

## Comments from Open Forum #6: Student Success.

There are many reasons student fail to graduate. Your comments?

- Money and work are issues.
- (GM) Many more of our students work than those at peer institutions, and more are working off-campus. Reasons?
- We collected data a few years ago and found that once you factor out ACT scores, student retention was correlated with how much they work or drink.
- It depends on how much they are engaged on campus.
- Intellectual maturity is an issue.
- (GM) The NSSE data shows us that our students are studying less outside the classroom. 41% of students say they study five hours or less.
- How many didn't return because they didn't perform well; couldn't cut it?
- Being first generation students is an issue. They have no expectation for what college is about.
- I wonder if housing is a factor.
- Which students were in learning communities or took UNV 101 courses?
- We need to look at whether these students (drop outs) are buying books.
- 56% of those who didn't return never attended a class. That's why it is important for faculty to report attendance, because if it is not recorded, those students are still included in the cohort.
- (GM) Do faculty get information about the "at risk" students and would it be beneficial to get that information?
- I have that information on 40 students in our program (SOAR). They come back because of closer connections and they get engaged.
- We know what our students are like; the other question is how can we impact these numbers? I don't know how the information would impact our work. Course design, program design is what we (faculty) can control.
- Most students want MWF or TT classes because of commuting time. I am concerned about the final schedule. It is important that students don't have three finals in one day. We should be adjusting the final schedule because they always end up on the same day.
- The undeclared students are not returning.
- It is valuable to collect data on subgroups like UNV 101 or those living in dorms, but we must be careful about the data collection and if it adequately reflects all students. The same goes for declared majors. Just forcing students to declare a major doesn't mean that will make them continue. Those in the "not exploring" category are more at risk; forcing them to declare a major might help but maybe not.

- We need to ask students about their enrollment goals. Is it because they want a degree or their parents told them to go to college or they had nothing else to do? Figuring out why they are here is important. That may be a better indicator of future success.

#### Mid-term grades – why do we not do this?

- At some point students need to be able to assess their progress independently. Are we enabling students and creating a dependency rather than independent students? Is that the best way to enable students to grow and become independent?
- It is what students want.
- Sometimes what they want is not what they need.
- It has not been an easy process in the past to put grades in Blackboard or SAP. Changes have been made and it can be done more easily now.
- It will be possible to upload grades directly to Blackboard for Fall 2013. Students will be able to see all their grades together. That will hopefully give them a wakeup call if they are working too much.
- (GM) What percent of faculty use Blackboard on a regular basis?
- Approximately 80% of the courses use Blackboard to some extent. You wouldn't have to use Blackboard but if you are already using Blackboard, you don't have to reenter the information.
- Midterm grades for juniors and seniors might need to be a plus or minus based on an ongoing project, else it could be a false progress report.
- Positive feedback is as important as negative feedback. When a student gets positive feedback at midterm, it encourages students to continue. Research shows that frequent feedback is important. It is not handholding; it is affirming. We need to expand beyond freshmen (for midterm grades).
- I'm all for midterm grades to be there. It could be a good contributor, even with faculty evaluations.
- Would it be beneficial to see how they are doing against peers in the class?
- What is the real question? Giving students feedback versus posting a midterm grade. I post grades on Blackboard, but I don't do a midterm. We really ought to separate these two issues.
- A number of us teach only juniors and seniors. They do projects. I don't want students to feel we have misled them when they don't get the same grade at finals because the midterm grade is based upon only 30% of the project completed thus far, not 50% of the assignment.
- Not all my professors have put grades online. For the professors that have done it, I will calculate my own grade, but it is frustrating when the grades are not online.

- IT is saying they can do it (midterm grades); I say go for it. I don't worry about students not being happy about it. I am more concerned about the decline in retention between the 67% and the 37%. Keeping students here is a more disturbing question, and we need to find angles to improve this.
- The first year retention rate of 67% caps our future success. This is our bleeding point.

Do we need to do anything to control who can enroll in online courses?

- Vicki Berling has data on the success of our online courses. We have an orientation session for evaluating whether the student is ready to take online courses. She also counsels them about the demands of online courses. We found that online is not very productive with high school students; they do not have the discipline or time management skills.
- (GM) Cleveland State University set up admission standards for online courses.
- I have been talking to local employers and how they look at those who have taken mostly online courses. They see a disparity between those courses, and employers have moved to not reimbursing those who take exclusively online classes. We need to ask employers how they differentiate those students in their minds.
- We have one major that is fully online. We have a GPA requirement for the program. There are restricted seats that require a permit. That gives us the ability to screen the students. We are doing more virtual office hours online, and using video tools to engage the faculty with students. That seems to help.

What percent of our general education courses are taught online?

- North of 60%.
- As a department chair, I have to staff these courses. I hope that the solution is more full-time faculty. If I move full-time faculty to general education courses, then I don't have the faculty to teach upper level courses.
- We are increasingly making it more difficult for full-time staff to teach courses by not allowing them to teach during the day.

What can we do as part of orientation to improve motivation, workload, and time management?

- High school students who do well in high school (without having to study as much) may not have the study skills needed for college.
- Students seem not to realize that while they were studying five hours per week outside the classroom, they were in class 30-40 hours per week, whereas, they are not in class the same number of hours in college, and they don't understand that they need to be making up the difference in study outside the classroom.

- I offer tours in our department, and we offer a pairing with another student for the day to go around campus. It is an experiential learning opportunity and helps students to better understand what is expected.
- Is UNV 101 required?
- It is not required. We used to teach about half the freshman class each year, but not all necessarily need it. The student is allowed to choose.
- Should we require it and make students prove they can opt out?
- The major may not have a lot of hours available that allow them to take UNV 101.
- Students who are pre-majors have heavy loads their first semester. There is a high attrition because they don't have the skills. A combination of things happening. Students are exploring majors.
- For the Student Success Center, the Norse Advising (a reimagining of the AARC) and career development are collaborating with faculty and academic departments.
- We are still developing the collaborative programs as we move in. Physical location is transforming how we help students navigate for services. It helps to make it seamless for the students. It will happen more easily than it has in the past.
- The plan is to get all orientation leaders aware of the services and programs available in the Student Success Center. I have not been involved in the collaboration efforts.
- We point out the Student Success Center on our campus tours. We talk about how nice the central advising center is. I am concerned about what is going on in on the ground floor. We have lost space.

What kind of programs should we implement to improve retention and graduation rates?

- Increase scholarship support and student employment on campus.
- Chairs don't have good data yet on retention by programs.
- Have we looked at staff positions and whether some students could replace them? I realize that is complicated and there would be certain places that it would not be appropriate, but cutting grass, washing dishes in the cafeteria; NKU needs to look around to see that we are not doing that (hiring students in some staff positions).
- How are transfer students counted in our retention rate?
- (GM) Transfer students are not included. I understand that federal government is looking at a better way to calculate retention and graduation, and the method will probably change.
- IR has been involved in a study with the University of Alaska at Anchorage. That study found that consistently 40% of our incoming class is transferring to another institution.
- On the issue of employment on campus, we have been operating as a lean machine so it is not a viable task to offset staff with students. We are working with outside businesses (Delta, Fidelity) to locate some of their services on campus so that it is a convenience for

students to work on campus with another business. Pursuing more of those options might be beneficial.

- I was in the first class hired to work with Fidelity on campus, and I worked with them for three years. It was a great experience; a great partnership with the call center.
- The skills-based jobs, I call them “resume poppers”. They reinforce homework in the discipline.
- A lot of freshmen are good students. If we had the opportunities here, it would help them make that switch.
- Kentucky Living (magazine) said that 70% of our students qualify for financial aid compared to 90% at other Kentucky institutions. Is that accurate? Maybe our students are working and earning too much money to qualify for financial aid.
- If we look at student employment, then we might want to look at how we distribute federal work study money. It is awarded to the department internally. We need to make it easier for students to find the jobs on campus.
- My students are looking for co-ops and internships. We ought to have a more centralized clearinghouse to find these opportunities.
- Encourage students to come to our workshops. We are an optional service. We do workshops for 30-40 students, but we could do 100.
- It would be helpful to advertise employment opportunities to students. Do you have placement statistics? That might be helpful to report.

What are your thoughts on Dual Credit?

- As a parent, it helped my children to be more prepared and receive credit. It helped him succeed well in his program.
- It is a good exposure to the rigor of a college course.
- If I’m hiring a high school teacher, they must be SACS qualified. It is hard to get full-time faculty to teach at 7:30 a.m. I found part-time faculty who live in the community (where the high schools are), and they are doing well.
- Communications is involved in School Based Scholars. A few high school teachers have the hours required to teach, but it is limited, so we find part-time faculty, too. However, we must make choices on how to spend the money. It comes out of our department funds.
- (GM) Do we get a lot of the dual credit students to enroll after high school?
- (yes)
- Do we do dual credit in Ohio?
- Ohio requires a self-study and Ohio approval for dual credit.