Supporting Continued Student Success at Elizabeth City State University

Jennifer O. Farnum, Ph.D.
VP for Research
Teresa Farnum & Associates, Inc.

Our Group Today

- Faculty
  - Arts & Humanities
  - Business and Economics
  - Education and Psychology
  - Mathematics, Science and Technology
- Student Affairs & Financial Aid
- Academic Affairs
- Others?

In Which Month Were You Born?

Directions:
1. Turn to the person to your right.
2. Introduce yourself.
3. Put your name and contact information on the index card.
4. Pass the card to your partner.
5. Set a reminder to reach out to your partner on September 3. Ask him/her to report on TWO main “lessons learned” today and what actions have result from those lessons.

Materials Available At:

Retention 101

“Retention is itself not the goal, but is the ‘byproduct’ or result of improved educational quality and the upgrading of the student experience.”

Noel et al., 1985

- Basic Ingredients for Success
  - Astin’s Theory of Involvement (1977, 1985)
  - Bean and Metzner’s Nontraditional Student Attrition (1985)
  - Tinto’s Theory of Student Departure (1975, 1993)
  - Seidman’s Formula for Student Success (1995, 2005)
How Does Retention Work?

Recruitment & Admission

Financial Aid

Academic Services

Student Services

Curriculum & Instruction

Examples of At-Risk Pops

first-generation
second-to-third year
low-income

student athletes
community college transfers
non-traditional

non-residential
academic probation
underprepared


Low-Income, First-Generation

Financial Aid

Folks?

Ingredients for Success at ESCU

+ -

The Perfect Storm

• Admission standards increased
  • lowers pool of prospective students

• Academic standards raised
  • impacts the number of students who are eligible to continue

• Performance-based funding implemented
  • formula that uses improvements in retention and graduation rates
Has Anyone Noticed?

“... Students increasingly are bringing to higher education exactly the same consumer expectations they have for every other commercial establishment with which they deal. Their focus is on convenience, quality, service, and cost.”


Principles of Success—Joe Cuseo

1. PERSONAL VALIDATION

- Student success is fostered when students feel personally significant—i.e., when they feel recognized as individuals, that they matter to the institution, and that the institution cares about them as whole persons.
  - Rendon, 1994, 2009; Schlussberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989; Terenzini et al., 1996

Principles of Success

2. SELF-EFFICACY

- Students are more likely to experience success when they believe that their personal effort matters—when they think they can exert significant influence or control over the outcomes of their educational and personal success.

Principles of Success

3. REFLECTION

- Students are more likely to be successful when they reflect on their college and life experiences, think deeply about them and transform them into a form that connects with what they already know or have previously experienced.
  - Brunetard, Brown, & Cook, 2000; Bruner, 1990; Flavell, 1997; Flavell, 1985; Svinicki, 2004; Vygotsky, 1978
Principles of Success

4. SOCIAL INTEGRATION

- Student success is strengthened through human interaction, collaboration, and the formation of interpersonal relationships between the student and other members of the college community—peers, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni.


ECSU Rates: A Reintroduction

Activity

Sophomore Characteristics

Sophomore Slump
Freedman, 1956; Kennedy & Upcraft, 2010

Refers to:
- Academic deficiencies
- Academic disengagement
- Dissatisfaction with collegiate experience
- Major and career indecision
- Developmental confusion
Describing Sophomores

Sophomore Challenges: Why are They?

- Special attention and support suddenly terminated
- “Novelty, mystery, and excitement” fades
- Social adjustments/challenges
- Residential adjustments, off-campus/within institution

Sophomore Challenges: Why are They?

- Changes in academic advising
- More serious curriculum
- Realities of academic major/course of study
- First-year habits not sustainable

What can I do on to support second-year success?

Faculty & Academics

Why It is Important to Sophomores

- Less likely to report investment in learning (Gardner, 2000)
- Study in academics less engaged (Gardner, 2000)
- More likely to see faculty as disengaged, unapproachable, unhelpful (Gardner, 2000)
- Approachable faculty more important to sophomores (Jullien, 2000)

Why It is Important to Sophomores

- Less interaction in classroom (30% “never or seldom participate,” Gardner, 2000)
- Quality of instruction: 1 of 4 factors that increases persistence (Schreiner, 2007)
- Engaged learning most important predictor of sophomore success, satisfaction, retention (Schreiner, 2010)

Particularly crucial that we:

- Relate learning to careers and career competencies
- Offer undergraduate research programs that recruit sophomores
- Offer courses taught by faculty on developmentally-appropriate topics

Interaction with students outside the “typical” classroom

- Find unique study/lesson spaces
- Attend events! Host events!
- Use modalities such as RemindMe 101 and Facebook
- Teach in residence halls
- Trips to areas of cultural and historical significance
Particularly crucial that we:

- Reorganize large groups into smaller ones
- Engage students by active/collaborative learning methods
- Focus on building peer-to-peer networks
- Use innovative teaching methods, changed times require innovative approaches

**Early Alert**
- Description of ECSU system
- Socrative
  - m.socrative.com
  - Room number 374684
- Best Practices in Early Alert
  - Identify the target audience
  - Define a clear intervention process
  - Create a formal feedback system

Why It is Important to Sophomores

- Certainty about major predicts academic success
  - Gahagan & Hunter, 2006
- Increased pressure to select major
  - Anderson & Schreiner, 2000
- Increasing lack of understanding of field, requirements, etc.
  - Tinto, 1993
- Aid structuring, focusing, sequencing
  - Anderson & Schreiner, 2000
- Tend to think dichotomously, leading to anxiety about "right" choices
  - Boivin, et al, 2000
- Epistemological develop:
  - Absolute, transitional, independent, contextual
  - Baxter Magolda, 1992
- Difficulty with academic/life decision making
  - Barr, 2003
- Difficulty balancing academic and co-curricular activities
  - Wilder, 1993

Why It is Important to Sophomores

- More dissatisfied with adviser approachability and knowledge from first to second year, both qualities are highly important
  - Juillerat, 2000
- Least satisfied with academic advising services
  - Schreiner, 2010
- All three types of sophomores at-risk (decided, undecided, major changers)
  - Gordon, 2010
- Academic major must directly apply to "final" career (Hawkins, Bradley, & White, 1977)
- Lack of exposure to career fields/sophomores

"Major selection and deciding on an appropriate career was sophomores' biggest personal problem."
- Gordon, 2010, p.72
Academic Advising /Career Development

Especially Important to:
- Establish formal advising-career development networks
- Construct sophomore-year checklist (e.g., SLU)
- Designate “sophomore-year advisors” and train accordingly (e.g., NACADA)

Financial Aid

- Avoid front-loading
- Offer sophomore-specific scholarships
- Actively reach out to students and parents to aid in financial literacy
- Proactively identify students who are at risk financially

Social Involvement

- Why It Is Important to Sophomores
  - Time of identity confusion, development, and questioning; definition through peers
    - Schade, 2010
  - “Satisfaction with peers” strongest predictor of overall satisfaction
    - Schaefer, 2003
  - Campus climate one of four predictors of retention
    - Schaefer, 2007

- Wild-child: 60% describe themselves as “fairly frequent or constant” partiers
  - Schade, 2010
- Moral development & retrogression: shift in perception of “right” and “wrong”
  - Schade & Kramer, 1969
- “Most students feel sense of belonging” / “I feel a sense of pride”
  - Schade, 2008
Social Involvement

Why It is Important to Sophomores

Student Development Theory (Schaller, 2005)

- 4 stages of student development: random, focused, tentative choices, commitment
- Most sophomores in “focused exploration” (Stage 2)

- Emphasis on relationships
- Uncertainty, alienation from first-year friends
- Friendship fit
- Building community

Social Involvement

Why it is Important to Sophomores

- Social relationships one of three major themes, within relationships:
  - Solidifying friendships
  - Developing new relationships
  - Friendships of choice versus convenience
  - Social relationships compete with other priorities

- Caronero, Topf, Stern, & Benjamin, 2007

Social Involvement

- Especially Important That We:
  - Offer exposure to different types of activities, especially “substantive” ones
  - Make use of (or create) peer mentoring and peer tutoring programs
  - UT Pan-American, SAA program
  - Provide leadership opportunities
  - Living/learning & residential options

Social Involvement

- Cohesion, bondedness, affiliation, identity, leadership

- Welcome back festivities (welcome week)
- Seasonal activities
- Sophomore residence halls
- Sophomore, junior, senior retreats
- Outdoor/experiential programs

Best Practices

This is a segue slide!
Final Exercise

- Arts & Humanities
- Business and Economics
- Education and Psychology
- Mathematics, Science and Technology
- Student Affairs & Financial Aid
- Academic Affairs

Thank you, Elizabeth City State University!!!!

Selected Resources

Selected Resources

Organizations/Documents

- FYE and SYE listservs, FYE-LIST@LISTSERV.SC.EDU, SYE-LIST@LISTSERV.SC.EDU

- Council on Undergraduate research (http://www.cur.org) also Healey and Jenkins, 2009

- Association for Experiential Education: http://www.aee.org/

- Belmont University
  http://www.belmont.edu/institutional_effectiveness/pdfs/ac-aap.pdf