effectiveness of organisations, contributing to increased productivity, promoting the quality of the service provided, reducing absenteeism and labour conflicts, and improving levels of satisfaction, as well as the commitment and performance of employees. Similarly, Kunsch (2003) argued that organisations need a clear internal communication policy established in accordance to outlined strategies, as well as detailed action programs for all employees. Accordingly, it is essential that companies have channels and instruments that allow all departments to act in synergy (Kunsch, 2003).

Since employees are the foundation of any organisation, this study focuses on their individual satisfaction with internal communication.

2.3. Satisfaction with internal communication

Welch (2012) claimed that employee satisfaction with internal communication (ICS – Internal Communication Satisfaction) can promote awareness of the existing market opportunities and threats and develop employees' understanding of changes in the organisation's priorities. When an organisation is able to transmit a clear understanding of its policies, the employees can focus on the same mission as their organisation (Welch, 2012). In accordance with Hume & Leonard (2014), an effective internal communication ensures that all employees are aligned to achieve a common goal, with a sense of effective mutual assistance.

Similarly, Dawkins (2005) indicated that employees are an extremely valuable external communication channel which remains somehow underestimated by organisations. Employees interfere with public and are a credible and reliable source of information, since employees are viewed as particularly credible sources by external stakeholders, mostly in the area of services (Dawkins, 2005). Moreover, Dawkins (2005) also suggested that an effective internal communication can improve the organisational reputation and credibility, as employees are seen as active voices in their organisations. Indeed, creating an internal culture of union, commitment and pride among employees enhances competitive advantage difficult to be copied by the competition (Rego, 2007). In this sense, internal communication is vital for the success of organisations and, when well executed, can bring strategic advantages through aligning the efforts of employees and sharing knowledge, which must be aligned with the company's strategy (Quirke, 2012).

For the purpose of this study we applied the concept of internal communication satisfaction which was primary operationalised by Downs & Hazen (1977) and served later as a foundation for an audit instrument developed by Verčič, Vokić, & Ćorić (2009). According to Downs & Hazen (1977), internal communication satisfaction stands for the individual level of employee satisfaction with the communication practiced within the organisation. The communication satisfaction operationalised by Downs & Hazen (1977) has become widely applied in studies of intra-organisational (or internal) communication (Verčič et al., 2009; Verčič & Vokić, 2017). In their study on communication satisfaction, they identified nine dimensions according to which employees govern their level of satisfaction with the internal communication practiced by the organisations in which they operate: 'organisational climate'; 'communication with superiors'; 'organisational integration'; 'media quality'; 'horizontal communication'; 'informal communication'; 'organisational perspective'; 'personal feedback'; 'communication with subordinates' (Downs & Hazen, 1977). Those propositioned dimensions served as a base for many studies ahead and are also enhanced in the present research. Following Verčič et al. (2009), this study applies the following dimensions of internal communication satisfaction: satisfaction with feedback, satisfaction with communication with superiors, satisfaction with horizontal communication, satisfaction with informal communication, satisfaction with corporate information, satisfaction with communication climate, satisfaction with communication media, and satisfaction with communication during meetings.

2.4. Organisational identification

For the last decades, the dominant approach has appeared to be to conceptualise the strength of the relationship between the individual and the organisation in terms of individuals' commitment to the organisation (Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006). Inspired by reconceptualisation of organisational identification based on social identity theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), more recent studies have shown an increase of interest in an alternative approach that conceptualises the relationship between individual and organisation in terms of social identification processes (Smidts et al., 2001; Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006).

In recognition of the apparent overlap between the concepts of identification and commitment, Ashforth & Mael (1989) asserted that the core difference between the concepts lies in the fact that identification reflects individuals' self-definition, whereas commitment does not reflect the self-definition. Based on that, while identification is a cognitive construct reflecting the degree to which the organisation is incorporated into the self-concept, commitment is viewed as an attitude toward the organisation (Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006).

Organisational identification occurs when, when evaluating the alternatives of choice in their organisational role, the employee considers the organisation's values and interests to be relevant (Tompkins & Cheney, 1983). OI defines the employee's perception of whether or not they belong to the organisation, as well as the emotional meaning associated with that connection (Tajfel, 1978).

According to this definition, two elements can be distinguished: a 'cognitive component' and an 'affective component' of identification. The cognitive component reflects the perceived amount of interests shared between the employee and the organisation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). This component is especially important when employees define the boundaries between the internal group and the external group, in order to achieve self-categorisation. The affective component concerns feelings of pride in belonging to the organisation or the fact that they feel recognised by the organisation, which creates a positive image of the organisation itself (Tajfel, 1982).

2.5. The influence of internal communication satisfaction on employees' organisational identification

Organisational identification derives from messages sent by the organisation, which link the values and objectives of employees to the values and objectives of the organisation, reducing the uncertainty of employees in relation to their organisational roles. Cheney & Dickson (1982) emphasised the role of internal communication as a reason why employees understand organisational goals, values and objectives. Similarly, Simon (1976) advocated that when employees adopt the values and objectives of their organisations, they develop they own decision-making processes that complement the decision-making processes performed by the organisation. In accordance with Smidts et al. (2001, p. 5), "employee communication may help organizational members to identify with their company by transmitting messages conveying the goals, values and achievements of the organization".

Undeniably, internal communication plays a fundamental role in organisations in developing positive attitudes among employees (Gray & Laidlaw, 2004) and in building a strong sense of commitment (Jo & Shim, 2005) and identification (Smidts et al., 2001). Similarly, this study considers internal communication to be a crucial and feasible management instrument that can affect organisational identification. Based on that, it is proposed:

H1: There is a positive relationship between Internal Communication Satisfaction (ICS) and Organisational Identification (OI).

2.6. Perceived organisational support

Perceived Organisational Support (POS) is an employee's belief that his organisation values their efforts and cares about his well-being (Eder & Eisenberger, 2008). POS is manifested when an employee believes that their organisation provides the necessary resources, or even additional resources, in order so they are able to perform their functions in an efficient and effective way (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The organisational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986) assumes that, in order to determine the organisation's willingness to reward efforts at work and meet the socio-emotional needs, employees develop a global belief about how far organisation is willing to value their contributions and is concerned with their well-being, meeting socio-economic needs (Eisenberger et al., 1986). According to this theory, employees tend to attribute human qualities and characteristics to their organisations (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

On its side, the social exchange theory developed by Blau (1964) and used to explain relationships in the workplace, consists of the exchange of value and co-creation between employees and the organisation, involving a set of interactions between the two parts that result in favourable behaviours and attitudes (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Gouldner (1960) argued that social relations define the act of 'giving back something received' as an obligation. In this sense, Gouldner (1960) came up with the 'reciprocity standard', based on two basic social requirements: 'we help those who help us' and 'we do not harm those who benefit us.' This norm is invoked in different social situations and normalises behaviour, establishing the return of a benefit received as a moral obligation (Gouldner, 1960).

Based on the 'reciprocity standard' (Gouldner, 1960) and the social exchange theory, POS contributes to the development and efficiency of the organisation itself (Blau, 1964). Employees who feel supported by their organisations will feel obliged to return the positive treatment they received (Gouldner, 1960). The POS is also influenced by several aspects related to the employees' interpretation of the organisation's motivations (Eisenberg et al., 1986). Regarding the benefits of POS in organisations, Eisenberger & Stinglhamber (2011) showed that there are positive consequences triggered by high levels of POS, both for organisations (e.g. increased effective commitment, trust and performance) and for their employees (e.g. increased job satisfaction, decreased stress).

2.7. Internal communication and perceived organisational support

As perceived organisational support encompasses employee perceptions regarding the extent to which an organisation values the employees' contributions, it also assesses the relationship that the employees have with their organisations (Allen, 1992). In accordance with Allen (1992), those relationships and the overall perception of organisational support given to an employee, are potentially influenced by messages communicated implicitly and explicitly by top management, immediate supervisors, and co-workers. Indeed, employees who have easiness of communication with managers are prone to build effective work relationships and increase their organisational identification (Carrière & Bourque, 2009; Neves & Eisenberger, 2012). This effective communication serves to increase the perceived organisational support. In accordance with Neves & Eisenberger (2012), communication can increase POS by "allowing managers to designate general goals and strategies and to provide needed information on

a timely basis that helps employees carry out their jobs" (p. 454). Similarly, Allen (1992) agreed that communication influences perceptions of support.

Based on this it is affirmed:

H2: There is a positive relationship between Internal Communication Satisfaction (ICS) and Perceived Organisational Support (POS).

2.8. Perceived organisational support and organisational identification

Grounding on social identity and social exchange paradigms, He, Pham, Baruch, & Zhu (2014, p. 7) state that "the feeling of being valued and appreciated by an organization (POS) makes employees appreciate and trust their organization more and have more confidence in their organization's fulfilment of its exchange obligations". Accordingly, supportive organisational constituents increase the employees' feeling of belonging, which in turn leads to a stronger belief that organisational involvement is self-enhancing and attractive, which gives employees a stronger motivation for identification with the organisation. Accordingly, it is proposed:

H3: There is a positive relationship between Perceived Organisational Support (POS) and Organisational Identification (OI).

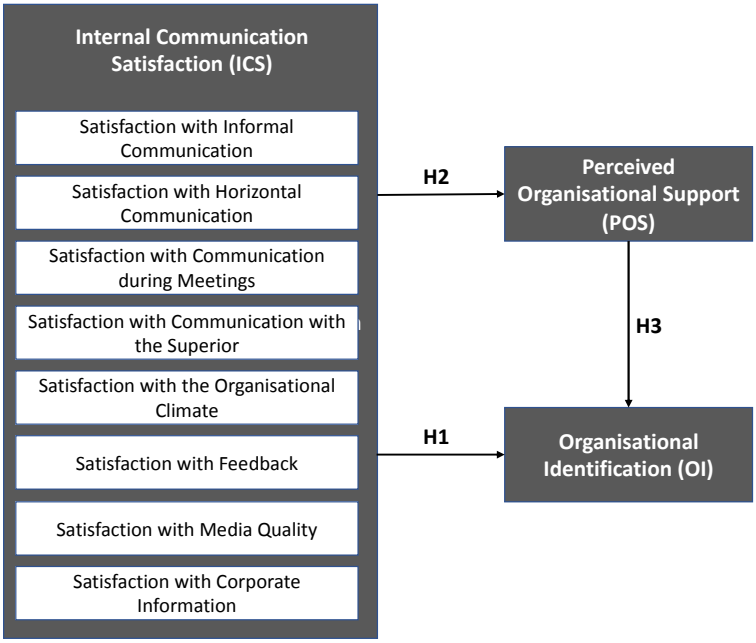
In accordance with Nakra (2006), employee communication facilitates the organisational identification, as it unveils the goals, values and achievements of the organisation. As for Allen (1992), perceived support intervenes in the relationship between perceptions of communication and organisational commitment. As stated in Allen (1992), communication with co-workers may have less weight on the commitment of employees who feel supported by an organisation, as they identify more with their organisation and less with their co-workers. Similarly, the communication with management can be more impactful on the commitment of employees who perceive more organisational support. In the same way, POS will enhance the relationship between internal communication and organisational identification. Additionally, Neves, & Eisenberger (2012) indicated that POS is a key social exchange mechanism, as employees try to reciprocate the positive valuation received from the organisation through internal communication. Accordingly, to test the linkages between communication satisfaction, perceived organisational support, and organisational identification the following hypotheses is proposed:

H4: Perceived Organisational Support (POS) mediates the relationship between Internal Communication Satisfaction (ICS) and Organisational Identification (OI).

3. Research model

Addressing the main purpose of this study, the proposed conceptual model relates the Internal Communication Satisfaction (ICS) with employees' Organisational Identification (OI) and Perceived Organisational Support (POS). The proposed model partially intersects previous studies: 1) Allen's (1992) study on communication and organisational commitment with a mediating role of POS conducted among university employees; 2) Nakra's (2006) study on the relationship between communication satisfaction and organisational identification tested through a sample consisting of employees from government organisations, public sector undertakings and the private sector; 3) the two similar studies by Verčič et al. (2009) and Verčič et al. (2017) on engaging employees through internal communication, which used the Nakra's (2006) and Downs & Hazen (1977) conceptualisation of satisfaction with internal communication (Table 1 defines the dimensions of ICS considered in the present study). The proposed model is exposed in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The proposed conceptual model



Source: Author's own study.

Table 1. ICS dimensions defined

ICS Dimensions	Definition	References
Satisfaction with Feedback	Employee satisfaction with the availability of information on individual objectives – "the degree to which employees feel that their efforts are recognized, their superiors understand their problems, and the criteria by which they are being judged are fair" (Nakra, 2006, p.43)	Nakra (2006), Verčič, Vokić & Ćorić (2009)
Satisfaction with Communication with Superiors	Covers both the upward and downward aspects of communicating with superiors (openness to new ideas, listening and paying attention, guidance).	Nakra (2006)
Satisfaction with Horizontal Communication	Also called 'co-worker' communication – concerns the extent to which horizontal and informal communication is accurate and free flowing. It concerns the ease of communication between co-workers and the employee's ease in accepting criticism from peers.	Nakra (2006)
Satisfaction with Informal Communication	All communication that is not done through the formal means of communication of the organization. It refers to satisfaction with the existing level of informal communication, with the number of decisions made based on informal communication.	Verčič, Vokić & Ćorić (2009)
Satisfaction with Corporate Information	Satisfaction about work-related information, information on turnover, profit, financial success of the organisation, familiarity with the work, rules and work procedures.	Nakra (2006), Verčič, Vokić & Ćorić (2009)
Satisfaction with Communication Climate	Employee satisfaction about how the organisation promotes its values and goals – "the extent to which communication in the organisation motivates and stimulates employees to meet organisation goals and makes them identify with the organisation" (Nakra, 2006, p. 42).	Nakra (2006), Verčič, Vokić & Ćorić (2009)
Satisfaction with Communication Media	Helpfulness, clarity and quantity of information associated with channels (publications and meetings).	Nakra (2006), Verčič, Vokić & Ćorić (2009)
Satisfaction with Communication During Meetings	Satisfaction in the communication exercised during the meetings, satisfaction about the information obtained and about the duration of the meetings.	Verčič, Vokić & Ćorić (2009)

Source: Author's own study based on: Nakra (2006) and Verčič et al. (2009).

As it was mentioned before, this study aims at testing the effect of internal communication on employees perceived organisational support and identification. Additionally, it intends to test the possible the mediating effects of perceived organisational support between the internal communication satisfaction and organisational identification.

4. Methodology

4.1. Data collection

Seeking to meet the objectives of the present study and to test the hypotheses, the primary data were collected through a survey by questionnaire with non--probabilistic convenience sampling using the snowballing effect. Since the use of a non-probabilistic convenience sample limits the possibility to generalise the results to the entire population, this study uses a subset of the target population (a sampling frame) from which the sample is selected for the possibility of statistical generalisation. According to Polit & Beck (2010), first the population to which we can extrapolate the findings shall be identified. As this study is cross-sectional, it is possible to indicate what was true to the chosen population at given time. In accordance with the rules of statistical generalisation (Polit & Beck, 2010), the population under study constitutes a representative sample that reflects common characteristics of the larger group. In the case of the present study all participants originated from the metropolitan areas of Portugal and were professionally active at the time of the survey, most of the respondents are employed by the same sector of activity (more detail about the sample characteristics is provided in Section 5.1). Additionally, we enhanced the generalisation with the integration of conceptual evidence as suggested by Polit & Beck (2010). In the last section of analyses, where the findings are discussed, in order to contribute to more generalised understandings, the achieved results are compared against the existing literature.

The survey by questionnaire was conducted online, assisted by Qualtrics and distributed through social media. As it comes to the questionnaire structure, it was divided into blocks and had an opening filter-question: "Have you been working more than 1 year for your organisation?", and all inquiries that answered 'no' were automatically directed to the end of the questionnaire. This filter-question was used to ensure that all respondents had some knowledge about the internal communication at their organisations.

4.2. Measurement scales

Basing on the Downs & Hazen's (1977) conceptualisation of communication satisfaction, Verčič et al. (2009) developed the Internal Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (UPZIK) which was applied in this study. The eight dimensions according to which employees govern their level of satisfaction with the internal communication practiced by the organisations in which they operate

are: 'satisfaction with informal communication' (ICS_Info); 'satisfaction with horizontal communication' (ICS_Horiz); 'satisfaction with communication during meetings' (ICS_Meet), 'satisfaction with communication with the superior' (ICS_Sup); 'satisfaction with the organisational climate' (ICS_Clima); 'satisfaction with feedback' (ICS_Feed); 'satisfaction with media quality' (ICS_Media); 'satisfaction with corporate information' (ICS_Corp).

The outcomes of perceived organisational support and organisational identification were measured by Likert-type agreement scales applied before by Eisenberger et al. (1986) and Tompkins & Cheney (1983), respectively. Table 2 summarises the scales used in this study.

Table 2. Measurement scales

Construct	Reference	Number of Items	Scale
Internal Communication Satisfaction (ICS)	Verčič, Vokić & Ćorić (2009)	32	Likert -7 points (1 – completely unsatisfied, 7 – completely satisfied)
Perceived Organisational Support (POS)	Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa (1986)	8	Likert -7 points (1 – completely disagree, 7 – completely agree)
Organisational Identification (OI)	Tompkins & Cheney (1983)	8	Likert -7 points (1 – completely disagree, 7 – completely agree)

Source: Author's own elaboration based on: Verčič et al. (2009), Eisenberger et al. (1986), Tompkins & Cheney (1983).

5. Analysis and discussion of results

5.1. Sample characteristics

As previously mentioned, the sample of the present study consists of 132 respondents originating from metropolitan areas of Portugal and portraying some common characteristics as it comes to their education, work experience, position at the company and sector of analysis. With regard to educational qualifications, 43.5% of the respondents have a university degree and 30.3% have the secondary education. With regard to the position held in the organisation, 'employee' was the option with the highest rate of respondents 26.5% and only 2,3% of the respondents represented 'executives.' Regarding the years working at the company, most respondents claim to be in the organisation for around 1-5 years

(11.4% of respondents). Interestingly, as it comes to the gender distribution the balance between sexes is maintained: 41.2% of respondents are male and 58.8% are female. Regarding the sector of activity, 'transport and storage' was the sector with the highest representation, indicated by 56.1% of the respondents. Consequently, this sector becomes of the greatest significance for the present study.

5.2. Measurement model assessment

To understand how the satisfaction with internal communication influences perceived organisational support and organisational identification this study uses the partial last squares method of structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) using the SmartPLS 3.3.2 software. They are some advantages of using PLS methodology, namely: it works well with small sample size and does not need the normality of data (Davari & Rezazadeh, 2013).

PLS is a robust method that uses latent variables and cause-and-effect relationships. The objective of PLS-SEM is to maximise the explained variance of the dependent constructs, through the connection of multi-item scales into constructs and defining relationships between constructs. It handles complex relationships and is able to grasp multiple dependent constructs within a single model (in difference to linear regression that is able to hold only one dependent construct). PLS_SEM has become a popular technique among researchers in the past years (Amaro & Duarte, 2016).

The PLS path model after PLS Algorithm calculation with independent variable (Internal Communication Satisfaction), dependent variable (Organisational Identification – OI) and moderator variable (Perceived Organisational Support – POS) is shown in Figure 2.

5.2.1. Reliability and validity

The measurement model was evaluated in terms of indicator reliability (reflective indicator loadings > 0.5), the reliability of items (Cronbach's alpha > 0.7), convergent reliability (assessed using average variance extracted, AVE > 0.5), internal consistency (assessed using composite reliability, CR > 0.7) and discriminant validity (cross loading criterion; Chin, 2010).

Table 3 presents the Crombach's alpha, consistent reliability (Rho_A), the composite reliability (CR), and the average variance extracted (AVE) of each latent variable.

Table 3. Measurement model table

Specification	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
ICS	0.970	0.972	0.972	0.558
OI	0.949	0.956	0.956	0.687
POS	0.893	0.901	0.918	0.653

The results support the reliability of the measurement indicators. The following items were dropped: POS_3, POS_8, ICS_Horiz3, ICS_Info3, ICS_Info4 and ICS_Corp2, as they were near the cut-off point (0.5). The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each indicator is grater that the expected minimum consistency (0.5) what ensures convergent validity (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The composite reliability (CR) values are also higher than the recommended minimum of 0.7 (Gefen, Straub, & Boudreau, 2000), indicating that all constructs have adequate internal consistency. The consistent reliability coefficient represents also the desired values (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015).

To assess the extent to which each and every latent variable was distinct from other constructs, Fornell & Larcker (1981) criterion was used to verify and confirm discriminant validity (Table 4). In accordance with data, the cross--loadings are lower than outer loadings in all the metrics and the square root of AVE is greater than the absolute value of all correlations with other constructs. That confirms the discriminant validity of the scales. All the loadings are significant, what assures the strength and reliability of the measurement model (Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & Kuppelwieser, 2014). Outer model loadings indicate the latent variable reliability as they are above .70.

Table 4. Discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker Criterion)

Specification	ICS	OI_	POS
ICS	0.747		
OI	0.723	0.829	
POS	0.739	0.787	0.808

5.2.2. Collinearity assessment

The values of inner VIF and outer VIF were verified to check the issue of multicollinearity in the model. The inner and outer VIF values show that there is no indication of multicollinearity (as in a well-fitting model the structural VIF coefficients should not be higher than 4.0). Therefore, it is concluded that the problem of multicollinearity is not present among the variables. Table 5 shows the inner VIF values.

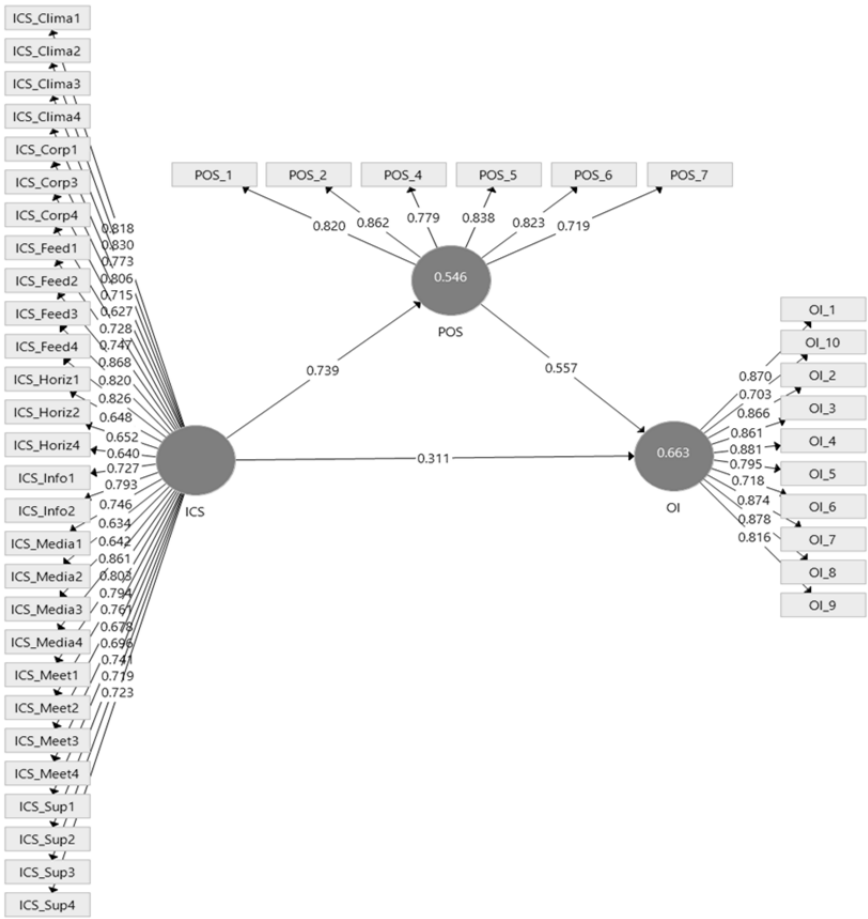
Table 5. Inner VIF values

Specification	ICS	OI	POS
ICS		2.203	1
OI			
POS		2.203	

5.3. The structural model

Figure 2 exhibits the structural model that shows the beta values of all co--efficients, the outer model loadings and the R2 adjusted for the dependent variables. Accordingly, Table 6 presents the estimated model fit.

Figure 2. PLS algorithm model



The standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) is a measure of the approximate model fit and reflects the average magnitude of a difference between the observed correlation matrix and the model-implied correlation matrix. As the SRMR is lower than .10, it can be assumed that the model has a good fit. Table 6 exhibits the algorithm model fit.

Table 6. The algorithm model fit

Specification	R Square	R Square Adjusted
OI	0.663	0.657
POS	0.546	0.543
SRMR	0.091	
d_ULS	8.246	
d_G	6.017	
Chi-Square	3303.544	
NFI	0.559	
rms_Theta	0.189	

5.4. Hypotheses testing

PLS-SEM uses a nonparametric bootstrap procedure to test the significance of estimated path coefficients with two-tails significant level of 5 per cent (Hair et al., 2014). Bootstrap estimates the spread, shape and bias of the sampling distribution of the population from which the sample under study is drawn from, creating a large, pre-specified number of samples (Chin, 1998). This study used the bootstrapping analysis with a resample of 5,000 iterations to calculate the t-values in order to evaluate the direct effects of all the hypothesised relationships. It is assumed that if t-value is greater than the critical value (t-value > 1.96) and p-value is smaller than 0.05, the statistical significance of hypothesis is accepted.

Table 7 presents the means, standard deviations, t statistics and p-values of the loadings after running the bootstrapping (with the confidence of 95%). For the tested model all of the outer model loadings are also significant.

Table 7. The measurement model quality (path coefficients)

Specification	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	p-values	Confidence Intervals	
						2.50%	97.50%
ICS->OI	0.311	0.304	0.099	3.144	0.002	0.119	0.497
ICS->POS	0.739	0.741	0.050	14.891	0.000	0.635	0.825
POS->OI	0.557	0.561	0.080	6.944	0.000	0.399	0.706

The mediation analysis was conducted by analysing the indirect effects present in the model (Table 8).

Table 8. Specific indirect effect

Specification	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	p-values
ICS->POS->OI	0.411	0.412	0.069	6.001	0.000

According to the results and considering the indirect effects, the influence of ICS (independent variable) on OI (dependent variable) through POS (mediator) is significant and strong ($\beta = 0.411$, $t = 6.001$, $p = 0.000$). Therefore, there is a mediation effect, which validates H4.

However, in accordance with the direct effects (path coefficients), the direct influence of ICS on OI is also significant ($\beta = 0.557$, $t = 6.944$, $p = 0.000$). Therefore, POS plays a partial mediating role in the relationship between ICS and OI.

Conclusively, Table 9 exhibits the summary of hypothesis testing. The path co-efficients, t-values and p-values allow validation of all of the hypotheses. The 'decision' column indicated whether the hypothesis was supported or not supported.

Table 9. Summary of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	ICS->OI	0.311	3.144	0.002	*Supported*
H2	ICS->POS	0.739	14.891	0.000	*Supported*
H3	POS->OI	0.557	6.944	0.000	*Supported*
H4	ICS->POS->OI	0.411	6.001	0.000	*Supported*
** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$					

6. Discussion of results

In this study, the central proposition examined was whether employees' satisfaction with their organisation's communication has any correlation with their organisational identification and what is the effect of perceived support that the organisation gives to its employees. The results provide support for the hypothesis that satisfaction with internal communication helps to strengthen organisational identification ($\beta = 0.311$, $t = 3.144$, $p = 0.002$). According to those results, increase in ICS leads to an increase in the organisational identification of employees towards their organisations, meeting the postulates of Cheney & Dickson (1982) who affirmed that the OI derives from messages sent by the organisation, and which link the organisational goals and employees' values and objectives.

For enhancing the practical utility of this study, the relationships between the ICS and POS, as well as between POS and OI were also examined. The ICS showed to be strong and significant in the relationship with POS ($\beta = 0.739$, $t = 14.891$, $p = 0.000$), which goes in agreement with both Allen (1992), as well as with Neves & Eisenberger (2012), who claimed that the POS of employees is influenced by the internal communication. Similarly, the relation of POS and OI is also significant ($\beta = 0.557$, $t = 6.944$, $p = 0.000$) as in the study of Nakra (2006).

As it comes for the mediation effects, and there is a direct effect of ICS on OI, there is a partial mediation of POS between ICS and OI. Results show that employee satisfaction with internal communication affects OI more strongly through POS then directly.

7. Conclusions

This study provides a portrayal of the internal communication effects organisational identification and brings interesting findings as it comes to the role of perceived organisational support.

Considering the effect of internal communication on perceived organisational support, it was possible to observe that internal communication has a prominent influence on the employee's global belief about the extent to which their organisation is willing to value their contributions and is concerned with their well-being. As it concerns the studied sample, communication seemed to be essential so that employees feel supported in their work and perceive an effective appreciation of their contributions to the organisation.

Similarly, as it comes to the effect that the employees' satisfaction with communication has on employees' identification with their organisations, it was possible to observe that the organisational identification of employees is enhanced by their satisfaction with the way their organisations communicate with them and an effective internal communication can stimulate employees to perceive the values and interests of their organisations. However, the influence of internal employee communication has a stronger effect on organisational identification through the support that the organisation gives to its employees. The study confirmed the partial mediation of perceived organisational support between the internal communication and organisational identification. Those findings confirm the postulates of social identification theory. Accordingly, internal communication should be able to promote social and work skills, such as in-

volvement in tasks, interactions between parties or the availability of employees to actively intervene in their organisations' daily lives. Employees who feel that their ideas, opinions and suggestions are considered and truly applied in the organisational strategies, will feel responsible for obtaining positive results. Thus, it is essential to look more and more at the management of human resources from a strategic perspective, particularly with regard to internal communication strategies. Ultimately, an organisation should seek to state a clear position as it comes to the support that it gives to its employees.

This study has some limitations, which should be considered, when interpreting the results obtained. Primary, similarly with many other studies, this research is cross-sectional, which limits the causality of its findings. Then, the use of a non--probabilistic convenience sample made it impossible to generalise the results to the entire population and it is only possible to consider the selected frame. Additionally, the fact that the filter-question eliminates respondents who have been working for an organisation for less than one year, meant that there was a significant reduction in the attained sample size. On the positive side, the sample did not vary greatly from the population with respect to gender. Future research could consider additional individual differences that might predict employee engagement.

While concerning the methodological issues, future studies should address the constructs studied with alternative methodologies, such as field and experimental studies, that could enhance the deeper understanding of the subject. It would also be interesting to study this relationship from a longitudinal perspective, trying to understand and justify possible fluctuations of the internal communication strategies over time. In order to guarantee a coherent generalisation of the findings, future replication in sampling, including random samples, and replication of the study is advised.

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IMPROVING INSTITUTIONAL CREDIBILITY: COMMUNICATION AS THE CENTERPIECE OF PLANNING IN THE AGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Each year institutions of higher education receive greater pressure from the federal level, regional accreditation agencies, and state legislatures, to become more transparent and accountable for their actions. It is more important than ever, then, for colleges and universities to engage in authentic strategic planning that may be embraced by both internal and external constituents. Unfortunately, strategic plans often do not work to move an institution forward. Using organizational principles and theory, this essay reframes the university strategic planning process with communication as its centerpiece. A case study is presented that illustrates how communication centered strategic planning can lead to the most meaningful and successful plan, thus improving the internal and external credibility of the institution.

> *"In the absence of communication from leaders, the organization will seek information from other sources, whether those sources know what they're talking about or not. Your silence doesn't stop the conversation; it means you're not participating in it."*
>
> Jeanie Daniel Duck
> *The Change Monster (2001)*

INTRODUCTION

Whether an institution engages in strategic planning due to governing board or administrative mandates, accreditation criteria, or because "everybody else is doing it," strategic plans have historically been part of organizational life that will not go away. It is something we do. But far too often, once it is completed, we rarely look at the plans again. Even worse, when our institution happens to have successes in areas not in our plans, we add them in after the fact as sort of a "plan addendum".

Many institutions have not taken planning seriously because the perception is that strategic plans have rarely worked to move them forward. Why is this true? The organizational structure and culture of higher education institutions make strategic planning particularly problematic. Whereas many private sector organizations may reflect a more collective society, colleges and universities mirror the individualistic nature of our society. Academic departments, for example, exist due to their expertise in a particular discipline. Faculty members work as independent agents who carry out their teaching and research duties relatively untouched by larger organizational issues (Willson, 2010). It is no wonder that they cringe at the very thought, much less the creation and implementation, of a strategic plan. In colleges and universities around the country, even administrators often breathe a sigh of relief when the plan is completed and placed as a link on the homepage.

Rowley and Sherman (2001) note that, "In the postmortems [of strategic planning],

faculty, administrators, staff, and members of the governing board all blame the general [strategic planning] process" (p. 5). On many campuses, academic departments quietly go their own way, disregarding a plan for which they know they will not be held accountable.

CHANGING TIMES

In education circles, the infamous 2006 Spellings Report was a major wake up call. It chastised postsecondary education by stating that "the quality of student learning at U.S. colleges and universities is inadequate and, in some cases, declining" (U.S. Department of Education, 2006, p. 3). It initiated a new era for strategic planning and assessment. With pressure from the federal level, regional accreditation agencies, and state legislatures, we have entered an age of "accountability," and now it is even more important for institutions of higher education to take strategic planning more seriously. In short, it is time to shake the dust off the plan and begin an authentic process for engaging in planning and assessment.

Noting changes in regional accreditation expectations, Bardo (2009) states that "the number of reports, the expected details of outcomes measures, and the level of ongoing interaction between the institution and the regional association will continue to increase" (p. 29). He goes on to say that, due to increased accreditation requirements, authentic strategic planning will be a crucial factor in achieving successful reaffirmation. Public institutions have the added complexity of more stringent state regulations and federal requirements. The bottom line is that institutions of higher education can no longer avoid creating and maintaining a transparent planning and assessment process. Academic and administrative departments can no longer go their own way. There is too much at stake.

Added to the complexity of campus attitudes toward planning and assessment are the difficult economic times we are now facing. As institutions across our nation lose faculty, staff, and even entire academic departments, there are now cries of "Why plan? We have no money to address new initiatives anyway." However, scholars who study planning issues argue that strategic planning is indeed worth the effort if carried out appropriately. Rowley and Sherman (2001) observe what occurs when strategic planning is rejected. "Problems don't go away, they get worse. Life doesn't become less complicated, it becomes more so. And if campuses don't improve, they slide further and further into difficulty and thence oblivion" (p. 23).

Strategic planning is a crucial element in helping campuses to make a successful transition from who they are now to what they want to be in the future (Keller, 1983). Shirley (1988) highlights the importance of strategic planning in aligning campuses with increasing numbers and demands of vocal stakeholders. More recently, Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (1997) state that strategic planning is crucial to an institution of higher education in creating a dynamic fit with its environment. The problem may be then, not the strategic plan concept, but the *process* used to create the plan.

TYPICAL PLANNING MODELS

Due to the loosely coupled and often decoupled organizational structure of higher education institutions (Weick, 1995), strategic planning is generally driven by the top of the organization. Often the process, and resulting strategic plan, resembles "internal" marketing where "tell and sell" is the dominant communication strategy (Clampitt, DeKoch, & Cashman, 2000). A typical model of the process may be described as follows.

As the five or ten year planning cycle comes to an end, institutional leaders, such as the president's leadership team, meet to decide new goals and direction for the university. They pay attention to legislatures, coordinating boards, boards of trustees, higher education trends, and yes, sometimes a few on-campus constituencies, to come to consensus on what goals the university strategic plan should encompass. These goals are typically shared with a slightly larger internal audience, along with instructions to "disseminate" goals to departments and see that they are implemented. This done, higher administration moves on with the confidence that they have created a plan that will address external pressures and serve university needs.

This kind of executive model for decision-making is not uncommon. Nutt (1999, 2002) tracked the success rate of decisions made by executives and managers at 356 different companies over the course of nineteen years. He found that nearly two thirds never explored alternatives once they made up their minds and that 76% used persuasion or edicts rather than discussion and participation to gain acceptance of ideas. With regard to implementation and success rate, persuasion failed 56% of the time, and edicts failed 56% of the time. This same research indicated that intervention (i.e., discussion of problems and performance gaps) was successful 96% of the time, and participation (i.e., announcing a broad, overarching objective and involving employees in decision-making) was successful 80% of the time. Clearly, the results of this research have implications for strategic planning process models in institutions of higher education.

ALTERNATIVE PLANNING MODELS

Recently, planning scholars have introduced planning models that address the complexity of the process and components needed to ensure success. To varying degrees they address communication as an important element in this process. For example, Cordeiro and Vaidya (2002) outline a variety of "lessons learned" from their work with strategic planning. They suggest the following: 1) identify, prioritize and allocate funds to key strategies, 2) use faculty members as consultants, 3) make the process clear, 4) effectively communicate the planning message, 5) have clear and measurable objectives, and 6) build flexibility to recognize and respond to internal and external environment changes. While the authors mention communication as one of the components of the process, they lean toward the "providing information" aspect of communication rather than an "engagement" perspective. They state, "What is necessary, however, is a methodology for ensuring that stakeholders understand the process, how issues are addressed, and what the plan is intended to accomplish" (p. 30). An actual communication process to facilitate the planning process is not outlined.

Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (1997), likewise, describe a ten step planning process that includes such things as performing an external and internal environmental assessment, conducting a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis, and formulating strategies, mission, goals, and objectives. They suggest a participative rather than top-down planning process. Again, however, they do not describe a communication model that will accomplish this task. Although references to the importance of communication and participation in the strategic planning process are not absent from planning literature, a focus on communication as the *centerpiece* of successful strategic planning is missing.

Willson (2006) speaks to the notion of combining planning approaches to address higher education institutions. He notes four planning approaches (i.e., rational, incremental, strategic, and communicative) and suggests relating these approaches to the organizational culture of the institution (Willson, 2003). In addition, he explores how Habermas' communicative action theory applies to planning through the use of a case study.

Planning research is also beginning to discuss the notion of change as an issue important to address in the planning process. Lick and Kaufman (2000/2001) outline four roles of change—change sponsorship, change agent, change target, and change advocate—that aid in understanding the dynamics of change and building the levels of commitment necessary to sustain change. However, they do not address how change can be communicated effectively, as has been addressed in much organizational communication literature (Clampitt & DeKoch, 2011). Polka (2007) notes that in order to facilitate change leaders need to address six employee professional "high touch" needs. The first need mentioned is communication.

Finally, in their article on educational planning foci from 1974 to present, Lindahl and Beach (2010) outline major themes that occurred in International Society for Educational Planning (ISEP) publications during these years. They note that, although feedback loops had some emphasis in the late seventies and eighties, "recent articles tend to mention these loops briefly as part of the overall planning process, rather than focusing on them specifically" (p. 3).

A CASE FOR COMMUNICATION AS THE CENTER OF PLANNING

At this point in the article, you may be thinking, "I communicate what needs to happen all the time—in memos, via the internet, and in hard copy. Still, faculty and staff show little understanding of the importance of planning and assessment." The issue is, what do we mean by "communication?" If you, as a leader, are sending messages via the modes described above, you are not necessarily "communicating" with stakeholders. An organization cannot be successful when leaders simply transmit messages, even if the quantity or quality of those messages is excellent. Communication is much more than just sending messages. It involves being audience centered, developing relationships, listening to the needs and perspectives of others, and adapting messages to the receivers' needs. A successful organization is one where stakeholders understand each other's point of view, develop some degree of agreement, and choose to act in a collective way to accomplish their mission. With ineffective communication, an "organization" at best is a collection of decoupled work units. At worst, it is a configuration of disjointed, isolated individuals. Given the decentralized nature of university culture, effective communication may be even harder to achieve within the organization.

Any discussion of leadership, then, must attend to the dynamics of the relationship between leaders and other members of the institution (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Because communication is the fundamental tenant of leader-employee relationships, effective downward, upward, and lateral communication among leaders and employees can facilitate an organizational climate where both routine business and major change initiatives can occur. This, in turn leads to greater success for the organization itself.

Most organizations, public or private, understand the importance of strategic

communication with external stakeholders and current or potential customers. Marketing plans are commonly used to outline strategic communication for these audiences. Yet institutions rarely approach internal communication in the same way. We know, however, that the most successful institutions create missions, goals, values, and procedures to facilitate a more common culture where employees identify with and are committed to the organization (Williams, 2008). A common culture brings coherence to the workplace and greater organizational identification for employees. But how do we achieve this kind of culture? Bacal (1998) notes the following:

> When we look at organizations that use their common culture as a strategic advantage, what we find is that they create that culture through the use of very strategic, coordinated communication strategies. They use multiple methods, consistently. Their training supports their cultural goals, as does their written communication (e.g. newsletters, billboard, slogans, etc.). Their management communicates consistently with common messages in a number of forms (e.g. performance management, department or sub-organization meetings, award and recognition programs, etc.). And perhaps most important, management behavior is consistent with the messages echoed via other communication methodologies. . . internal communication, in its broadest sense, is the key to bringing that [common culture] about. It won't happen unless we are proactive in our communication and coordinate our efforts so they convey consistent, compatible messages (p. 4).

Organizational research supports the notion of effective communication as crucial to moving an organization forward. Belasen (2008), in his discussion of stakeholder theory, outlines seven principles of stakeholder management (often referred to as Clarkson Principles). Principle 2 states that "Managers should listen to and openly communicate with stakeholders about their respective concerns and contributions. . . [Effective communication] involves discourse between managers and stakeholders. Managers should try to understand the multiple perspectives of the stakeholders" (p. 185-186).

Strategic, coordinated communication strategies, then, are at the heart of creating a common organizational culture. Some have even concluded that internal communication, where there is talk back and forth within the organization as well as up and down the hierarchy, may well be more important to a company's success than external communication (Young & Post, 1993).

Yet leaders have been slow to embrace the importance of communication to organizational success. Clampitt and Berk (1996) note three primary reasons. First, communication has been wrongly perceived as a cost that does not produce measurable return. This has occurred because researchers have had some difficulty in linking how an institution communicates with its success or profitability. Second, communication has long been perceived as a technical skill, not a strategic activity. Finally, senior managers have had a longstanding fear of a process they believe cannot be totally controlled.

However, shying away from engaging in strategic communication during times of significant change only serves to alienate employees who complain about lack of information in a decision making process affecting their lives. What leaders need to know is that, as "messy" as the process is, true buy-in to new ideas and new directions for an organization can only occur when those within the organization believe they are part of the decision making process. Salem (2008) notes that "Communication is a social process in which individuals can make sense together, and artifacts are only an opportunity for

making sense, an opportunity for conversation. Complaints about inadequate information are complaints about the lack of opportunities to make sense together" (p. 5).

HIGHER EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLANNING AND COMMUNICATION

A strategic communication model can actually allow planning to serve as an "artifact" that assists faculty, staff, and students to understand their institution, and, more importantly, feel a commitment to its goals. Farmer (1990) notes that effective planning can contribute to the kind of campus environment that supports change. Specifically, an open planning process can provide the dynamics through which the university's vision is translated into specific planning objectives and implementation strategies. Farmer (1990) emphasizes the prominent place of oral communication in the planning process at King's College.

Extensive face-to-face deliberation provides opportunities for immediate feedback, both verbal and nonverbal, on proposed objectives and strategies . . . The ability to deal immediately with responses, acknowledging the ideas and the feelings of people involved in the planning process, helps to nourish a widened sense of ownership and also to transform discussion of planning objectives into productive talk about the implementation strategies (p. 12).

A strategic planning process that embraces a model of open, two-way communication has an additional advantage. It can become a heuristic devise for reconceiving the entire internal communication system. For example, with a new planning initiative, leaders may want to analyze the climate in which the planning will take place. They may ask such questions as "What are the key beliefs and values of stakeholders?" "What is their emotional state?" "What are they willing to do?" "How disposed are they toward change?" A communication strategy that builds an analysis of context into the system cannot only aid the planning but also facilitate successful institutional change.

Implementing the Communication Process

Initially, those in charge of planning for a university or college need to consider three key components of the strategic communication process:

- Who are the stakeholders in the planning process?
- What messages do you want to communicate to the various stakeholders?
- Who will be involved in communicating the chosen messages?

Who are the stakeholders? With regard to stakeholders, Belasen (2008) encourages leaders to include both internal and external groups and individuals. This would include anyone who values "the goals and interests of the organization, in managerial decision-making processes" (p. 179). Although there are differences among institutions due to size, private/public status, region, and state, the most salient stakeholders for most higher education institutions would typically include faculty, staff, administrators, students, parents, governing boards, legislators, and accreditation agencies. All these have some "stake" in the institution's goals. A strategic plan outlines those goals and includes steps to reach those goals. Therefore, it becomes an important artifact in the conversation among stakeholders about the goals of the institution. As you view this list, you can easily see that these groups do not all have the same vision about institutional priorities. Belasen (2008)

states that, because stakeholders often have competing values, leaders should take on the responsibility of finding out what stakeholders want. "Better communication also helps prevent conflict before it has a chance to percolate" (p. 180). This "conversation," although tedious during the initial stages of the planning process, does lead to greater ownership of the strategic plan.

In an effort to bring others into this conversation, the leadership of the institution could engage the campus community in a review of the current strategic planning process. Groups including deans, chairs, faculty, and staff could have input into the process and provide feedback. In this way the president makes it clear that stakeholder opinion matters, and the campus community believes it is part of the future of the university.

What messages do you want to communicate to stakeholders? At first blush, this may seem like an odd question. However, leaders must pay attention to the varied perspectives of stakeholders to understand what is most important to each of them. Although there may be some broad goals on which all stakeholders agree, different stakeholder groups often want to hear their specific interests reflected in the messages they receive about planning. For example, faculty may want leaders to talk about student learning or program development with regard to the plan. Staff may want to hear how important their role is in supporting the academic mission of the university. Governing boards may want to know more about how the strategic plan will lead to prestige. Therefore, leaders must be "audience centered" in their communication. This means that leaders need to take into consideration the knowledge, attitudes, and interests of their various audiences with regard to the institutional goals and direction in order to tailor messages accordingly. They must also allow feedback from the various audiences to refine, clarify, and provide authenticity to the planning process.

Who will be involved in communicating the chosen messages? Most institutions of higher education have an office that oversees planning and assessment. Sometimes the president or provost will lead the initiative. A strategically communicative planning process, however, requires more than the "official" leadership of the institution to lead if it is to be successful. Particularly in larger institutions, deans and department chairs must take an active role in discussion regarding the strategic planning process. Middle management, as well as directors at the first level of management, must be able to have conversations and actually consult with their faculty and staff on the plan's goals and outcomes. They can then serve as liaisons to the provost, president, and other officials in charge of planning in communicating feedback of faculty and staff within the smaller units of the institution. This way the voices of stakeholders across campus will be heard, leading to a more authentic plan with greater buy-in.

Another important avenue for engaging in strategic communication is through opinion leaders within academic and administrative departments (Rogers, 2003). An opinion leader is an individual whose ideas and behavior serve as a model to others. Opinion leaders communicate messages to a primary group, influencing the attitudes and behavior change of their followers. Often faculty and staff pay more attention to experienced, knowledgeable people in their own departments than to anyone who speaks for the "larger" institution. At an academic institution, it isn't very hard to learn who these people are. You have probably even relied on this type of person to chair committees and

serve as a liaison in other capacities for the institution. Opinion leaders provide yet another avenue to carry on the important conversations needed to result in a meaningful plan. It is important to remember that one-way communication is not true communication. True communication will result only if the feedback loops are in place and positive changes result from the conversations.

When selecting those members of the university or college community who should play a leadership role in the strategic planning process, it is crucial that they be perceived as credible. Kouzes and Posner (2003) spent over a decade of research addressing the characteristics of most admired leaders. Consistently, four characteristics emerged: honest, forward looking, inspiring, and competent. At all levels of leadership, whether they be formal or informal leaders, those chosen to engage in communicating with stakeholders should possess these qualities in order for communication to be successful in the planning process.

Addressing these three questions provides a strategic communication framework that serves as the foundation for the planning process. However, this framework, alone, does not ensure success. Communication throughout the planning process should be based on sound principles that have been shown to facilitate change initiatives. Below is a summary of communication guidelines to incorporate into the planning process.

COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES OFTEN OVERLOOKED IN PLANNING

As noted earlier, most planning models do not incorporate effective communication as a centerpiece of the planning process. Implementing the following communication principles provides a necessary ingredient for success:

- The first principle of effective communication is to "analyze the audience." The many sub-audiences and opinion leaders in the organization must be considered to determine their receptiveness to messages and strategies. When communicating change, such as will inevitably occur with the creation of a new strategic plan, leaders must realize that resistance is likely to be encountered at all levels of the organization. Understanding the reasons for resistance and having conversations about related issues will aid greatly in creating a smoother strategic planning process.

- Before the strategic planning process is launched, leaders at all institutional levels should be trained to implement the process as part of the regular business, be knowledgeable about successful communication processes, and be held accountable for providing information and feedback to their departments or divisions.

- Messages related to the strategic planning process should be linked to the institution's mission statement. The mission statement provides a collective identity for stakeholders. It is the "charter" and "constitution" on which the organization is grounded.

- Although more time consuming than regular planning models, a communication based strategic planning process depends upon interpersonal, face-to-face channels

that allow two-way exchange and feedback. This, in turn, will prevent selective perception on disliked topics, provide greater detail, and more effectively get receivers to change strongly held attitudes.

- Designated and clearly identifiable locations on the university website can be used to update the steps in the planning process, provide documents that are under review by various stakeholders, solicit feedback to documents, and allow those in the university community to record their questions.

- The more stakeholders at all levels of the institution are engaged in the "conversation" about planning, the more committed they will be to do their part in implementing the plan. Participation allows stakeholders to voice frustrations and offer suggestions that may be important to strategic plan implementation.

- Those leading the institution must claim ownership of messages. When leadership delegates ownership, it signals to those in the organization that the message is not important enough for leadership to devote time to it. In addition, insufficient communication from senior leaders will often result in middle management killing initiatives.

- Deans, directors, and department chairs are crucial to "translating" the university strategic plan for faculty and other employees as the process unfolds. This translation provides focus and meaningfulness at the operational level and helps stakeholders understand how the plan affects them. In addition "middle management" can serve as an upward communication liaison for suggestions and concerns expressed.

- Communication alone does not create buy-in. It creates expectations that there will be follow through and action taken on the initiatives. Therefore, communication should be considered an ongoing dialogue that supports progress on initiatives that are being implemented. Institutions with a "high say" "low do" organizational climate create the perception among stakeholders that communication is all talk and no action, thus creating distrust.

COMMUNICATION BASED STRATEGIC PLANNING: A CASE STUDY

The case study outlined here involved a large southwestern state university. This process was led by a new president whose tenure followed an administration that used a more traditional top-down methodology. It is an example of a "top down" "bottom up" approach that used communication as the centerpiece for strategic planning. It included the following nine steps.

Step 1: Review of Previous Planning Process

Trust is an essential prerequisite for communicating change and should be "a consciously pursued institutional goal" (Farmer, 1990, p. 10). At this university, dissatisfaction in the planning process, resulting from a long history of limited stakeholder involvement, was a critical issue that needed to be addressed.

In order to attend to this issue, the first step was to allow stakeholders to critique the previous planning process. To answer the question, "Who are the stakeholders?" the president's leadership team met with the associate vice president in charge of planning to come to consensus on this issue. They decided to solicit initial feedback from stakeholders, including deans, chairs, faculty and staff, about the old planning process. Four separate groups of stakeholders were charged with meeting for one semester to discuss, critique, and provide ideas to the associate vice president in charge of planning, as well as provide formal public reports that were shared with the leadership team. Ad hock groups included a presidential task force (consisting of key faculty and staff leaders throughout the university), the council of deans, and the council of chairs. In addition, the standing university committee on planning that was in place when the new president arrived also critiqued the previous planning process. Because the president ensured that academics would drive all university initiatives, an academic planning steering committee convened to review all reports and make formal recommendations for the new process to the president's leadership team. Note that these groups did not just include persons in designated leadership roles. The persons chosen to serve on the academic planning steering committee were true opinion leaders within their colleges and within the university. They embraced the characteristics perceived as important to good leadership. The associate vice president in charge of planning met regularly with the president and vice president for academic affairs to ensure that these recommendations would be included in the new planning process. The committee also developed a planning calendar that incorporated formal feedback loops at all planning junctures.

Step 2: Environmental Scan Process

Most universities go through some kind of environmental scan and evaluate strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (i.e., SWOT analysis) when a strategic planning process begins. However, rather than have one office gather and provide information on the environment, a process was developed to identify thoroughly all possible environmental impacts on planning, both internal and external, to all university levels. Academic departments created SWOT analyses and environmental scans that took an "inside out" approach to initiatives they were attempting. Reports included what departments needed for support to carry out initiatives they were discussing, including infrastructure. Departments also had the opportunity to produce an environmental scan that reflected unique environments. In addition, the office for institutional effectiveness provided input for a university scan, including possible local, regional, state, and national impacts. This was the first time that internal and external impacts on planning had been aggregated in a meaningful way to determine how colleges and the university would have to prioritize initiatives using limited resources. The information was gathered and shared with the academic planning steering committee for synthesis. In addition, the information was announced and placed on the planning web-site for review by the university community. This transparency helped engender trust in those who had previously been skeptical of the planning process.

Step 3: "Bottom up" Feedback Process

Often university goals are laid out by administration and "presented" to the university community without true input from those who will actually carry out the initiatives

to support those goals. Such was the case of the university studied in this analysis before the arrival of the new president. The new administration, however, wanted to send a clear message that the planning process would be transparent, and that stakeholders would be consulted about university goals and direction. This message was reiterated to stakeholder groups by the vice presidents, deans, chairs, and members of the academic planning steering committee. At this point in the process, the framework for strategic communication had been set. Stakeholders had been identified, and a clear, consistent message was delivered by appropriate opinion leaders. In addition, feedback loops were in place. This framework provided a more trusting atmosphere where stakeholders knew that they were participating in the planning conversation.

With environmental scan assessments and departmental internal evaluations in place, all academic units were equipped with the appropriate information to frame a realistic vision for their departments. Whereas university goals had previously been framed by administration, university goals actually grew out of the vision and direction of departments and colleges.

In order to capture the collective academic vision for the university, the newly formed academic planning steering committee framed questions that were distributed to all academic departments, seeking essential information to develop university goals. Answers to these questions served as both information for university planning and, more importantly, discussion at the department, college, and academic division levels. The discussions across organizational lines (i.e., department to department and college to college) led to a better understanding of diverse views and the need to engage in dialogue to create consensus about a collective vision among university community members. Instead of "persuasion from the top," the university was collectively contributing to the creation of those goals.

Step 4: Planning Categories

Based on college and department feedback on planning questions, the academic planning steering committee created planning categories that would provide the framework for university goals. Departments provided information about the plans they were creating with regard to academic programs, teaching excellence and student learning, scholarly and creative work, development, and diversity. These documents were made available to everyone on campus via the web. Not only did the resulting public documents collectively assist the framing of university goals, they also activated important conversations among departments and colleges that had never occurred before. This sharing of information allowed departments and colleges to see where collaborations could take place, where duplications of initiatives were occurring, and what opportunities there may be for future academic initiatives. In addition, academics could contribute information to goals they embraced because the goals were part of what academics "do for a living." These categories then became the basis for the creation of department, college, and, finally, university goals.

Within academic affairs, perhaps the greatest value of looking collectively at what individual departments wanted to accomplish was the realization that the university could not do it all. Thus, the new planning process called on departments, colleges and the division of academic affairs to prioritize maintenance needs and new initiatives within their plans. Maintenance priorities included such items as new faculty or operational budgets to maintain an existing program with growing numbers of students. Chairs met with faculty

to create department plan prioritization, deans met with chairs, and deans met with all faculties in their college to discuss the college plan and what it would prioritize. In these sessions faculty had the opportunity to discuss, provide feedback, and make suggestions for the college plan. This iterative process allowed departments to commit to the college plan because they were now part of the "conversation." Deans then presented final plans, including plan priorities, in open forums where everyone on campus was invited to attend. In addition, the forums were taped and placed on the web for those who were not able to attend.

Finally, each dean met with the vice president for academic affairs to make a case for the college's priorities. The vice president of academic affairs was charged by the president to make choices as to what programs and new initiatives would be lifted up to the division plan. This plan, along with academic affairs priorities, was also presented in an open forum and placed on the web for viewing and monitoring.

Because the new planning process continued to engage faculty and staff through communication, in the form of the public presentations and publicized written documents, the university community was able to follow the planning "track" and have a greater understanding of why certain priorities and decisions had been made. Thus, trust continued to build, and participation in the process grew.

Step 5: Mission Statement Review

A crucial part of the success of the strategic planning process was the decision to review the university mission statement to determine what changes, if any, needed to be made. The timing for conducting this review was intentional because the best time to reevaluate the university's mission was when all academic departments were already laying groundwork for their future that would lead to decisions for the university's direction. Rather than having an "imposed" mission statement, the campus community was provided the opportunity to create a mission statement that reflected the direction outlined in the newly created academic plan.

The president wanted a mission statement that would truly be a guide for university initiatives. Thus, the mission statement process reflected the new "open communication" perspective that was now beginning to be embraced by a campus that had a history of limited feedback systems. Academic departments, administrative units, and student body leaders (in groups) reviewed the "then" current mission, vision, and core values statements to 1) come to consensus on elements of these statements they considered fundamental to the mission and create a prioritized list, 2) answer the question "What should be included, but isn't," and 3) answer the question, "What is distinct about our university?" Units were asked to provide their title (e.g., Department of Psychology) along with the number of people who participated in the discussion. Participation was optional. Feedback was collected and publicly posted to the web. The president then appointed a mission statement review committee to synthesize themes, report data, and fashion a draft mission statement. The draft statement was placed on the web for review by all students, faculty members, and staff. After several iterations, the final statement was created and approved by the president's leadership team and later the board of regents.

Step 6: Administrative Division Planning

After the mission review process was completed and academic affairs stakeholders

completed strategic plans, the academic planning steering committee was expanded to included appropriate leaders from administrative divisions so that support divisions could begin their strategic support plans, based on information gleaned from academic plans. The expanded committee was charged to develop, evaluate, and modify planning and assessment processes in academic and administrative units. By providing a framework that addressed basic planning concerns (e.g., assessment and resource allocation), the committee considered the needs of the entire university, as well as external mandates.

With academics at the core of university processes, administrative divisions now had the opportunity to view all academic strategic plans to provide the support needed to achieve university goals. Whereas support divisions had previously created plans separate from the division of academic affairs, they now had the ability to determine academic needs, have conversations with departments, and provide feedback to the administration on the needed infrastructure and other support as they created plans that would support the academic endeavor. In keeping with the planning categories that had been created for academic affairs, administrative units used a collaborative process similar to the academic affairs process for creating their plans. All vice presidents presented their plans in open forums, and all on campus were invited to attend.

The presentations made by support division vice presidents provided an unexpected "plus" for the university collaboration that had not been anticipated. Generally, academic and administrative sides of the university remain in their own "corners," never completely understanding the importance of working together for student success. Public presentations by divisions such as student affairs provided a greater understanding of how academic affairs and student affairs could combine resources and ideas to create a better, broader learning environment for students. The student affairs division, for example, provided formal study sessions in freshman dorms to support similar strategies in academic plans. Again, the opportunity for conversation and feedback led to a better, more meaningful strategic plan.

Step 7: Creating a "Living" Plan

As mentioned in the introduction, one of the most problematic issues facing any strategic plan is whether or not it will actually be used to guide initiatives at all university levels. The new planning process addressed this issue. Committees were formed to "read across" all major planning categories in college plans in order to 1) identify opportunities where colleges could share ideas and build on initiatives, 2) aggregate resources requested by all colleges, 3) identify infrastructure needed to fulfill requests, and 4) report on types of support or guidance that could be provided for colleges about which they may not have information. Each committee prepared a report for the president's leadership team, and separate discussions between committee members (i.e., representative faculty, staff, and student stakeholders) and the deans, vice presidents and the president began. Reports were shared throughout campus, and decisions about prioritizing initiatives within plans were guided by discussions resulting from the reports. For the first time, faculty and staff could see that their plans were not only being read, but were being used to frame arguments and provide information for prioritizing university initiatives, infrastructure, and other forms of university support. In addition, because information was shared, various academic and support units had the opportunity to discuss needs and realistically look at what could be provided.

Step 8: Development of University Goals

Because the university used an open, collaborative, communicative process to determine direction, initiative priorities, and the university mission statement, university goals evolved naturally from previous planning process activities. Although formally reworded, the goals related directly to the planning categories that grew out of original planning questions to academic departments concerning academic programs, student learning and success, scholarly and creative activity, development, and diversity.

For each of these broad goals, "intended outcomes" to make progress toward the goal were created. These outcomes were derived from initiatives outlined in college and division plans, reports and recommendations from "read across" committees, presidential commitment to new initiatives already underway, and external state and accrediting agency expectations.

Step 9: Developing Final University Plan Draft

By the time the final draft of the university plan was completed, all stakeholders across campus had been given the opportunity to provide input on all aspects of the plan via departmental, college, and division discussions, as well as presentations, information, and feedback opportunities via the web. From the plan's initiatives and goals to the university mission statement, campus stakeholders had opportunities for ownership of the final university plan. The implementation of communication principles and strategies proved to be successful in moving the organization forward.

CHALLENGES IN USING A COMMUNICATION BASED PLANNING MODEL

Although the planning process and resulting plan proved to be a success, communicating the process and getting buy-in was sometimes problematic. The following are challenging issues inherent to using a communication based planning process for university planning.

1. *In institutions having a history of mistrust with administration, the introduction of a new planning process can easily be perceived as a "Here we go again" initiative forced on the campus community.*

The new leadership realized trust among some university employees may be a problem as the process began. Following the announcement of a new planning framework, the usual negative comments were made in some departmental hallways and meeting rooms. However, once the president announced that the planning process would be "open and collaborative," all levels of leadership had to consistently illustrate that in every portion of the process. Only when campus stakeholders began repeatedly to see their ideas being implemented in discussions about the plan did trust begin to build. Toward the end of creating the process, much more buy-in occurred.

2. *Implementing a communication based planning process is time consuming, especially within the context of a large university setting.*

From inception to completion, ending in the creation of department, college, division, and university plans, the new planning process took over two years to create.

During that time, the president put on hold the submission of proposals for new Ph.D. or other programs, as well as other proposed initiatives, until the new university plan was completed. Only programs and initiatives specifically given the "go ahead" by the previous administration were cleared to move forward. The president believed that all initiatives needed to reflect the new mission and university plan before they would be considered. Although some departments across campus grumbled, the message communicated clearly that the new plan was a true guide for the future of the university, thus reducing further skepticism on the part of the campus community.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to be both "efficient" and "effective" in a communication based process. However, the benefits of an engaged university community greatly outweigh the time and effort required.

3. *Given the decoupled organizational structure of universities and colleges, and faculty allegiance to departmental goals rather than university goals, faculty participation is difficult to engender during a university strategic planning process.*

Because faculties are crucial to ensuring that university initiatives are actually implemented successfully, their participation in any planning initiative is important. Morris (2000) noted, "We know decisions would not be accepted or implemented without participation [by faculty]—or at least consultation" (p. 55). In addition, organizational literature supports the notion that employee participation has positive effects on job satisfaction, commitment, performance, and acceptance and implementation of change (Miller & Monge, 1986; Seibold & Shea, 2001; Wagner, 1994). Morris (2000) summed up faculty attitudes toward strategic planning participation through the response of one faculty member participating in the study.

> In the eyes of most faculty members, committee work is time consuming and typically results in little more than a report that sits on some administrator's bookshelf. In addition to tangible rewards, there must be visible action and recognition on the part of the institution with regard to the work of the committee. Faculties have to see the effort as more than an "academic exercise" (p. 64).

The initial faculty attitude discussed in this case study differed little from the statement made above. However, over time most faculty became convinced that the planning process was more than an academic exercise. Committee membership included respected faculty opinion leaders appointed by the president. All recommendations made by various committees were taken to the president and implementation of recommendations began quickly. Committees were recognized in the university plan and on the web, as well as in speeches made by the president and other university top administrators. The experience represented a true "flattening" of the organizational structure.

4. *Guiding any process from the top of the organization is always problematic, especially when messages are incorrectly translated.*

Wood (1999) states that previous organizational research has found immediate supervisors to be the primary information sources for employees. Although all parts of the institution in this case study were included in the communication process, first level managers and opinion leaders often had more influence than those at the top of the organization. This pattern is common in organizations undergoing change (Larkin & Larkin, 1994; Quirke, 1996). In implementing the strategic planning process, the university

was dependent on the translation of many messages by department heads and other opinion leaders within the institution. Some department heads and opinion leaders did not believe in the process or had reasons for rejecting it for what they perceived to be advantageous to their individual department or personal agenda. In these cases, they "translated" the message negatively to those over whom they had influence, thus slowing down overall acceptance into the process.

In order to counteract this trend, most of the messages were sent to all university stakeholders to interpret so that they could come to their own conclusions. Although this did bother some middle managers, it did engender conversations that would never have occurred if a larger audience had not received the message.

5. *Because many managers are not knowledgeable about communication principles and effective group processes, this hinders the use of consensus building communication.*

Clampitt, DeKoch and Cashman (2000) note that, in continuously changing organizations, CEOs should engage employees at all organizational levels in communicating the core message. This is one area of the planning process that was problematic. In this case, it was not that managers were necessarily against a communication based planning process. Some simply did not know how to carry it out. Although most chairs and directors had gone through leadership training based on communication principles, there had not been enough training to allow people at all leadership levels to integrate communication principles into their leadership styles.

Argenti and Formen (2002) suggest that "making communication a core value and including it as an integral part of any performance review will guarantee that this value permeates all levels of you organization" (p. 144). Recognizing this, the university has implemented more communication based leadership training for all directors, chairs, and other middle management positions in hopes that training will lead to better leadership.

CONCLUSION

Because strategic planning at institutions of higher education, as well as other organizations throughout the country, will continue to exist as part of the organizational culture, it seems prudent that the most meaningful method of conducting strategic planning be investigated. Toward that end, the purpose of this article was to reframe the strategic planning process with strategic communication as its centerpiece. Although many conducting planning research incorporate communication elements within the process they propose, none focuses on communication as the core component.

To better clarify the communication centered approach to strategic planning, a case study was presented. The planning process employed at a large southwestern state university illustrates how well established communication principles and organizational communication theory can be integrated into a strategic planning process. The resulting plan served as an authentic guide to create and implement the university mission and goals. Furthermore, we conclude that institutions should consider how a communication centered strategic planning process can be used to address both routine and non-routine communication, and thus improve their credibility in the current age of accountability.

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Examining the Effects of Internal Communication and Emotional Culture on Employees' Organizational Identification

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Abstract

As one of the first empirical attempts investigating the emerging role of positive emotional culture within organizations, the study examined how a symmetrical internal communication system and leaders' use of motivating language contribute to fostering a positive emotional culture featured by joy, companionate love, pride, and gratitude. Furthermore, the study examined the linkage between a positive emotional culture and employees' organizational identification. A quantitative online survey was conducted with 482 full-time employees in the United States. Results showed that both symmetrical internal communication and leaders' use of motivating language, including meaning making, empathetic, and direction-giving languages, induced employees' perception of a positive emotional culture of joy, companionate love, pride, and gratitude, which in turn enhanced employees' organizational identification. Positive emotional culture fully mediated the impact of corporate and leadership communications on employee identification with the organization. Theoretical and practical implications of the findings are discussed.

Keywords

internal communications, emotional culture, symmetrical communication, leadership communication, organizational identification

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Organizational researchers and practitioners alike have long acknowledged the impact of the *cognitive* component of organizational culture (Rousseau, 1990). Emotional culture, referred to broadly as the *affective* aspect of organizational culture, has largely been treated as a black box that affects a limited number of worker attitudes and behaviors. Different from cognitive culture, which dictates how organizational members think and behave, emotional culture sets the tone for how organizational members *feel* (Men & Yue, 2019). Organizations, though in the minority, are using apps to record how much fun employees are having while others hire technology experts to track employees' moods monthly, weekly, or even daily (Barsade & O'Neill, 2016). Despite that some progressive organizations are starting to find ways to harness a positive emotional culture to achieve organizational effectiveness, emotional culture is often ill-managed or not managed at all (Barsade & O'Neill, 2016; Kumar, 2017). Many organizations are not aware of the important role emotions play in building the right culture. In this study, we focus on exploring organization's positive emotional culture featured by joy, companionate love, pride, and gratitude. Seminal empirical research suggests a list of beneficial outcomes of a positive emotional culture such as employee job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, employee advocacy, quality employee-organization relationships, or even hard measures such as financial performance and absenteeism (Barsade & O'Neill, 2016; Men & Yue, 2019). Given the value of emotional culture in shaping everyday organizational life across a range of settings (e.g., health care, finance, high tech, emergency services) and a lack of empirical research in this arena, this study delves into the question of why emotional culture matters and how to cultivate a positive emotional culture using strategic internal communications. Specifically, we proposed and tested a model that links organizational internal communications, a positive emotional culture, and employee organizational identification.

The power of internal communications in shaping organizational culture has been evidenced by empirical studies (e.g., Grunig et al., 2002; Sriramesh et al., 1996) and justified by a constructivist communication perspective (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014). To expand the theoretical knowledge of emotional culture and internal communications, one purpose of the present study is to investigate whether and how strategic internal communications at the organizational and leadership levels can construct a positive emotional culture within organizations. Specifically, we examined two types of internal communications as antecedents of a positive emotional culture: leadership-level motivating language (ML) use and organization-level symmetrical internal communication. Symmetrical internal communication entails the notion of openness, reciprocity, negotiation, and tolerance for disagreement between organizations and employees. Organizations implement symmetrical internal communication model to empower employees in decision making in order to reach mutually agreed solutions. Another form of communication considered critical in dyadic, leader-to-follower communication is leaders' use of ML, which involves the employment of meaning-making language, empathetic language, and direction-giving language.

This study also attempts to understand why and how a positive emotional culture matters for employees and organizations. In particular, we examined organizational identification as the outcome of a positive emotional culture and internal communications. Based

on social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), organizational identification is a specific form of social identification in which individuals define themselves in terms of their association with the organization (Ashforth et al., 2008; Mael & Ashforth, 1992) and refers to employees' "perception of oneness with, or belongingness to the organization" (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 34; T. Kim et al., 2010).

This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on emotional culture at workplace and reinforces the constructive role of internal communications in shaping organizational culture and employee organizational identification. Internal communication managers and organizational leaders will benefit from the findings in terms of why and how to strategically manage leadership communication and build a symmetrical internal communication system in order to create a positive emotional culture that will ultimately feed into employees' organizational identification.

Literature Review

Organizational culture, consisting of a set of norms, values, beliefs, and assumptions, is a social glue holding organizational members together and guiding their behaviors and interactions with each other (Baker, 1980; Ravasi & Schultz, 2006). Academic literature on organizational culture is rich and diverse (Ogbonna & Harris, 2000). Even though there is little consensus on what defines organizational culture and how we should observe and measure and it, it generally describes "the way things are done" or "the way things are understood, judged, and valued" in an organization (Davies et al., 2000, p. 112). Schein (1985) put forth one of the oft-cited definitions of organizational culture:

> Organizational culture is a pattern of shared basic assumptions—invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration—that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to *perceive, think*, and *feel* in relation to those problems. (p. 2)

It is challenging to study culture because of its conceptual vagueness and measurement issues specifically related to the difficulty in capturing the dynamic of culture. Despite that, scholars have unanimously agreed that a robust and healthy workplace culture contributes to the success of an organization (Denison et al., 2004) by enhancing organizational effectiveness (Gregory et al., 2009; Ouchi & Jaeger, 1978), employee performance, cohesiveness, and organizational identification (Schrodt, 2002), just to name a few.

Defining Emotional Culture

Schrodt (2002) noted that organizational culture is a group learning process simultaneously involving a cognitive and an affective dimension. Previous literature defines cognitive culture as "shared *intellectual* values, norms, artifacts, and assumptions" in what to think, to say, and to behave, within organizations (Barsade & O'Neill, 2016,

p. 60; Rousseau, 1990). Cognitive culture is unarguably important for organizations as it determines the extent to which organizational members are customer-focused, innovative, and competitive; however, it is only part of the story (Barsade & Knight, 2015). The other key part is what we call the emotional culture, defined as "shared *affective* values, norms, artifacts, and assumptions that govern which emotions people have and express at work and which ones they are better off suppressing" (Barsade & O'Neill, 2016, p. 60). Emotional culture exists in organizations regardless of whether it is brought into cognizance by organizational leaders. Emotional culture can be transmitted and translated into meaningful outcomes through either *feeling mechanisms* or *normative enactments*. Feeling mechanisms reflect organizational members' emotions truly felt and experienced, whereas normative enactments account for emotions expressed simply to conform to organizational norms and expectations irrespective of members' real feelings (Levy, 1975; Parkinson, 2005). Like cognitive culture, emotional culture is expressed and observed through different structural levels of abstraction; from the most obvious to the deepest structural level, emotional culture comprises:

(a) nonverbal emotional expressions (e.g., tone, facial expression, body language) and cultural artifacts (e.g., physical space, decorations, stories, group rituals, lore, ceremonies);
(b) underlying values (i.e., collective importance placed on certain emotions such as an understanding of what emotions should be expressed or suppressed);
(c) underlying assumptions (i.e., the implicit, take-for-granted meaning of expressing or suppressing a certain emotion; Barsade & O'Neill, 2014; Schein & Schein, 2017).

While being referenced regularly in trade and professional literature, emotional culture has not received much scholarly attention (Barsade & Knight, 2015). In the current study, we proposed a normative model and empirically demonstrated the value of emotional culture in strengthening employees' identification with organizations and the role of internal communications in engendering emotional culture. Specifically, the study focuses on a positive emotional culture of joy, companionate love, pride, and gratitude. *Culture of joy*, characterized by good humor, conviviality, pleasantness, and delight, guides everyday employee interactions (Boyle, 1986; O'Neill & Rothbard, 2017). Companies such as Ubiquity, Vail Resorts, and many start-ups emphasize having fun as one of their management principles. Emotional culture of joy is instrumental in employee flourishing (Hazelton, 2014), goal achievement, physical and social resources attainment (e.g., Rhee, 2007), and job success (O'Neill & Rothbard, 2017). In terms of team and organizational outcomes, a culture of joy enhances team effectiveness by uniting team members and alleviating work pressure (O'Neill & Rothbard, 2017; Rhee, 2007). It is also tied to organization's profitability, employee retention, and the fun experienced by customers (Barsade & O'Neill, 2016; Joyce, 2003). *Culture of companionate love* is manifested in the pervasiveness of support, caring, compassion, and affection among different levels of organizational members (Barsade & O'Neill, 2014).

It is different from romantic love, which is common in intimate relationships and at home. Instead, companionate love, or love at work, is characterized by warmth, support, and respect for others (Sternberg, 1986). Empirical evidence shows that people working in a culture of companionate love reported higher job satisfaction, commitment (Barsade & O'Neill, 2014), group attachment, enhanced teamwork, and personal accountability for work performance (Barsade & O'Neill, 2016; Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Furthermore, it even boosts external stakeholders' willingness to engage in organizations' activities (Barsade, 2002; Barsade & O'Neill, 2014). A strong emotional culture of companionate love can be felt through employees' use of words such as *us* and *we*. As described by an interviewee in Barsade and O'Neill's (2014) study: "We are a family . . . Everyone cares for each other . . . We all watch out for each other" (p. 554). *Culture of pride* arises from team success and group cohesiveness and captures employees feeling important, valuable, and admired about their jobs and organizations (Swanson & Kent, 2017; Todd & Harris, 2009). Proud employees are those embracing self-worth, self-esteem, and experiencing meaningfulness at work (Tracy & Robins, 2007). Moreover, culture of pride influences various organizational outcomes, as evidenced by increased organizational identification (Todd & Harris, 2009), job satisfaction (Tyler & Blader, 2001), organizational commitment (Ellemers et al., 2011), and intention to stay (Kraemer & Gouthier, 2014). Thus, culture of pride is regarded as an asset for organizational success (Katzenbach, 2003). *Culture of gratitude* is synonymous with thankfulness and appreciation. Cultivating a culture of employee gratitude is an alternative to solving issues related to incivility, high turnover, and employee entitlement in the workplace. Cultivating such culture can start with encouraging employees to show simple appreciative gestures such as a handwritten thank you note and use verbal recognition. Furthermore, organizations can implement systematic, gratitude-oriented human resources or internal public relations programs (Fehr et al., 2017).

Recall that one focus of this study is to provide a holistic view in understanding how communications at different levels in the organization interplay to affect organizational and employee outcomes. This is a key departure from past research, which primarily operationalized internal communications as either a dyadic, leader-to-member communication episode or an organizational, system-level communication. Furthermore, decades' worth of research shows the importance of internal communications on shaping *cognitive* culture with little mentioning of *emotional* culture (e.g., Berger, 2008; Men, 2014; Sriramesh et al., 1996). In the following sections, we reviewed literature on the two types of internal communications—leaders' ML use and organizational symmetrical communication—and articulated their respective influence on shaping a positive emotional culture.

Motivating Language Theory

Originally conceptualized by Jeremiah Sullivan (1988) as a linguistic framework, motivating language theory (MLT) posits that leaders can adopt different types of speech when talking with subordinates to induce their work motivation and positive psychological and behavioral outcomes (J. Mayfield & Mayfield, 2018; Sun et al.,

2016). The three forms of leader ML are *meaning-making language, empathetic language*, and *direction-giving language*. Meaning-making language connects employees' personal goals with higher organizational purposes. To accomplish this, leaders go through two steps. First, they must paint a clear picture of the organizational value, mission, vision, and identity and be able to communicate these to employees, which can be interpreted as a sense making process. Second, leaders must link employees' individual goals with the overarching organizational purpose. It is accomplished by affirming the uniqueness and strength of each subordinate, coaching them to "enter and find their niches," and acknowledging their contributions to the organization (J. Mayfield & Mayfield, 2018, p. 13). The second dimension of ML, empathetic language, refers to leaders using supportive, compassionate, and respectful language to connect with employees. Leaders can employ empathetic language in both work occasions and employee personal events, such as applauding employees' work success, congratulating employees on a personal matter, as well as providing comfort and reassurance in times of personal setbacks (J. Mayfield & Mayfield, 2012; Sun et al., 2016). Through emotional disclosure, leaders and employees reveal their human side, such as empathy, authenticity, and vulnerability, to each other. Even though it is least employed by leaders, scholars have associated the use of empathetic language with employee job satisfaction and engagement (Dutton & Spreitzer, 2014). The third dimension of ML, direction-giving language, is "a key to getting the right things done in the right ways" (J. Mayfield & Mayfield, 2018, p. 15). Direction-giving language involves articulating what needs to be done to achieve organizational goals, clarifying role and task ambiguity, and providing performance feedback. In addition, direction-giving language comprises communication transparency, which reduces task uncertainty and elevates employees' work efficacy (Sun et al., 2016). By effectively communicating task goals and reward contingencies, employees understand what they can expect in return on task fulfillment.

ML and Emotional Culture. Literature has consistently shown that ML is positively related to a wide array of employee and organizational outcomes, including job performance (Holmes, 2012; J. Mayfield & Mayfield, 2010), job satisfaction (Sharbrough et al., 2006; Simmons & Sharbrough, 2013), job creativity and innovation (Sexton, 2013; Wang et al., 2009), organizational commitment (Krause, 2013; Madlock & Sexton, 2015), and intention to stay (Krause, 2013; J. Mayfield & Mayfield, 2007). A recent study found that leaders who communicate with sympathy, compassion, and warmth, or what they called responsive leadership communication, are more likely to foster a positive emotional culture and employee advocacy (Men & Yue, 2019). Similarly, experts of MLT have proposed that ML facilitates quality employee-organization relationships by creating a positive communication culture (J. Mayfield & Mayfield, 2018). M. Mayfield and Mayfield's (2017) study further revealed that leader ML can create a welcoming, supportive, and creative environment for employee creativity to grow. Taken together, these findings provide a solid theoretical rationale for the current study to examine the role of leader ML in eliciting organizational culture, and particularly, a positive emotional culture.

To elaborate, employees feel valued, appreciated, and motivated under the influence of meaning-making language. This is because they see their personal goals aligned with organizational goals and meaningful work. We argue that only when employees make sense of their organizational goals and find meaning and value in fulfilling their work role can they genuinely experience joy and pride in work. Coworkers who experience positive emotions will likely internalize these emotions as their own and contribute to building a positive emotional culture. Furthermore, empathetic language directly conveys leaders' emotional support for employees. By displaying openness, sincerity, and sensitivity, leaders set the positive emotional display rules. In the words of J. Mayfield and Mayfield (2018), empathetic language can "ease and translate emotional labor into positive energy" (p. 39). Through emotional contagion, employees are likely to internalize positive feelings and emotions expressed by their leaders (Hatfield et al., 1993). Eventually, empathetic language may motivate all levels of employees to create a working culture replete with gratitude and companionate love. Finally, direction-giving language tells what needs to be done and how rewards will be allocated. We speculate that employees who receive clear task instructions, role expectations, and responsive feedbacks will appreciate the communication transparency and feel satisfied and happy with their work. This feeling in turn helps build a positive emotional culture. Taken together, we argue the three facets of ML all contribute to building a positive and shared emotional culture featured by joy, companionate love, pride, and gratitude. We put forth our first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Leader motivating language is positively associated with a positive emotional culture.

Symmetrical Internal Communication

First proposed by Grunig (1976), symmetrical communication has been a focal construct in public relations and communication management research (Kang & Park, 2017). In a nutshell, symmetrical communication is an ethical worldview organizations adopt in communicating with their stakeholders. This worldview puts great emphasis on openness, responsiveness, mutual understanding, mutual adaptation, interdependency, and a balance of interest and power (Kang & Park, 2017; Men & Stacks, 2014). The underlying motive for applying a symmetrical model is to negotiate, adjust, and promote ideas and behaviors to be respected and accepted by all parties involved. Thus, it contrasts with the manipulative, one-way, top-down asymmetrical approach and is considered the most ethical and effective communication system (Grunig, 2006). Grunig (1992) also suggested organizations implement symmetrical communication internally to bring out positive employee outcomes. A symmetrical internal communication system is employee-centered and built on "trust, credibility, openness, [. . .], tolerance for disagreement, and negotiation" (p. 558). In other words, symmetrical internal communication system values and amplifies employees' voice, feedback, and power to negotiate. Therefore, in this environment, employees generally feel empowered to participate in decision making.

It is worth noting that symmetrical internal communication is functionally and conceptually different from ML. Functionally, symmetrical internal communication mainly addresses organizational formal communication primarily disseminated from management to employees through various mass communication channels, such as intranet, email, newsletter, and social media. Communication/public relations department typically initiates such communication and controls message content and timing (Men & Bowen, 2017). In comparison, ML is about leaders directly using verbal language to engage in face-to-face or mediated interpersonal communication with subordinates. Not only the source and target of the message is clearer (i.e., a certain leader(s) to a certain subordinate(s), the content, format, and timing of the message is also more flexible and informal. Conceptually, symmetrical internal communication is theorized as a communication system or model to reduce power asymmetry between the management and employees (Kang & Park, 2017). It highlights active organizational listening, mutual understanding, and a balance of power through dialogue and negotiation. In contrast, ML is embedded in linguistics theory and is devised to *motivate* followers to achieve desirable work-related outcomes through leader's strategic use of spoken messages. Unlike symmetrical internal communication, the conceptualization of ML does not "represent an *entire* two-way conversation or a dialogue, even though it is often meant to be part of them" in an implicit manner (J. Mayfield & Mayfield, 2018, p. 147).

Symmetrical Internal Communication and Emotional Culture. Research has flourished in recent years examining the role of symmetrical internal communication in engendering different employee outcomes. For instance, scholars have made positive associations between symmetrical internal communication and employee-organization relationships, work engagement, employee communication behavior, organizational advocacy, organizational citizenship behavior, and organizational identification (Jiang & Men, 2017; Kang & Sung, 2017; Y. Kim, 2018; J. N. Kim & Rhee, 2011; Men & Stacks, 2014; Men & Yue, 2019; Smidts et al., 2001). Even though public relations scholars have articulated that symmetrical internal communication can foster a horizontal participative organizational culture by empowering employees in organizational decision making (e.g., Men, 2014; Sriramesh et al., 1996), empirical evidence is undeniably lacking, which limits our understanding of the impact communications can have on organizational culture (Schrodt, 2002). In this study, we argue that a symmetrical internal communication system that conveys empowerment, collaboration, and tolerance for different opinions will most likely lead to a greater sense of belonging and cohesion among organizational members. On the contrary, highly controlled, one-way, top-down communication cuts the human connection and fails to elicit the notion that "we are all in this together." Active listening and genuine input solicitation made easily accessible by various internal communication channels also showcases organizations' care and respect for employees. We therefore believe that employee who feel their voice being heard and respected, feedback encouraged and valued, will be more grateful for and proud of being a contributing member of their organizations. Eventually, positive emotions and

feelings created by a symmetrical internal communication system will transmit among individuals and groups and form a positive emotional culture on the organizational level. We thus propose:

Hypothesis 2: Symmetrical internal communication is positively associated with a positive emotional culture.

Organizational Identification

Scholars across disciplines, such as management, social psychology, and communication, have explored organizational identification for decades given its importance for the well-being of both the organization and its members (Edwards & Peccei, 2010; van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000). Emphasizing one's strong attachment and oneness with an organization, the modern conceptualization of organizational identification derives from social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). According to Tajfel (1978), social identity is "the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups, together with some emotional and value significance to him of that membership" (p. 31). Thus, identification happens when individuals define themselves as members of social categories and ascribe the characteristics of those categories to themselves, and when members feel pride, meaningful, and acknowledged being part of the social group (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Smidts et al., 2001). The cognitive (sense of belonging/oneness) and affective components (pride in membership) reflected in the conceptualization of identification suggest two basic motives of individuals: need for self-categorization, which helps define individuals' place in society, and need for self-enhancement, which requires the group membership be rewarding for members' feeling of self-worth (Pratt, 1998; Smidts et al., 2001).

As employees begin to identify with the organization, they link their self-concept with the organization either cognitively or emotionally. In other words, they conceive themselves as a part of the organization, feel attached to the organization, and find pride in their organizational membership. Because of the sense of ownership and belonging, employees who are identified with the organization tend to internalize the values, beliefs, goals, and culture of the organization and act in the organization's best interest (van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000). Employees also tend to show supportive attitudes and behaviors toward the organization that they feel identified with and make decisions aligned with organizational objectives (Smidts et al., 2001). Numerous studies in management and communication have demonstrated the positive effects of organizational identification on various employee and organizational outcomes, such as enhanced interpersonal trust, employee retention, cooperation, positive job attitudes (Nakra, 2006), organizational commitment (Riketta, 2005), perceptions of work environment (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004), and organizational citizenship behavior (Riketta, 2005). The literature has also suggested a number of factors that foster organizational identification, among which communication plays a central role (Neill et al., 2019; Sha, 2009; Smidts et al., 2001), along with factors of organizational leadership

(Epitropaki & Martin, 2005), perceived organizational support (Edwards & Peccei, 2010; Wiesenfeld et al., 2001), perceived external image or construed external prestige (Myers et al., 2016; Smidts et al., 2001), and employee demographic and dispositional characteristics (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005).

Internal Communications and Organizational Identification. The symbolic linkage between organizational members and the organization is at the core of organizational identification (Myers et al., 2016), and such linkage cannot be established without proper communications at the leadership and organizational levels. Cheney (1983) suggested that through communicating values and goals, organizations can help facilitate the process of employee identification. Research demonstrated that a positive communication climate in the organization characterized by openness and trust in communication, participation (perception of having a voice in decision making), and supportiveness (feeling of being taken seriously) largely contributed to employees' identification with the organization (Neill et al., 2019; Smidts et al., 2001). Likewise, stressing the importance of communication from both leaders and the organization, Nakra (2006) showed employees' satisfaction with the organization's overarching communication climate and supervisory communication both linked to employees' enhanced organizational identification. Along this line of reasoning, the current study posits that leadership communication in the form of using ML and the organization's symmetrical internal communication both could positively predict organizational identification as perceived by employees.

Specifically, as leaders depict the organization's fundamental values, mission, vision, history, and cultural heritage to employees using meaning-making language (J. Mayfield & Mayfield, 2018), it helps unveil the organization's unique identity and distinctiveness, which facilitates members' self-categorization. Furthermore, leaders who use meaning-making language strive to connect employees' personal goals with organizational purposes. Such process helps employees internalize organizational attributes, values, and practices as part of their own self-identity, which could enhance organizational identification. In fact, leadership scholars have long made similar observations, suggesting that certain charismatic and transformational leadership behaviors, such as communicating a compelling vision, emphasizing shared values, and priming the collective level of employees' self-identity, increase employees' levels of identification with the organization (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005; Kark & Shamir, 2002). Likewise, because employees tend to associate themselves with membership that is rewarding (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), leaders' use of empathetic language that is supportive, caring, and compassionate can induce employees positive affect toward the organization, thus strengthening their identification and connections with the organization. Along the line of reasoning, leaders' use of direction giving language clarifies role and task expectations, provide feedback for employee improvement, and reduces ambiguities, which promotes a climate of openness and transparency; such attributes could also enhance employees' positive experiences within the organization, strengthening their feeling of belonging in the organization. Therefore, we put forth the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Leader motivating language is positively associated with employees' organizational identification.

At the organizational level, just as how a positive communication climate can be associated with organizational identification (Neill et al., 2019), symmetrical internal communication defined by two-way information flow, reciprocity, feedback, listening, employee participation, and balance of interests (Dozier et al., 1995; Men, 2014) can also predict employee identification with the organization. Sha (2009) provided the earliest empirical evidence on how symmetrical and ethical public relations efforts enhanced organizational identification in the university setting. She concluded that symmetrical/ethical communication not only improves public identification with organizational mission but also is "most strategic for getting stakeholders to feel a sense of belonging to the organization" (p. 309). Similarly, this study argues that when the organization's internal communication system is symmetrical, employees will feel listened to, cared for, empowered, and involved. Such positive feelings satisfy employees' need for self-enhancement and reinforce employees' attachment and feeling of belonging to the organization. Therefore,

Hypothesis 4: Symmetrical internal communication is positively associated with employees' organizational identification.

Emotional Culture and Organizational Identification. Organizational culture has been suggested as the foundation of organizational identity, the internalization of which could enhance employees' identification with the organization. According to Dutton et al. (1994), organizations' culture representations such as rituals, symbols, ceremonies, and stories could "objectify and communicate the collective organizational identity to organizational members" (p. 243). Hatch and Schultz (1997) also suggested perceived organizational identity is a self-reflective product of the dynamic processes of organizational culture. Therefore, emotional culture manifested in nonverbal and verbal communication, artifacts, values, and assumptions naturally comprises the affective component of organizational identity. Perceived organizational identity, "a member's beliefs about the distinctive, central, and enduring attributes of the organization," could in turn serve as a powerful image that affects members' levels of identification with the organization (Dutton et al., 1994, p. 244). In particular, the more attractive the organizational identity is perceived, the stronger the organizational identification is. As such, it is safe to argue that a positive emotional culture, serving as the foundation for collective organizational identity and featuring joy, companionate love, pride, and gratitude, could enhance employees' identification with the organization. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5: A positive emotional culture is positively associated with employees' organizational identification.

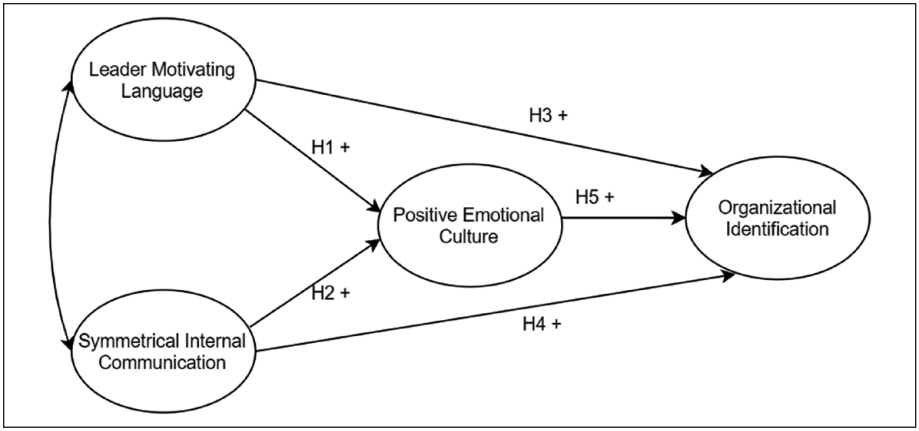

Figure 1. The conceptual model.
Note. Mediation Hypothesis 6–Hypothesis 7.

Mediating role of a positive emotional culture. Given the interplay between leader ML, symmetrical internal communication, positive emotional culture, and organizational identification as hypothesized, the study also proposes the mediating role of positive emotional culture, which can potentially explain how communication in the organization influences employee identification. In particular, since leader ML and organizational-level symmetrical communication could both predict a positive emotional culture and organizational identification, and given the innate linkage between culture and identification (Ismail & Baki, 2017; Ravasi & Schultz, 2006), the study suggests that positive emotional culture could mediate the effects of leader ML and symmetrical internal communication on organizational identification. In other words, leaders' use of meaning making, empathetic, and direction-giving language and an employee-centered internal communication system jointly create a positive emotional culture, which can in turn, boost employee organizational identification. Therefore, the following hypotheses are generated.

Hypothesis 6: A positive emotional culture mediates the positive relationship between leader motivating language and employees' organizational identification.
Hypothesis 7: A positive emotional culture mediates the positive relationship between symmetrical internal communication and employees' organizational identification.

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual model.

Method

Data Collection and Participants

We designed an online survey using Qualtrics platform and distributed the survey link through Dynata (formerly known as Survey Sampling International[1]) in November

2018. With the assistance of Dynata, we utilized stratified random sampling strategy to ensure a representative employee sample at varying levels of age, gender, income, and education. After eliminating invalid responses (e.g., failed quality check questions, straight line answers), we retained a final sample of 482 full-time employees. Table 1 summarizes the demographic information of the participants.

Measures

All the key constructs in this study were adopted from previous studies using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*. A total of 13 items were utilized to operationalize a positive emotional culture (Allen et al., 1988; Barsade & O'Neill, 2014; Todd & Harris, 2009). Respondents were asked to report the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the words describing the prevailing emotions in their organization and their feelings about its atmosphere or culture. Specifically, a culture of joy was measured by four items (i.e., delighted, happy, joyful, and excited, $\alpha = .94$), and a culture of companionate love measured by three items (i.e., affectionate, loving, and companionate, $\alpha = .91$). Three items measured a culture of pride (i.e., proud, superior, worthy, $\alpha = .82$), and three items measured a culture of gratitude (i.e., grateful, thankful, appreciative, $\alpha = .95$). A measure of six items from Dozier et al. (1995) was used to assess symmetrical internal communication (e.g., "My organization encourages differences of opinions", $\alpha = .88$). As far as for the three dimensions of ML, Cronbach's alphas for meaning-making language were .94 (eight items, e.g., "My direct manager/boss tells me stories about key events in the organization's past"), .93 for empathetic language (six items, e.g., "My direct manager/boss expresses his/her support for my professional development"), and .95 for direction-giving language (ten items, e.g., "My direct manager/boss offers me helpful directions on how to do my job"), taken from J. Mayfield and Mayfield (2018). Finally, six items were adapted from Mael and Ashforth (1992) and Men and Bowen (2017) to measure organizational identification (e.g., "When I talk about this organization, I usually say "we" rather than "they," $\alpha = .90$).

Results

Structural equation modeling was utilized for data analysis because the hypothesis testing involved multidimensionality latent constructs and relationship testing between latent constructs. We followed the two-step procedure to first assess the measurement model and then the structural model (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The analysis was performed with AMOS 24.0 software using maximum likelihood procedures.

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was first performed and the measurement model test revealed satisfactory model fit: $\chi^2(146) = 452.60$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 3.10$, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .07 (90% confidence interval [CI]: .06, .07]), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = .03, Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = .95, and comparative fit index (CFI) = .96 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The scale items and their factor loadings can be found in Table 2. The proposed structural

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample.

Respondent profiles	Frequency	Valid % of sample
Gender	482	100
Female	279	57.9
Male	203	42.1
Position	482	100
Nonmanagement	254	52.7
Lower-level management	90	18.7
Middle-level management	110	22.8
Top management	28	5.8
Age (years)	482	100
18-24	34	7.1
25-34	116	24.0
35-44	111	23.0
45-54	102	21.2
55-64	98	20.3
65-74	21	4.4
Ethnicity	482	100
White	337	69.9
Black or African American	64	13.3
Hispanic or Latino	44	9.1
Native American or American Indian	4	0.8
Asian/Pacific Islander	30	6.2
Other	3	0.6
Education	482	100
No college (secondary education or below)	68	14.1
Vocational level (diploma, higher diploma, and associate)	67	13.9
Some college	121	25.1
A bachelor's degree	156	32.4
A master's degree	55	11.4
A doctoral degree	15	3.1
Income ($)	478	100
<10,000	7	1.5
10,00029,999	76	15.9
30,00049,999	108	22.6
50,00069,999	115	24.1
70,00089,999	57	11.9
90,000109,999	49	10.3
110,000-129,999	23	4.8
130,000-149,999	17	3.6
150,000-179,999	12	2.5
180,000200,000	5	1.0
>200,000	9	1.9

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Respondent profiles	Frequency	Valid % of sample
Industry sector	478	100
Banking and finance	28	5.9
Building and construction	21	4.4
Government/public administration	27	5.6
Health care and social assistance	67	14.0
Information technology	23	4.8
Manufacturing	42	8.8
Real estate and rental and leasing	5	1.0
Arts, entertainment and recreation	13	2.7
Accommodation and food service	22	4.6
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	3	0.6
Professional, scientific, and technical services	32	6.7
Educational services	34	7.1
Retail trade	40	8.4
Transportation and warehousing	25	5.2
Utilities	6	1.3
Others	90	18.8

equation modeling model demonstrated good fit and was thus retained as the final model: $\chi^2(146) = 452.60$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 3.10$, RMSEA = .07, 90% CI [.06, .07], SRMR = .03, TLI = .95, and CFI = .96.

Hypotheses Testing

Standardized path coefficients were illustrated in Figure 2. Hypotheses 1 and 2 predicted that leader ML (Hypothesis 1) and symmetrical internal communication (Hypothesis 2) are positively associated with a positive emotional culture. The results suggest that the more leaders employ ML, the more likely organizational members feel a positive emotional culture ($\beta = .60$, $p < .001$), supporting Hypothesis 1. Likewise, Hypothesis 2 was supported because symmetrical internal communication was positively related to a positive emotional culture ($\beta = .25$, $p < .001$), though this association was weaker compared to the influence of leader ML on a positive emotional culture. Hypotheses 3 and 4 proposed a direct positive association between leader ML and organizational identification (Hypothesis 3), as well as between symmetrical internal communication and organizational identification (Hypothesis 4). Results did not support Hypothesis 3 or Hypothesis 4; neither leader ML ($\beta = .04$, $p = .59$) nor symmetrical internal communication ($\beta = .05$, $p = .44$) was directly related to organizational identification. Finally, as hypothesized, a positive emotional culture and organizational identification are positively and strongly related ($\beta = .68$, $p < .001$), supporting Hypothesis 5. Leader ML and symmetrical internal communication explained 67% of the variance in a positive emotional culture. A positive emotional culture explained 57% of the variance in organizational identification.

Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results.

Factor	Scale items	Standard loadings	*SE*
Leader motivating language	Meaning-making language	.77	NA
	Empathetic language	.90	.05
	Direct-giving language	.93	.05
Symmetrical internal communication	Most communication between me and my organization can be said to be two-way communication.	.63	.06
	My organization encourages differences of opinion.	.82	.06
	One purpose of communication in our organization is for managers to be responsive to employees.	.70	.05
	Supervisors encourage employees to express differences of opinion.	.83	.06
	Employees are usually informed about major changes in policy that will affect jobs before they take place.	.73	.06
	Employees are not afraid to speak up during meetings with supervisors and managers.	.76	NA
Emotional culture	Emotional culture of joy	.92	NA
	Emotional culture of companionate love	.85	.04
	Emotional culture of pride	.85	.03
	Emotional culture of gratitude	.86	.03
Organizational identification	When someone criticizes this organization, it feels like a personal insult.	.74	NA
	I am very interested in what others think about this organization.	.72	.06
	When I talk about this organization, I usually say "we" rather than "they."	.82	.06
	This organization's successes are my successes.	.87	.06
	When someone praises this organization, it feels like a personal compliment.	.89	.06
	If a story in the media criticized this organization, I would feel embarrassed.	.62	.06

Note. NA = not applicable. All the loadings are standardized and significant at the .001 level.

Indirect (Mediation) Effects. A test of indirect effects using bootstrapping procedure ($N = 5{,}000$ samples) was conducted to test the mediating role of a positive emotional culture. Bootstrapping uses nonparametric method based on resampling and does not violate assumptions of normality. Results revealed a significant indirect effect of leader ML on organizational identification via a positive emotional culture ($\beta = .48$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.32, .70]). Therefore, H6 was supported. In addition, a positive emotional culture significantly mediated the effect of symmetrical internal communication on organizational identification ($\beta = .18$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [.07, .34]), supporting Hypothesis 7. In other words, the effects of leader ML and symmetrical internal

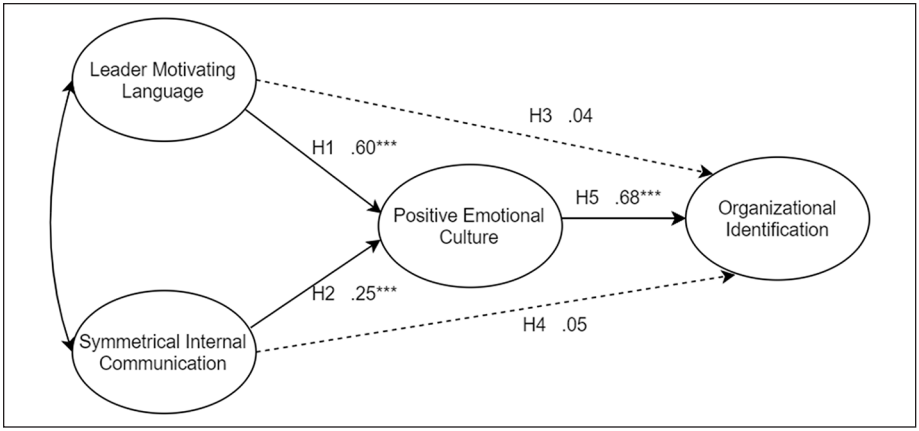

Figure 2. The hypothesized structural model with standardized path coefficients.
Note. Mediation Hypothesis 6–Hypothesis 7. Leader motivating language has an indirect effect of .408 and a total effect of .448 on organizational identification. Symmetrical internal communication has an indirect effect of .17 and a total effect of .22 on organizational identification.
$^{***}p < .001$.

Table 3. Bivariate Correlations, Reliability Coefficients, Means, and Standard Deviations for the Main Variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. SIC	(.88)								
2. DL	.74**	(.95)							
3. EL	.64**	.84**	(.93)						
4. ML	.54**	.71**	.70**	(.94)					
5. Joy	.63**	.65**	.66**	.61**	(.94)				
6. Love	.54**	.62**	.63**	.63**	.80**	(.91)			
7. Pride	.59**	.63**	.64**	.56**	.78**	.72**	(.82)		
8. Gratitude	.60**	.62**	.63**	.56**	.79**	.71**	.73**	(.95)	
9. OI	.52**	.53**	.55**	.53**	.64**	.61**	.63**	.62**	(.90)
M	4.87	4.92	5.04	4.28	4.59	4.24	4.75	4.95	4.70
SD	1.23	1.28	1.32	1.43	1.45	1.49	1.31	1.51	1.35

Note. SIC = symmetrical internal communication; DL = direction-giving language; EL = empathetic language; ML = meaning-making language; OI = organizational identification. The numbers on the diagonal are reliability coefficients.
**Correlation is significant at $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

communication on organizational identification were fully mediated via a positive emotional culture. Zero-order correlations and descriptives for the major variables are reported in Table 3.

Discussion and Conclusions

As expected, this study unveils a strong, positive role of leader ML in eliciting a positive emotional culture within organizations. Symmetrical internal communication is also positively related to a positive emotional culture. A positive emotional culture is directly and positively linked to organizational identification and mediates the relationship between internal communications (i.e., leader ML, symmetrical internal communication) and organizational identification. However, we did not find a direct association between internal communications and organizational identification, indicating that a positive emotional culture fully mediated the relationships.

The full mediating function of a positive emotional culture supports the proximal and indispensable value of emotional culture in creating organizational identification. In other words, effective internal communications indirectly strengthen employee organizational identification by first and foremost fostering a positive emotional culture in which employees embrace and share. It is essentially how employees feel about the organization that produces the degree of identification (Schrodt, 2002).

Among one of the earliest empirical attempts to examine the linkages between communication, organizational culture, and organizational identification, findings of the study provide significant implications for management and business communication scholars. First, the study expanded the scope and offered a new perspective for research in organizational culture by focusing on the affective component of culture in the organization that is centered on how employees *feel*. It further provided strong empirical evidence regarding the impact of a positive emotional culture in building organizational identification, adding to the body of knowledge on why emotional culture matters (Barsade & O'Neill, 2014). Previous studies on cognitive culture argued that cultural artifacts such as organizational dress, totems, rituals, and ceremonials contribute to identification because these artifacts signal to individuals that they are part of the group (Wiesenfeld et al., 2001). Extending this argument, this study highlighted that *emotional* culture provides a similar context for organizational members to define and experience themselves with a shared social identity that in turn fosters organizational identification (Hatch & Schultz, 1997; Turner, 2001). More specifically, the emotional, affective component of organizational culture filled with joy, companionate love, pride, and gratitude is a positive motivator for employees to strengthen their self-distinctiveness, self-esteem, and self-enhancement (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton et al., 1994). It is also likely that employees working in an environment with positive emotional culture tend to pay back their organizations by showing stronger identification as suggested by organizational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 2001).

Second, this study advanced our understanding that communication is fundamental to both the creation of culture and organizational identity (Grunig et al., 2002; Myers et al., 2016; Sriramesh et al., 1996). In discussing the relationships between culture and communication, a substantial body of literature has been dedicated to testing the role of organizational culture in influencing the practice of internal communications

(e.g., Buffington, 1988; Reber & Cameron, 2003). However, the relationship between organizational culture and internal communication practice is likely reciprocal (Berger, 2008; Sriramesh et al., 1996). In fact, a constructivist communication perspective has long held communication as a process through which culture is shaped, influenced, and altered (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004, 2014). The study first highlighted the importance of leadership communication for organizational effectiveness by demonstrating the strong positive effects of leaders' use of ML in nurturing a positive emotional culture. It thus provided new insights into the efficacy of the MLT, an emerging approach in theorizing leadership communication from a linguistic and rhetoric perspective (M. Mayfield & Mayfield, 2012; J. Mayfield & Mayfield, 2018). The present study further examined communications at organizational level and expanded the influence of symmetrical internal communication in cultivating a positive organizational *emotional* culture.

This study made further contributions in comparing two forms of internal communication—leader ML and symmetrical internal communication system—in the model with regard to their effects on positive emotional culture and organizational identification, and therefore provided a synergistic understanding of how communications at different levels in the organization interplay to affect organizational and employee outcomes. The value of the symmetrical internal communication mainly resides in *organizational* listening and feedback, which, if implemented properly, can narrow power distance between management and employees and elicit a positive emotional culture, as shown in this study. Scholars have identified organizational listening and feedback as key components of effective public relations (Broom & Sha, 2013; Macnamara, 2016, 2018). Though some may argue that leaders entail listening as part of their ML practice, organizational listening emphasizes systematic organizational-level efforts, such as building resources, technologies, skills, policies, as well as conducting research and consultation, to be more symmetrical, open, and interactive (Macnamara, 2016, 2018).

From a practical standpoint, the study findings offered strategic insights into how organizations and leaders should communicate to create a benign cultural environment filled with positive emotions and boost employees' sense of belonging in the organization. First and foremost, leaders at different levels in the organization should recognize the benefits of ML and utilize meaning-making, empathetic, and direction-giving languages appropriately. In particular, leaders should avidly communicate the vision and culture of the organization to enhance employees' collective understanding of *who we are, what we believe in, why we exist*, and *where we are going* as an organization. A compelling vision unites and motivates employees to strive for the same organizational purpose that goes beyond individual goals. Stories, anecdotes, and metaphors can be utilized in leaders' vision communication and storytelling to connect employees' individual goals to the organization's big picture. Furthermore, leaders' verbal communications should be genuine, caring, show compassion, empathy, and provide emotional support for employees. Such support is not necessarily limited to employees' work roles or task-related events but also can be pertinent to employees' personal life events (J. Mayfield & Mayfield, 2018). For instance, a manager can communicate

heartfelt concern about a serious illness in an employee's family. Additionally, leaders should provide clear verbal guidance and feedback to employees so that they get the right thing done in the right way.

Along with leaders' use of ML, the organization should invest resources, tools, technologies, and training to develop a two-way, employee-centered internal communication system that emphasizes trust, reciprocity, employee feedback, voice, and participation. Some examples include using organizational listening tools such annual surveys, internal social media platforms, management townhall meetings, or informal gatherings to gather employee feedback, address their concerns timely, and foster conversations and dialogue. More importantly, organizations and leaders should be devoted to creating an organizational culture where employee feelings are respected and cared for and promoting an atmosphere that is filled with joy, companionate love, pride, and appreciation. For instance, wearing big smiles to work every day communicates joy; using wordings of *we* and *us*, and gestures of hugs and proper touching communicates companionate love; celebrating employee milestones and achievements in the organization promotes a sense of pride; writing thank you notes and programs such as employee appreciation day contributes to fostering a culture of gratitude. Likewise, office décor and furnishings convey the appropriate emotions expected. To detect the prevailing emotional culture, organizations may consider adopting new technologies such as mobile apps to track employees' daily mood. For instance, an app called Niko Niko allows each team member to record a graphic assessment of their mood during each day so that, over time, management can spot the patterns of change in the moods of employees and teams. Eventually, the internal communication efforts and a positive emotional culture together create employees' shared identity and enhance their identification and deep bonding with the organization.

Limitations and Future Directions

Despite the implications and insights offered, the study encountered some limitations that can be addressed in future research. First, the study adopted a quantitative approach in examining emotional culture. While this helps verify a priori relationships drawn from previous literature, it focused more on the explicit and tangible manifestations of emotional culture, with little references to the espoused values and underlying assumptions. Future research could utilize qualitative and interpretive approaches such as observations, document analysis, and in-depth interviews to investigate how a positive emotional culture fosters organizational identification. Second, the cross-sectional survey design is limited in suggesting the order of influence among focal variables of communication, emotional culture, and organizational identification. It is likely that organizational identification forms prior to employee entering the organization. Organizational culture can also provide a context for internal communications to happen. To establish the true causal links among the variables in this study, future scholars should conduct experimental and longitudinal investigations. As culture and identity are formed over time; communication also happens on a day-to-day basis, it is worthwhile to examine how these factors interplay over time. Given the complex

nature of culture, future research should explore other dimensions of organizational culture (e.g., organizational culture profile, O'Reilly et al., 1991) in relation to communications and organizational identification.

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Note

1. Dynata is a well-known market research and data collection company with 1.5 million research panel members in the United States. It has been utilized by scholars who study public relations and communication management.

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