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LEARNING LOG
From Equality to Equity: The Journey to Support Students More Effectively

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DETAILS

MAKING IT WORK, UNDERSTANDING WHAT WORKS, AND SHARING WHAT WORKS

TITLE

From Equality to Equity: The Journey to Support Students More Effectively

SOLUTION ⓘ

Redesigned Planning Advising and Student Services;Digital Learning and Next Generation Digital Courseware;Developmental Education Reform and Supports for Learning

CAPACITIES ⓘ

Strategic Finance;Policy;Leadership & Culture;Information Technology;Institutional Research

Owner

👤 Susan Mayer (/education/s/profile/005360000047G5cAAE)

Record Type

Monthly-Current 2017

INSTITUTION

Miami Dade College

REFLECTION

SITE INITIATIVE ⓘ

When teams of faculty and staff at Miami Dade College began to build Shark Path, our Guided Pathway, in 2012, we started trying to level the playing field for students by providing broadly available foundational services like structured on-boarding, advisor assignments, a new first year experience course, and advising processes that facilitated the creation of academic maps and supported non-cognitive development. These were good things to do because thousands of students got off to a stronger start in college. The vast majority (85-95%) of incoming students now attend orientation, chose a program of study by the end of the first term and are retained from fall to spring. The average number of credits completed in the first term increased as has attainment of sophomore status by the end of the first year. But with more experience and data, we began to understand that we weren't doing enough to level the playing field; specifically, that our approach needs to address the fact that students start in different places, have different goals, and progress at different speeds. This reflection describes our attempts to move from an equality-based, "average student" approach to one that provides more equitable support so that increasing numbers of students have opportunities to succeed.

PROGRESS TOWARD STUDENT SUCCESS ⓘ

As we've discussed in a couple of the prior learning logs, our focus on equity was jump-started by the changes to developmental education requirements that now enable most students who graduate from high school in Florida to enroll directly in college-level "gateway" courses. These changes were the impetus for creating separate math pathways (algebra vs non-algebra) by program of study, redesigning gateway algebra to make it more active and relevant,and implementing an early alert and intervention systems to support student learning.

Academic and student services team currently are collaborating to design and deliver more comprehensive, pro-active and intentional alerts and interventions that augment the early focus on gateway course performance. These alerts and interventions are rooted in our data and incorporate best practices in retention, progression and completion. They include:

- Increased focus on career assessment and exploration: First year orientation has been redesigned to include a meta-major component. The content contains information about careers to excite students about professional opportunities, help inform their credential, program of study and transfer institution choices, guide them to enroll in the most appropriate courses, and learn transitional skills and academic resources for engagement and success. Faculty and academic administrators participate in orientations and build relationships with students to support involvement and mentoring. Students participating in the meta-major orientations that were piloted last summer re-enrolled at high rates in the next 2 sequential semesters.

- <u>Identification of incoming "at risk" students:</u> Data shows that students with low high school GPAs drop out in higher numbers than other students. As a result, advisors now identify students with high school GPAs lower than 3.0 and provide priority advising in early fall term that includes more focus on non-cognitive diagnostic assessments and resource matching.
- <u>Course withdrawal</u>: Our data indicates that students who withdraw from a course in the first term are 2x more likely to attrit than other students. New course withdrawal policies are being piloted that require a conversation before a student is allowed to withdraw, providing an opportunity to share information and trade-offs with students and identify supportive resources (labs, tutors, Single Stop, bus passes, etc.). This support will be provided to all students, not just incoming freshmen.
- <u>Sequential course taking</u>: Starting in the fall term, faculty will support in-class reinforcement of the importance of sequential course-taking, especially in gateway and foundational courses and we are beginning to implement year-long schedules in some disciplines.
- <u>Part-time enrollment</u>: Data indicates that students who attend part-time re-enroll at 2.5-3 times lower rates than full-time students and complete at significantly lower rates. While the pattern is common across most programs of study, it is more pronounced in certain academic areas. Additional analysis is underway to determine if scheduling changes, or other strategies could change these trends. Some part-time students may also benefit from stackable credential programs.
- <u>Course repeaters</u>: Students are allowed to enroll in the same course up to 4 times. Historically, interventions occurred only at the 4th attempt. A new course repeater policy that was implemented this spring alerts students at the second attempt to use support resources, and requires an intentional intervention with the student's academic department at the 3rd and 4th attempts. Students now complete a SMART Action plan that identifies challenges and strategies to overcome them. Students also meet with the academic department over the course of the semester to reinforce the use of the SMART plan strategies.
- <u>Course failure:</u> Recent data from EAB suggests that failing isolated courses is a key driver of falling GPAs and attrition. We are starting to identify and reach out to students who fail or withdraw from courses and work with them to develop SMART plans to increase the likelihood of success going forward.

IMPACTⓘ

Meta-major orientations were piloted at one campus last summer. Students participating in them re-enrolled in the next two semesters at higher rates than students who did not attend.

Most of the other interventions identified are currently in early implementation or will be implemented in fall term.

INTERNAL/EXTERNAL RESOURCESⓘ

Academic and student services teams reviewed longitudinal data about student retention, progression and completion, as well as course performance data in key gateway courses and combined that information with research about best practices to design the interventions described above. Academic and student services teams jointly developed and are delivering currently the meta-major orientations. The Student Services team will be develping detailed action plans for several of the interventions in a full-day planning workshop later this week. These will be shared with Academic Services for further development and implementation. Training will be provided by the College's internal training and development team.

NEXT CRITICAL STEPSⓘ

Implementing these additional interventions at scale and assessing their effectiveness for ongoing improvement and sustainability.

OPPORTUNITIES/CHALLENGESⓘ

Successful implementation of these new interventions requires

- Resource re-allocation and potential changes to the three-tiered advising model. Currently, all first time in college direct entry students are transitioned out of professional advising to college mentors (faculty, departmental advisors and departmental chairpeople) after they complete 25% of the credits necessary for an associate degree. Analysis of the impact of the interventions may lead us to conclude that some students would benefit from retaining the relationship with advising and some may be ready to be assigned to a faculty mentor from the start. We also need to provide more intentional and proa-active support to delayed entry and non-traditional students, who currently do not have assigned advisors.
- Technology: We are implementing alerts and interventions manually today (combination of IR reports, pivot tables and spreadsheets). We cannot scale comprehensively without additional technology infrastructure.

QUESTIONS/REQUESTSⓘ

What strategies have other colleges found to be successful in encouraging/incentivizing students to remain full time and/or to support them to re-enroll and complete at higher rates if they remain part-time?

Did any of the FS colleges participate in the EAB "Murky Middle" project. If so, are your results consistent with those reported nationally?

STATUS

Final

Completion Dateⓘ

5/31/2017

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Susan Mayer (/education/s/profile/005360000047G5cAAE) (Miami Dade College) updated
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May 31, 2017 at 11:56 AM (/education/s/feed/0D53600001Nk0Q4CAJ)

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