2016

Enrollment Management: Improving Systems & Operations

REPORT ON FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK | APRIL 14, 2016

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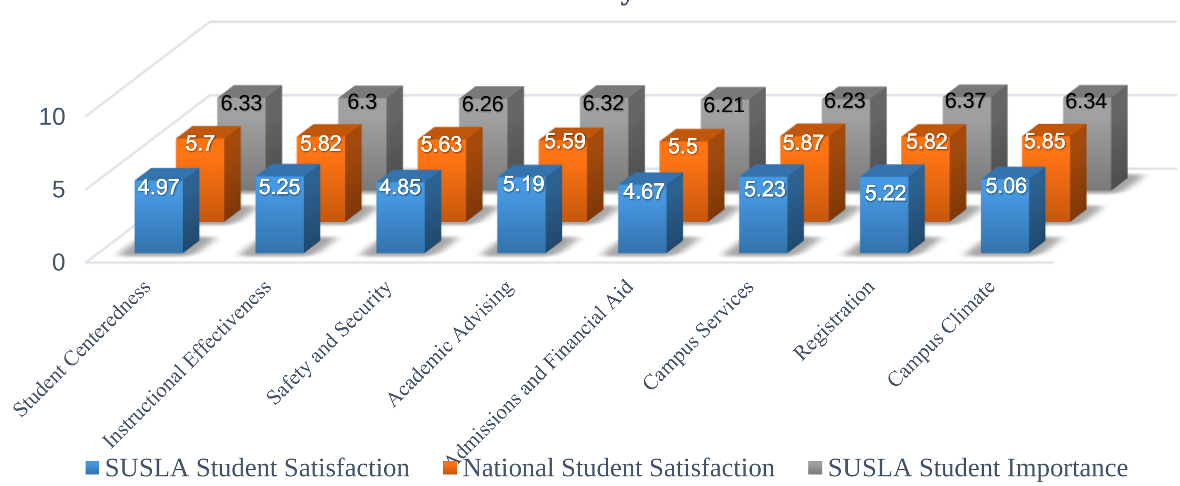
SUMMARY OF PROJECT

Southern University at Shreveport, Louisiana (SUSLA) entered into a remediation plan to improve its performance in related to retention metrics established in the Granting Resources for Autonomies and Diplomas (GRAD) Act. As a result of SUSLA's failure to meet the established performance agreement, the institution developed a plan of action to improve its performance. More specifically, to improve retention, the institution determined that additional data were needed to determine the reasons why students were not being retained.

To gather additional data, the University administered the Ruffalo-Noel Levitz *Student Satisfaction Inventory* (SSI). This instrument is designed to examine the multifarious facets of the University's overall quality of student life and learning and identify factors that promote retention and foster student success. In cultivating a holistic assessment infrastructure, essential is understanding the degree to which students are 1) supported in their learning, 2) engaged and in what ways, and 3) satisfied with the programs and operations important to their success. According to Noel Levitz, student learning coupled with student engagement and satisfaction leads to increased student success—impacting student retention. Assessing these various aspects of student life positioned the University to substantively assess its ability to meet students' needs and then strategically target opportunities for improvement that students establish as important.

The SSI was administered September 21-25, 2015 in approximately 80 courses and 742 surveys were returned which represents 41% of the student population at the Aerospace, Metro, and Main campuses—a representative sample. The analyses offers a broad overview of what matters to SUSLA's students and highlight organizational performance gaps as identified by items that have low satisfaction, but high levels of importance. Figure I delineates SUSLA's performance in each of the eight areas, depicting on average, how satisfied SUSLA students are in each area as compared to the national average.

Figure I: *Student Satisfaction Inventory* Overall University Performance



The data analysis revealed a significant performance gap in the area of admissions and financial aid effectiveness. Although students identified its effectiveness as important (i.e., average rating of 6.21, scale: 1-not important at all to 7-very important), they were not satisfied with the services in this area (i.e., average rating of 4.67, scale: 1-not satisfied at all to 7-very satisfied). Results also proved that an extensive examination of financial aid operations and processes for opportunities to improve its effectiveness is needed. Table I delineates the performance gaps (i.e., student rating of importance minus student rating of satisfaction).

Table I: Admissions and Financial Aid Effectiveness				
Item #	**Item Description**	**Importance Rating**	**Satisfaction Rating**	**Performance Gap**
5	Financial Aid awards are announced in time to be helpful in college planning	6.24	3.96	2.28
7	Admissions staff provide personalized attention prior to enrollment	6.19	5.09	1.10
15	Financial aid counseling is available if I need it.	6.25	4.74	1.51
23	The institution helps me identify resources to finance my education	6.25	4.66	1.59

Finally, there were also other areas identified that are signal additional improvements are needed. See Figure II.

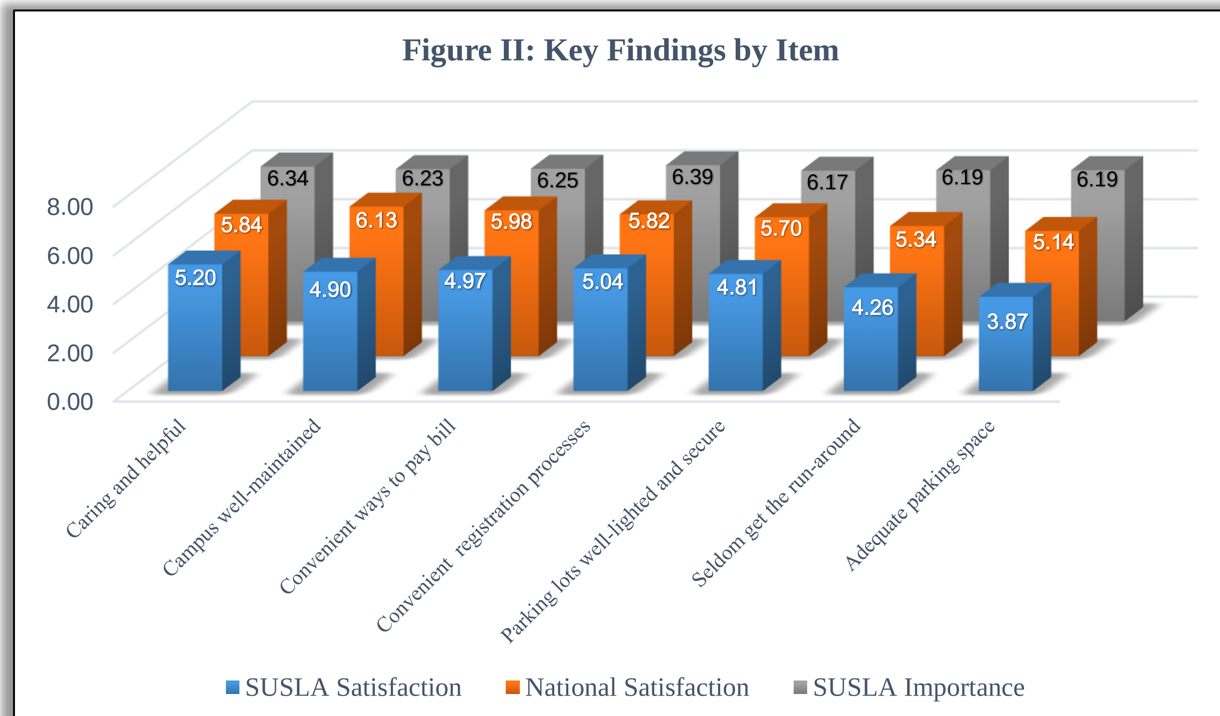


Figure II: Key Findings by Item

The *Student Satisfaction Inventory* (SSI) analysis provided the University with an institutional breadth of data that signaled great opportunities for improvement in a few key areas. However, following further analysis, there was no depth of data for University personnel to identify exactly what needed to be improved. Therefore, the Enrollment Management Committee—a University standing committee—convened and determined that additional data were needed to understand exactly why students are not satisfied the University's enrollment management practices and how it impacts their quality of student life. As such, the Department of Outcomes Assessment and Quality Management held a series of focus groups in February and March, 2016 involving various populations of interest, including: students enrolled at the various campuses (i.e., Martin Luther King, Jr. or main campus, Aerospace campus, and the Metro campus) as well as faculty and staff involved with the enrollment management process. Through the focus groups, the University gathered information to assist administrators, faculty, and staff alike to improve the overall enrollment management process (i.e., admissions, testing, advising, financial aid, registering for courses, attending class, etc.).

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Outcomes and Quality Management held focus group discussions with faculty, staff, and students. All information was provided via group discussion which was designed to gather information from the students in regard to the following outcomes:

I. To understand students, faculty, and staff perceptions about the enrollment management process.
II. To identify and understand students, faculty, and staff concerns germane to various facets of the enrollment management process, including admissions, testing, advising, financial aid, registering for courses, attending class.
III. To identify innovative ways to improve and streamline, where necessary, the overall registration process.
IV. To understand how students and faculty are communicated with about the enrollment and registration processes and identify the most effective methodologies in doing so.

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Overall, there were 20 students, faculty and staff to participate in four focus groups.

- 2 faculty and staff focus groups
    - 6 faculty
    - 4 staff
    - Participants reported to be involved in the following registration processes: admissions (1); advising (4); testing (3); other (1)
- 2 student focus groups
    - 4 Women
    - 6 Men
    - One student was a first-time student as SUSLA

- Number of times students participated in the registration process: one time (1); three times (2); four times (4); five times (2).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Following are the summary of findings by outcome. Each summary includes the top five opportunities presented for improvement per subject area, where applicable. See the transcript of each focus group in the appendices for further details.

Outcome II: To identify and understand students, faculty, and staff concerns germane to various facets of the enrollment management process, including admissions, testing, advising, financial aid, registering for courses, attending class.

Admissions: Opportunities for Improvement

1. Improve student awareness and understanding of the admission and application process. Ensure that students know what to bring with the application, how long it will take to process the application, and what is required to be fully admitted.
2. Improve the follow-up process to ensure timely and accurate communication with the student throughout the entire process. Specific follow-up processes need to be implemented or improved: when the application is received, when the application has been processed, when the student is actually admitted, when the transcript has been received and analyzed, and repeatedly (i.e., not just one time) when there is an outstanding document missing that is needed to complete the admission's process.
3. Improve organization during high volume times to include a methodical way for how all students and parents are addressed and served. Ensure that the office environment and personnel are welcoming, helpful, and customer friendly.
4. Improve the overall transcript submittal and articulation process to ensure that faculty are able to adequately advise the student at any time with all of the information needed.
5. Provide a myriad of convenient ways for students to pay the admission's fee, namely after the admission's application has been submitted. In addition, improve the admission's fee hold process to mitigate unnecessary back-and-forth for the student.

Testing: Opportunities for Improvement

1. Improve the testing schedule to include clarity of the information published, provide opportunities for online scheduling, send notifications to all affected and interested parties of location changes, etc.
2. Provide clearer guidelines, especially where students are concerned, to assist individuals in understanding who actually needs to test.
3. Ensure that our students, especially our working adult population, have enough convenient times to test, which includes offering more testing options.
4. Accommodate more students during the registration period through the use of larger testing spaces and more trained proctors to ensure that students are able to complete the registration process.

Advising: Opportunities for Improvement

1. Increase student awareness of their assigned academic advisor in order that students know if they are to see a freshman advisor or a faculty advisor, regardless, it should be clear to the student.
2. Decrease wait time to see an academic advisor. More freshman advisors need to be trained, provided access, and utilized in the advising process during high volume periods to decrease student frustration and inconvenience.
3. Decrease the number of overrides that are requested and enroll students in a larger variety of freshman appropriate courses.
4. Increase advising accuracy by improving coordination between faculty advisors and freshman advisors and providing faculty advisors more access to the student record.
5. Increase freshman orientation compliance by making it mandatory. On registration day—on site—use group orientation/advising best practices to expedite the student registration process.

Financial Aid: Opportunities for Improvement

1. Increase student awareness of and clarity about the Satisfactory Academic Progress process. Ensure students are aware of each step in the process, what is required, and what is needed.
2. Improve the follow-up and communication with students about the SAP appeal process.
3. Increase student awareness about how to accept fees and what this step means in the registration process—especially new students.
4. Improve front-line and back-office communication and customer service with students, including providing complete service at first point of contact if possible. See the focus group transcripts for specific incidents.
5. Increase student awareness about the purpose of and how to use the Jaguar Card.

Registration: Opportunities for Improvement

1. While the arena registration process has many notable improvements, students, faculty, and staff cite the following improvements are needed: ensure that all departments are in the gym, ensure that computers are in the gym, improve use of faculty as a resource, add appropriate signage and personnel to assist students so that they know where they are going, etc.
2. Improve course availability on registration day to mitigate students registering online for courses and coming to campus to complete registration and the courses are no longer available. Students also report enrolling in the course, accepting fees and somehow the student is not listed on the course roster when they attend class.
3. Improve course scheduling as most courses are offered at the same time—during the day. This makes it difficult for students to complete their schedules.
4. Improve document tracking systems as many students report lost documents.
5. Ensure cross-trained personnel are available and trained to assist all students during the registration process as this will prevent students from having to do so much back-and-forth.

Attending Classes: Opportunities for Improvement

1. Registration is too long and as a result, student learning is hindered in the process when students attend classes two and three weeks after class has started. See Table II for a comparison of registration dates for local and regional colleges and universities.

2. Faculty need the authority to deny student access to their class if a student registers late and too much material has been covered for the student to adequately catch up in the class.
3. Faculty need a way to adequately record attendance other than LDA's. The attendance policy needs to be reinforced.

Table II: Late Registration Periods of Louisiana Colleges and Universities		
INSTITUTION	**Regular***	**Late**
AREA SCHOOLS		
Southern University at Shreveport	**1 business day**	14 business days
Bossier Parish Community College	1-3 business days	1-5 business days
Centenary College	2 business days	7 business days
Grambling State University	2 business days	5 business days
Louisiana State University Shreveport	2.5 business days	5 business days
Louisiana Tech University (Quarter system)	1 business day	2 business days
Northwestern Louisiana State University	5-7 business days	8 business days
OTHER TWO - YEAR SCHOOLS		
Delgado Community College	5 business days	2 business days
River Parishes Community College	1-2 business days	5 business days
Southwest Louisiana Technical Community College (SOWELA)	1-2 business days	8 business days
*** Regular excludes early or early online registration.**		
Figures indicate average time based on duration of Spring 2016 registration session.		

General Customer Service: Opportunities for Improvement

1. Answer phone calls and return messages. There are numerous accounts in multiple offices where students do you receive calls back after leaving several messages.
2. Develop a sense of compassion and seek resolve for the issues that students experience.
3. Improve the ways in which we communicate with students, including maximizing the mediums utilized.
4. Increase opportunities for students to be served during lunch periods (11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.). Ensure that adequate and knowledgeable coverage is available.

Outcome III: To identify innovative ways to improve and streamline, where necessary, the overall registration process.

1. Establish internal controls. Put controls in place that ensures all emails, phone calls and other communications are received and addressed in a timely manner, to include follow-up and follow-through.
2. Establish a communication plan. A robust communications plan should be explored that assist students in seamlessly navigating the enrollment process in its entirety. Suggestions were made for an application to be develop whereby once students

enroll, each step of the enrollment process is linked in Banner and a cell phone app. Students would be able to know what their next step is and what needs to be done to move on to the next step in the process.

   A. Also recommended is a simple, but visually appealing front/back brochure or card that has each step of the enrollment process—a checklist. The student would be engaged (i.e., actually read the document) in the product and able to check-off each step in the process. The checklist should be provided to students once interest is expressed or when admitted.

3. <u>Increase awareness of student advisors</u>. Assign student advisors immediately when the student is admitted and when the student major changes so that the student is aware of who their financial aid and academic advisors are.
4. <u>Increase technology usage</u>. It was suggested that a link be placed in Banner that directly takes students to their Skymail account once they click on it.
5. <u>Invest in purposeful professional development</u>. All persons working with the registration/enrollment process should participate in an annual mock session that takes each person through the entire registration process to build awareness and increase knowledge capacity. Within enrollment management departments, personnel should be cross-trained and able to perform the most basic functions at a minimum in order that students may be served without being refereed to multiple individuals for services. This would mitigate student's run-around. Cross-training should also occur interdepartmentally. More Banner access should be provided between departments which may mean that the organizational structure needs to change a bit in order that this may be effective.
6. <u>Increase access to information</u>. Repurpose the front-desk or switchboard center to be an information center where students can be served by cross-trained hyper friendly individuals. Ideally, students and visitors would be able to visit the information desk to get basic information relative to their enrollment: financial aid, admissions status, schedule information, etc. These persons would essentially serve as an enrollment specialist and would serve in a number of capacities.
7. <u>Establish a culture of customer service</u>. Implement policy that clearly dictates SUSLA's way of customer service and implement rewards and accountabilities for such.
8. <u>Increase availability and visibility of student information</u>. Articulate all student transcripts before the student reaches the advising stage and increase advisors ability to see more student information to help them plan and be proactive.
9. <u>Organize operations</u>. During arena registration, ensure that a representative from all departments are present to serve students and visitors. Ensure that all resources (i.e., computers, etc.) and signage (i.e., directional) are available.

Outcome IV: To understand how students and faculty are communicated with about the enrollment and registration processes and identify the most effective methodologies in doing so.

See focus group transcripts located in the appendices section.

OTHER PERTINENT DATA

Fall 2015 "Why I Didn't Enroll?" Survey Report Summary

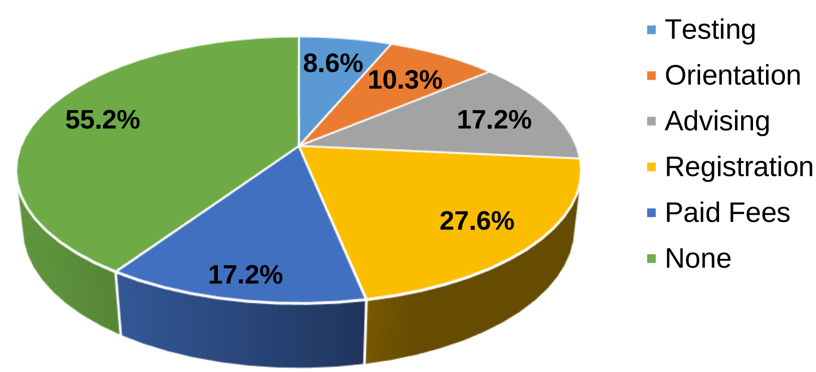
In the fall 2015 semester, the Department of Outcomes Assessment and Quality Management administered a survey to SUSLA applicants who applied to SUSLA, but failed to complete the registration process in its entirety. The "Why I Didn't Enroll at SUSLA?" survey was established to explore the seemingly pervasive ideology that purportedly, an increasing number of students were not enrolling in SUSLA as a result of dissatisfaction with services provided by the institution in enrollment management related areas.

The survey was administered September 14-28, 2015 and the report was disseminated to enrollment management officers on September 28, 2015. The survey was sent to 625 applicants via email—excluding international and College Connect students—that did not enroll. Of the survey solicitations sent, 58 surveys were returned completed, yielding a 9.28 percent response rate. While the results are hardly generalizable to this population, enrollment management personnel are able to glean valuable insights from the data.

Summary of Findings

Overall, nearly half of the respondents to the survey demonstrated genuine interest in attending SUSLA for the fall 2015 semester as indicated by their completion of one or more enrollment processes beyond the admissions application: a) 8.6 percent of the applicants completed the testing process; b) 10.3 percent of the applicants completed the orientation process; c) 17.2 percent of the applicants were advised; d) 27.6 percent registered for courses; and e) 17.2 percent paid their fees which would ordinarily complete the registration process, but somehow indicated that they were not enrolled in courses for the fall semester. Figure III delineates applicant's level of engagement in the enrollment management process.

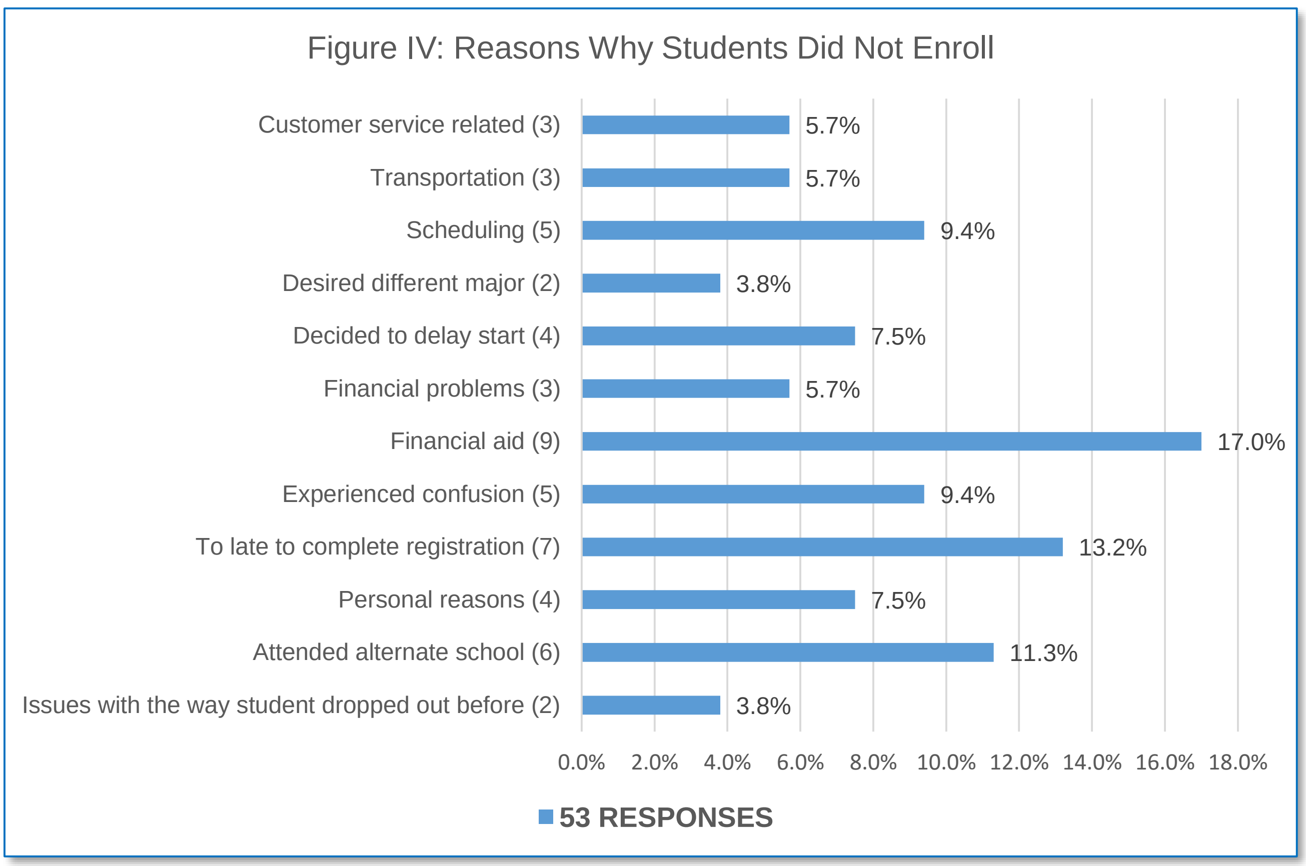
Figure III: Steps Applicants Completed in the Registration Process



When applying to SUSLA and perhaps engaging in enrollment processes, students—on average—rated their experience as "average" or 2.4 with 27.6 percent rating their experience as "excellent" with no improvement needed, 24.1 percent rated their experience as "good" with little to no improvement needed, 24.1 percent as "average" with some improvement needed, and 24.1 percent as "poor" with improvement needed. Roughly half of the participants that applied to SUSLA rated their experience as "somewhat positive" and about half rated their experience as "somewhat negative". Seventy pecent of the participants indicated that they had enough informtion to make a decision about attending SUSLA, 60 percent were contacted at least once about attending SUSLA and 20 percent were contacted twice.

Participants responses varied greatly in their primary reasoning for not attending SUSLA during the fall 2015 semester. Most notably, 17 percent of students identified financial aid as a barrier to enrolling in SUSLA (e.g., too many hours attempted, out of financial aid, lack of assistance provided by staff, appeal denied, etc.). Another 13.2 percent of participants completed some part of the registration process to late to enroll in classes (e.g., lack of assistance by University offices/personnel, waited too late to apply and complete the processes, still needed to test, etc.). Roughly 11 percent of participants desired to attend another school.

Other notable reasons for not enrolling surrounded some level of confusion the participant experienced while trying to enroll at SUSLA (i.e., did not know the correct paperwork to file to receive aid because of unemployment; did not know program was cancelled; did not know financial aid appeal was approved; did not know a financial aid appeal was needed until the last minute and it was too late to file the paperwork, etc.). Figure IV delineates broad themes that categorize reasons why participants did not enroll.



Gleanings, Opportunities for Improvement and Recommendations

While the number of respondents does not reflect the population of students that applied and did not enroll, several opportunities exist for improvement:

- Roughly 50 percent of the respondents described their registration experience as “average” to “poor”. Almost half of applicants that come in contact with SUSLA are dissatisfied at some point in the process. Respondents’ comments offers insight as to why students experience was less that optimal.
  - A number of respondents experienced confusion with the financial aid appeal process. Reasons rendered pertained to unawareness of the process or late notification. **<u>RECOMMENDATION</u>**: Review the financial aid appeal process and ensure that the timelines and deadlines are appropriate and functional for all parties involved. In addition, take a group of students to research the market and determine if students actually understand the appeal process. Map out the notification process to determine what changes need to be made and adapt internal controls to ensure that the process is efficient and works for every student.
  - Respondents reported not getting information back within a reasonable amount of time to address issues and retrieve requested documents. **<u>RECOMMENDATION</u>**: For all areas, calls should be efficiently called back daily to address student issues.
  - Respondents also experienced difficulty germane to course scheduling. **<u>RECOMMENDATION</u>**: Engage in course management planning. Students are stopping out because they are getting accepted into clinicals and are left for a semester or more without courses to take. Ensure courses are planned throughout the day at adequate times so that all courses are not offered at the same time.
  - Some respondents reported stopping out or dropping out the wrong way. **<u>RECOMMENDATION</u>**: Explore options that will help better position the student when a decision is made to stop or drop out. This would assist the student in furthering their education when desired.
- Roughly 25 percent of the respondents engaged in the registration process beyond the application which is an indication that respondents demonstrated some level of interest in enrolling in courses. An opportunity for improvement exists in ensuring that students are completely enrolled once fees are paid. **<u>RECOMMENDATION</u>**: The Enrollment Management Committee should explore reasons why students complete the entire registration process—to include paying fees—and do not enroll. While there could be a number of explanations, one being the student assumed that this step has been completed, nonetheless, this aspect warrants further exploration.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: FACULTY FOCUS GROUP TRANSCRIPT: FEBRUARY 25, 2016

Please note that the focus group transcript has been amended to remove names, potential participant identifiers, and to provide context.

Below are faculty and staff responses to the Registration Processes Focus Group:

Six (6) Participants

What specific registration processes are you or have you been involved in (i.e., admitting a student, advising a student, testing, other—please explain, none, etc.)**?**

- Admitting a student (1)
- Advising a student (4)
- Testing (3)
- Other (2)

How often do you read communications pertaining to the overall registration process via email? (Always, Often, Seldom, Never)

- Always (0)
- Often (3)
- Seldom (1)
- Never (1)

How many years have you participated in the registration process at SUSLA?

- 2
- 12
- 2
- 10
- 4
- 7

Describe some of the challenges that you or students have encountered with the following processes:

Being Admitted to SUSLA

- Be more proactive and make the admissions steps available to students so they know what to bring to the campus when they do come and apply.
- Member stated that Banner indicates what is missing, but that offices need to follow-up with students to ensure where they are in the process.
- Need to develop a detailed checklist or flow chart, but something that is more attractive than we have currently—something that is succinct and engaging. Should specify to the students what is missing.

- Focus group passed around proposed student checklist and the participants said that the checklist was not engaging enough and the students will not read it. They didn't want to read it. It should be more simplistic.
- Checklist for students. Current checklist is too vague and not realistic for students to understand the steps. For example, something as simple as which health unit to get their shot record from—many students do not know this information. More guidance on the checklist on how to get a transcript. More specific details about what students need to actually do--what is accepted and what is not accepted.
- Students do not know where to go or what to do during the admissions process. Persons do not know accurately where to direct the students. This seems to happen at all points in the process for students and faculty alike.
- Credits not articulated in time for advisors to know what courses to put the students in. Don't know what courses transfer as SUSLA courses—for example, College Success Course.
- Some faculty were unaware of what courses articulated from the transcripts. In particular, there were instances where only the courses that pertained to the student's degree plan or major were articulated—no other courses. So, when the student changed their major, other courses that applied to the new major needed to be articulated. This was experienced in Allied Health as well as other divisions. There were also accounts of issues with International transcript articulation.
- Students cannot log-in to their banner account to view or check financial aid status until they have been fully admitted.
- BPCC sent a student's transcript via eScript. However, the student could not be admitted because the eScript had not been pulled down which prevented the student from completing the financial aid process. The student did not know that this would hinder them in this capacity. To expedite the process, the student got a hard copy from BPCC since the Admission's Office did not pull down the eScript and the admission's staff said that they could not accept the hard copy. The student was frustrated from the poor customer service.
- Student's experienced issues with their application not being pulled down by the Admission's Office when trying to register. Students apply online, but when they go to the Admission's Office they are told that they need to pull their application down.
- Students are not able to pay online after the application is submitted. Too convoluted for the student to try to pay over the phone or come on campus.
- Students experience issues when completing the application online. When they come on campus to register, the Admission's Office indicate that they have not "pulled the application down" or informs the student that they are unable to locate the application.
- Students do not know the entire hold process and where the hold comes from.
- Students complain about applying and not getting a response back after applying. Students complain about not hearing back from staff.
- Students feel uninformed about the admission's process and do not know everything that they need to be admitted
- "I paid my admissions fee, but I can't register because there is a hold on my account."—as told to a faculty member. This happened to a student this semester.
- Students experience issues with holds being placed on Admissions' accounts and them not being lifted for the student to proceed in the process.

Testing and Advising

- Freshman advisors need to practice advising students to take other courses to complete their schedule once the courses desired closes.
- There are way too many course overrides. Advisors should be prepared to put students in other freshman courses that are available if one course fills up. There is no need to put all freshman students in the same courses.
- Advise students accurately.
- Need more testing proctors during high volume times.
- Need more frequent testing opportunities to serve and accommodate our students. More convenient testing hours. For example, if a student comes to apply and needs to test, the student should be able to test--Accuplacer specifically--within 30 minutes to an hour of arriving on campus. Multiple testing sites to accommodate more students during registration.
- During registration, have a larger testing space to accommodate more students. Mitigate wait times.
- Improve testing schedule (e.g., make it clearer to understand). Students should be able to go online and schedule for a test as well as pay for it, when warranted.
- Make the process more efficient for students to determine whether or not they need to test. Takes too much time to make this determination and too much back and forth for this simple step.
- There should be a mandatory online orientation session held prior to registration.
- There should be group advising based on major. Too long of a wait for students to come to register and have to go through the slides in the computer lab before enrolling in courses. This seems to be inefficient and ineffective.
- When advising, ensure that the students know which classes are offered on rotation to ensure better planning and fewer low enrollment courses. That is, courses that are not offered every semester.
- There is an issue with students being able to register without seeing a major advisor to approve their schedule. There should be a hold or a flag for the advisor to approve. Students should be able to see their courses, but not complete their schedules.
- For continuing students, students need to know who their advisor is and it needs to be published more prominently along with the office hours of the advisor.
- There is an advising wait during high volume times because there are other freshman advisors, but only the two in the Center for Student Success are being used and/or recognized.
- Need more people advising during the high volume season--registration. Should recruit and train volunteers.
- Non-traditional students end up having to come back to campus to be advised because the wait is too long and they are not able to be serviced when they are available. These students have jobs and other obligations that make our process less friendly.
- Too long of a wait to see advisors.
- Everyone in the College Success Center should probably advise. Two advisors is inadequate.
- Some students come to register and are not aware that they have to test and then they don't want to due to time constraints. Students may not want to or have other things to do.
- Students do not know when they need to or do not need to be tested--emphasis on students that have ACT scores and/or are 25 and older.

Registering for courses, to include REEL

- Why do we have an alphabetical registration process on paper? We should make registration available to students whenever the need arises.
- Course management issues: Should be better pre-planning of courses. For example, there are not an adequate number of the right courses out on the schedule which causes frustrations with completing the course data entry from. Students are equally frustrated.
- Not enough [broad selection] courses out there for students to enroll in.
- Degree audit technology such as DegreeWorks.

Attending classes

- Professors letting students know when they are not going to be present in class.
- Students showing up just for LDA's and not returning. Not an accurate representation of attendance.
- Faculty need to be empowered to change the culture.
- Faculty do not have the purview to administratively withdraw students from the course or reject students who register late.
- Communicate the attendance issues differently to students so that they understand the consequences.
- Make the student responsible for attending class.
- Need to enforce the attendance policy.
- At what point do we end registration to help students be successful? **Had a student just register for a class almost a month after classes started.**
- LDA's: Need automated attendance systems. Students should be able to swipe the ID cards or utilize some other technology to take attendance.

Customer Service

- Have people to serve as marshals or ambassadors to walk around with tablets to assist students. On the tablet, they would be able to look up a student's status and provide them with the information that they need.
- Recognize that every student is different. For example, summer only students or students that are not on financial aid have a different process than regular students.
- Link Moodle to all courses and student communication to increase student engagement. Students would be more aware of what is going on and could easily communicate with their instructors.
- Need signage to know where offices are specifically in the building.
- Every faculty member needs to have their schedule on their door as students are frequently looking for them.
- Ensure that offices are covered during lunch hour.
- Respond to all emails.
- Answer the phone.
- No staff cross training

- Students experience issues when coming on campus to see XYZ; however, XZY went to lunch and did not tell the person that was left in the office that she was coming so the person in the office cannot fully serve the student and have the student to make a blank trip.
- Some non-traditional students come to campus during lunch, however, every office does not have coverage or someone in the office to serve the student (someone that is knowledgeable).

In what ways would you streamline/improve the registration process?

- When a student is admitted, they should be immediately assigned and know who their financial aid and academic advisors are. When a student major changes, they should automatically be assigned an advisor. It should be readily visible to students at all times.
- Give students a brochure in-hand when they are admitted as a checklist to facilitate the admissions/registration process. The checklist/brochure should be as specific as possible and have a few words to communicate what the student need. Also, allow faculty and students to view what you have come up with to see if it communicates what is desired.
- Provide consistent follow-up communication to applicants that indicate what they are still missing.
- Should develop an APP (phone/tablet application) that students can follow in the admission's process and know what their next step is.
- Other schools provide mailers. Should develop some pamphlets that includes tips and strategies for successfully enrolling in SUSLA.
- From a marketing perspective: say" apply now" rather than "register now" because it gives false information to students.
- It would be helpful if transcripts were pre-articulated before students reach the advisement stage.
- Eliminate manual processes and do them online.
- Improve processes for the future.
- Ensure that Banner is utilized to its capacity.
- More proactive in advising. Communication from department to department and work together to admit the students.
- Cross-train between offices.
- Need an enrollment management specialist. Persons who can do everything and knowledgeable about all aspects of the process.
- Provide quick feedback to students.
- 24 hour turn around...
- System that ensures that all students are contacted within 24 hours.
- People being as interested in students as Jeremy is,...
- Customer service is more than your job description....
- we need to treat each other well on the INSIDE...
- Intake, educate, and graduate....mission driven....
- We need to realize change....
- Adhere to policy
- Need to focus on service and then the human capital will come
- Service gives birth to capital

- People who are answering the phone need to go to an office (perhaps the mailroom) and the front needs to be an information center.
- Utilize the information monitors more efficiently.

END OF TRANSCRIPT

APPENDIX B: STUDENT FOCUS GROUP TRANSCRIPT: MARCH 2, 2016

Please note that the focus group transcript has been amended to remove names, potential participant identifiers, and to provide context.

Below are student responses to the Registration Processes Focus Group:

Seven (7) Participants

How often do you use (log-in to) your SkyMail account?

- Never (4)
- Seldom (3)

What are some reasons why you do not use your SkyMail account? Do you read the information that comes to your email about registration, advising, or financial aid? Did you understand that information?

- The student did not know that they had a SkyMail account because the student just started the Aerospace program--January 2016.
- Student uses their SkyMail account to know when they are getting their refund check because they are an off-campus student.
- The student has never logged into their SkyMail account and felt like they never had a reason to use it. Indicated that it was discussed in the class and heavily encouraged by the instructor, but never had the desire to actually log-in. Student has been enrolled at SUSLA about three or four semesters.
- Student reported that it is easier to use their personal email rather than SkyMail because of the numerous issues experienced. Student needed password to be reset multiple times--about four specifically. Sometimes needing reset after only *not* logging in for one month. On one occasion, the URL changed and it no longer worked on the student's phone (the link).
- When the student first set-up their SkyMail account, the student checked their email daily, but after some time of using it, their password needed to be reset. When that happened and it became too difficult to reset the password, the student stopped trying to log-in to their email. It's inconvenient for the student to have to come to campus just to reset their password.
- The student didn't see value in checking their SkyMail account. In addition, specifically commented that they did not was to see the frequent emails about the lunch menu--mostly because they are an off-campus student.
- The student did attempt to use their SkyMail account, but had many problems with logging into the email. Each time, the student would have to go to IT to get the password reset (when on-campus). The student reported leaving the IT office and then not being able to log-on. Several students (about four) reported this experience.
- Student reported that the SkyMail password would need to be reset after a short period of time. In one instance, after having the password reset on Friday and logging in to the account, the password would need to be reset again on that Monday. Even reported going to the computer lab to log-in to their SkyMail account once after the password had been reset and not being able to log-in to their email account. Even reported the password needing to be reset after one month of not logging into the account. These frustrations caused the student to almost never use their SkyMail account.

What is the most effective way that the University can communicate with you (get you important information)? Participants were able to provide multiple responses.

- Via cell phone (4)
- Via personal email (2)
- Via faculty members or friends (2)

How many semesters have you participated in the registration process at SUSLA?

- 1 (1)
- 2 (0)
- 3 (1)
- 4 (3)
- 5 (2)

Was the process easy when you registered?

- Very easy (1)
- Easy (2)
- Difficult (3)
- Very Difficult (2)

Did you happen to register after the first day of class? If so, why?

- Yes (3)
- No (4)

- The student knew about the class they were wanting to take, but did not know how to register. The student also did not know that registration was going on and therefore had registered late.
- The student registered late due to problems with initial admission's process.
- The student registered late because they experienced problems with academic suspension. The student admits that the academic suspension was warranted. However, the student completed the appeal letter in May for the fall semester and did not know that the appeal was approved. When the student followed-up after several months, staff indicated the appeal letter had not been read. When the student followed up again, the appeal had been approved, but the student did not know it. There was no communication. Since the Aerospace courses are structured differently and the Federal Aviation Administration determines how much class a student can miss, the student timed-out of the first fall class and failed due to lack of attendance. Had the student been notified of the approval in a timely manner, the student could have went to class on-time, but had to register late.
- The student registered late because after receiving the GED, the student was encouraged to enroll in classes and therefore, started late. Said started after classes had already started.
- In March 2015, the student was putting in classes for the summer semester, as it got closer to the beginning of summer, the student's registration was not completed and there was a price change in fees. Before the student could accept fees before classes started, the system required that the student complete a Master Promissory Note when the student was receiving grant funds and the tuition was covered--there was no money owed. The student reported that the only way to complete the registration process was

to accept their fees and complete the Master Promissory Note. The student contacted Financial Aid and was told that they needed to complete it anyway. To register, the student just waited until the system would let them accept their fees without completing the Master Promissory Note. This scenario—with the MPN—was reported by two students. This was the reason for their registering for courses after classes started.

- The student registered for summer classes early in May and had two week break before summer classes started. When the student came back, their financial aid was posted to their account and the student received their refund, but their refund was missing $100.00 due to the late registration fee being assessed. The student talked with someone in financial aid and the staff member was very irate with the student. The financial aid representative told the student that it was their fault the registration fee was assessed because they should have made sure everything was done correctly before they left for the two week break. The student admittedly did not accept their fees before leaving for the break and knew they were supposed to. The student did accept fees before the purge date, but was not aware that the fee would be assessed if they did not accept fees before the late registration date.

Describe some of the challenges that you or students have encountered with the following processes:

Being Admitted to SUSLA

- The student expressed that the experience here had not been like other institutions that the student attended. Frustration was experienced when the student could not enroll without an official transcript. Indicated that other schools allowed students to enroll and attend classes.
- Student reported that the admission's process took too long.
- The student's reported that the registration process is prolonged by data being input incorrectly.
- Student couldn't register because the staff told the student that their transcript had not been received, but the transcript--per the other school--had already been received. The student reported that they could not get a call back so they came up to the school to get the issue resolved, but the student did not know that the school closed on Friday at noon. The Director of Admissions happened to be still in the office and helped student. The staff found the transcript that was reported not to be received.
- The student reported that Admissions was telling them about what classes they needed, but were misinformed about the program and this caused the student to completely redo the schedule. Recorder triple confirmed that the student was accurately referring to the Admissions Office.

Testing and Advising

- Student reported that they were given one schedule for Aerospace in the Admission's Office, and then changed everything when came to faculty advisor.
- Student felt like Center for Student Success advisors were informed.
- Student reported that registration day was easy for the first-time student. His faculty advisor made it easy.

Registering for courses--including REEL (early registration)

- The student reported attending what the recorder has identified as a non-accredited institution. Before admitting the student, staff in the Registrar's Office wanted to check to see that the student owed no money to the institution, before being admitted. The student also attended another accredited institution and provided transcripts to the Registrar's Office. The transcripts were reportedly lost in the Registrar's Office.
- The student went to register for classes, but could not complete the process because the account indicated that transcripts were needed. The student went to the Registrar's Office and the staff said that the student still needed the transcript, but the student reported that the transcript had been submitted already. When the staff member went to go look for it, the transcript was in a pile in the back of the office that no one had entered yet. The student was frustrated because this added unnecessary time to the registration process.
- The student reported that the Registrar's Office staff member was accusatory to the student in speech by questioning the validity of the school that the student attended. The student stated that the staff member was acting like a "jerk". The staff member went to Google the school to confirm that the student was telling the truth. The student felt like the staff member was calling the student a liar.
- The students feel that their transcripts are often lost, filed incorrectly, or not articulated in a timely manner.
- After registering for a math class and showing up to class, the student was told that they were not on the roster for the class. The student called the Registrar's Office on a Monday and left a voice mail and did not get a call back that day. The student then proceeded to call Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and never got a call back. The student reported that this occurred this semester. The student left two separate voice mails and never received a call back.
- Students report that registering online is easy and putting the classes in is easy, but financial aid is a hold up
- The registration step-by-step process was easy.
- Student did not know they were actually on academic suspension until it was time to register.
- Student was placed on academic suspension, but was not really supposed to be on it. The student had all A's and B's. Had to go through extra stuff to get that off of their account to register. Staff said that the student needed to re-appeal, but the student never appealed and should have not been on academic suspension.

Financial Aid

- The student was told by the Financial Aid Office that they would have to come back the next day to resolve their issue because the staff could not fix the issue on that day which equated to finding lost paperwork. The student came back the next day and the staff member said the EXACT same thing. Then, the student came back the third day and the staff member found the paper on their desk in a pile after a few minutes of shuffling files.
- Other students reported being told to come back the next day when it was not anything that the staff member could not do that day, like find a paper.
- Student could not see financial aid money attached to record in Banner; therefore, could not accept fees.

- Had to pay $300 to $400 out of Financial Aid and did not know or understand what happened or why. Still never got a clear answer as to why this happened.
- Students give up after not getting responses from Financial Aid.
- The student did not know about the Jaguar Card until a peer told him about what it was and how it works.
- Student reported that they got the Jaguar Card in the mail and did not know what it was. Couldn't call because no one answered the phone.
- Financial told the student to go to Cashier's Office to pay a balance and that the Cashier's Office would accept their fees for them. The student experienced frustration because they needed to go back to campus four days later because the hold had not been cleared and showed the student still with a balance. The Cashier admitted the mistake and helped the student. The student reported that this happened twice in two different semesters and has only been here for three.

Customer Service Related Issues

- When the student first started, they did not have books in the bookstore or didn't have enough books.
- Student reports frequently calling the main campus and no one answering the phone. Several students reported that the staff say that they are busy, but when they actually come to campus to take care of issues, staff are not busy and allowing the phone to just ring in the office. They staff will be playing with their cell phones.
- The student was moving the Shreveport and wanted to attend the Aerospace program. In preparation, the student called from November *to* January to try to get information on the program and get some questions answered and not a single call back--the student left several voicemails, but did not indicate which office was called. The student finally physically came up to the campus in January to get the information.
- The student reported that it seems like the staff in offices cannot answer phone calls. Especially during high volume times like registration. Student reported this a being frustrating because it takes so much time for the student to have to come to campus and miss class to actually follow-up rather than being able to follow-up by phone.
- Student reported that they have had to have multiple people calling for them to try to get someone to answer the phone to because their schedule does not allow them to easily come to campus to get information to resolve issues. The student reported coming to campus and being frustrated because the staff are "not even busy, not doing anything and no one in the office". Student did not understand why it is so difficult to get staff to answer the phone.
- The student reported that when staff tell you to go to another office to get something taken care of, they should pick up the phone to call the office to tell them that you are on the way. The student reported that it took all day long to get an answer. Started on the 4th of Jan and actually got the issues resolved on purge day.
- Students reported that overall, the service in-person is pretty good once you get in the face of people. Reported that the faculty are good and nice. But, when you have called a lot, the staff seem to have an attitude with you.
- The staff seem to not know a lot about the Aerospace program (repetitive)
- Student felt like the Registrar's Office was helpful but not the admissions or financial aid offices.
- Student reported success in staff responding to emails

- Students report never being told about how anything works. Did not have any orientation process.
- Students find out the information that they do know from other students.
- Faculty are helpful
- Poor communication about process
- Out of the seven students present in the focus group, only one student received a phone call back ever.

In what ways would you streamline or improve the registration process?

- Student feel like campus reps should come to the Aerospace campus during the registration process.
- Student say that there should be a link to SkyMail from the Banner page
- Answer the phone
- Students would like to know when a process or something is actually complete
- Staff should be more informed about how the Aerospace program works.
- Answer the phone, again
- Students report that follow-up and follow-through are areas for major improvement

END OF TRANSCRIPT

APPENDIX C: FACULTY & STAFF FOCUS GROUP TRANSCRIPT: MARCH 3, 2016

Please note that the focus group transcript has been amended to remove names, potential participant identifiers, and to provide context.

Below are faculty and staff responses to the Registration Processes Focus Group:

Four (4) Participants

What specific registration processes are you or have you been involved in (i.e., admitting a student, advising a student, testing, other—please explain, none, etc.)**?**

- Advising a student (3)
- Other (2)

How often do you read communications pertaining to the overall registration process via email? (Always, Often, Seldom, Never)

- Always (1)
- Often (3)

Often, but the information concerning registration is not always clear.

How many years have you participated in the registration process at SUSLA?

- 19
- 2
- 10+

Describe some of the challenges that you or students have encountered with the following processes:

Being Admitted to SUSLA

- The student needs to know the amount of time that it takes to process the application—this is especially important when the student comes in and applies for admission at the last minute.
- Many students don't realize that they actually need to be admitted to the college. There needs to be some type of check-off for the student that takes them all the way through the process.
- It took a student recently almost two months to be admitted. The student was an out-of-state student. We need some type of conditional admission status to help students get enrolled.
- There was a student that a faculty member personally knew who applied, paid their application fee, and called to follow-up on their next steps. The student never heard back from anyone after persistently calling back for four months. The student never enrolled.

- A faculty member knew of a student that was interested in attending SUSLA and wanted to go to a local school—family of five (i.e., three children, two mothers). The students attended a college fair and filled out a response card and never received a call back. Had a very pleasant experience at the fair with SUSLA's representative. Since the student never heard back from SUSLA after calling too, the student pursued Louisiana Tech. The student was called back in 20 minutes from LA Tech. The student is attending Tech this fall following graduation.
- Need to provide students some level of feedback of their status.
- It took one student a month to get admitted. The student was sitting in class since the first day.
- Be kind to the students. Expect them to be happy to see you.
- Students that transferring from SUBR should be a seamless process, but it is not. The lady seemed like she didn't want to accept the credits.
- Callers cannot reach intended parties. Getting someone on the phone is hard. The Departments have voicemail accounts that are separate from individual employee accounts, but no one seems to check them. Calls are not returned in a timely manner.
- There are no voicemail instructions to guide callers in contacting personnel during the registration process.
- International students are not being properly served. There seem to be too few counselors.
- Multiple faculty complain about the discriminatory practices toward international students.

Testing and Advising

- Certificate program students experience issues with getting registered for courses when they are first admitted. Banner requires the cod or pin for students with less that 30 credit hours. This is also an issue for students that enroll in these programs and they have too many credit hours. It presents too much back and forth for the students.
- Faculty advisors are hindered by not being able to see a student's transcript if the student has not declared a major. Program directors should be able to see all students transcript, regardless of major to assist the student in decision-making and to adequately advise students.
- Program advisors should be able to see student's accounts in their entirety so that they can assist the student an answer questions when advising the student.
- More faculty should go through the process to be a certified advisor.
- Intrusive advising is not happening. We are only doing course entry/scheduling versus getting to know the students. Advisors need time to spend with the student. Understand the student's background and to know the student in general.
- We need to go back to the model of using more people to advise and spending more time with the student.
- We need to better understand our entire population of students.
- We need to better be able to direct students in terms of who need to see freshman advisors and who do not. Some students do not need to go to the Center for Success to be advised—certificate students, students with too many hours. It is frustrating for them to go back-and-forth.

- One student took a semester off from a certificate program, when that student returned, they were trying to force that student in some general education courses that the student did not want to take.
- Some advisors overly insist that students do something that they do not want to do because the student ran out of financial aid. The student went back-and-forth with the Center for Student Success. Don't think you always know what is best. This student had a plan.
- Students are often unaware of classroom changes pertaining to their schedule.
- When the testing location changes, and all adequate persons are not informed, staff and faculty do not know where to direct students. The student come back informing staff that testing was not in that location and then wanting to know where to go. This adds to the frustration of a student.

Registration

- When a student is needing to appeal, the student should be told everything that that they need to do. Some students experience confusion when the letter of justification (degree plan) is needed and they are trying to get in school and go to many different offices at the last minute trying to get what is needed. The student should be explicitly told on the front end what is needed.
- During arena registration, the institution should make better use of its resources. Faculty are not doing a lot in the gym. Some faculty should be redirected to a dedicated advising location to work with the Center for Success in advising students.
- Faculty should be cross-trained to advise students during peak times.
- Late registration is too long. After 14 days, it is too long when the student was not sitting in class the entire time.
- Need to have computers back in the gym with someone manning the stations.
- Student records should be more protected as during registration, a faculty member observed that these records were all over the desk with student's sensitive information on documents.
- During arena registration, the students don't know who to go see. Make this type of information more prominent.
- Need more visual aids or information that assists students in knowing where to go. Use the SGA in assisting students. Train and certify the students as assistants.
- Consider having a color coded process during registration so that departments or people can easily be pointed out. Each department can be represented by a different color.
- Need more teamwork.
- Everyone should be trained annually to assist with various aspects of registration and anything that is new or need to be repeated—especially the program directors. This training should occur in early in the spring/summer semesters.
- Registration has improved greatly under Dr. Rogers. Students are able to get in classes and the process is trusted. There is a quick response and quick decision-making.
- All persons need a schematic a day or two before registration to properly direct students in the correct place. Some may send students to an office when no one is in that office and then we are unaware of that office's location.

- Everyone needs to know the steps for freshman registration.

Financial Aid

- When a student has reached 90 semester credit hours, the process should be simpler for the student to enroll in school. Currently, the process is too complicated.
- When a student's appeal is denied, many students do not understand why. The denial letter should be clearer as to why a student was denied.
- Someone in Financial Aid should always answer the phone. Students can rarely get someone to answer the phone. When students call, they should know how long they have to wait before getting an answer. We are busy, but we are also a business.

General Customer Service Related Issues

- Answer the phones.
- Ensure that people have friendly faces. We are salesmen too. We should welcome people the same way that sales people do.
- Complaints have been lodged about classes without assigned teachers. Students cannot reach adjuncts.
- Phones are the first point of contact. Respond to phone calls and emails in a timely manner.

Ideas for Improvement

- All program directors and faculty who serve as advisors should attend a mock enrollment process this summer to ensure that everyone know what is going on.
- Response time matters. The institution needs to be timelier. Students can go somewhere else.
- Staff and faculty should demonstrate a concern and interest in the students.
- When we register students, we should have maps available in every building to assist the student in knowing where they are and where they are going. It should also tell the student what office is in that building.
- Persons who work the phone system department should also be trained related to registration so that they can better assist our customers.
- During arena registration, there should be a phone connected in the gym with a manned space.
- Assist front-line staff in knowing where to direct students.

END OF TRANSCRIPT

APPENDIX D: STUDENT FOCUS GROUP TRANSCRIPT: MARCH 8, 2016

Please note that the focus group transcript has been amended to remove names, potential participant identifiers, and to provide context.

Below are student responses to the Registration Processes Focus Group:

Three (3) Participants

How often do you use (log-in to) your SkyMail account?
- Always (1)
- Seldom (1)

What are some reasons why you do not use your SkyMail account? Do you read the information that comes to your email about registration, advising, or financial aid? Did you understand that information?
- Faculty made it mandatory, but never really use it.
- Depends on the SUSLA website to read information.
- Did not use it at first, but started seeing the different information.

What is the most effective way that the University can communicate with you (get you important information)? Participants were able to provide multiple responses.
- Via cell phone (2)

How many semesters have you participated in the registration process at SUSLA?
- 3 (1)
- 4 (1)

Was the process easy when you registered?
- Difficult (1)
- Very Difficult (1)

Did you happen to register after the first day of class? If so, why?
- Yes (1)
- No (1)

Registered during the pre-registration period, but had the paper work in the Registrar's Office but was still not in the class. Had to go to the office to get registered

Describe some of the challenges that you or students have encountered with the following processes:

Being Admitted to SUSLA
- Admissions was congested and hot. A faculty member came out of the office and was frustrated and yelling at the students saying that “you need to come in or out”. When questions were asked, with a raised voice saying, “no I will be with you a second”.
- While outside of the Admission’s Office, student’s observed staff interactions with the Iranian students that appeared to be racist. Specifically, the staff member in

Admissions made the Iranians wait, even when the student said that they were there first—ahead of the student. The staff person in turn said that "they could wait because it will take too long".

- Student had to go to admissions three times in one day. Student reported that they had to get something removed so that they could accept their fees. Went back to the gym and the gym sent the student back and said that they was not registered. A different staff person went in system and removed hold. Then, the student was told to put their classes in. The student had to go back to the administration building because they could not put one of the classes in. The student was on campus from 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. The student found out that they needed an override when they went to the computer lab to accept fees and then could not. Had to go back to the administration building again.
- People were sitting on the floor in the hallway. The Admission's staff should have come out said the name of the student next in line to be served.
- Student experienced a little back and forth when first admitted.

Testing and Advising

- Student reported their experience with testing and advising as good.
- Student reported that testing was smooth.
- The advising experience was good. Would give them an A-plus.
- Reported that the advisor in their major program has clear communication and is motivating.
- Student reported that their program advisor is helpful.

Registering for courses--including REEL (early registration)

- Student reported that there needed to be some computers in the gym so that students can easily complete their course schedule.
- Student reported that there were classes available on the website (Banner), but not available when you got to the gym to finalize the course schedule.
- Student reported that they were able to register online and pick classes easily. However, when you come up here (campus) on registration day, somehow you end up having to pick your classes all over again.
- Student reported frustration because you are sometimes not able to find the person that you need to sign-off on the class that you are trying to take.
- Students have experienced not being enrolled in a course even though the student has the paperwork that say they are enrolled in the course.
- Registering online for courses is easy, it is just when the classes are not available on registration day that makes the process difficult.
- One student reported that when they pre-registered with their faculty advisor, they did not have that problem.
- One student registered for a math class and was enrolled. Then, the instructor informed the student that the class was dropped. Then the class was added back again. As of this week, March 8, there are now four people enrolled in the class because the instructors could not place the students in other courses—it was so late after registration had already ended. Student was questioning how they were going to take

a mid-term the following week without ever having attending class. The student basically missed the first half of the semester when the course was reinstated.

- Student reported that registration is difficult on the day of due to all of the back and forth.
- On student experienced not being able to take a class at first registration because the student was listed in the wrong major. The student had to go back to get their major changed and the go back and get the needed class added to their schedule.
- Student reported difficulty in registering because there were not a lot of options for the classes that was needed for graduation. Like face-to-face.
- The students reported needing more class options. Indicated that there is no other day or time to take classes and make your schedule difficult. Seems like all of the classes are offered at the same time.
- The students reported that they need more flexibility in the morning class schedule.
- Many students do not pay for the parking decal because they are waiting on their financial aid refund check to pay for the parking decal.
- The student noted significant improvement in the arena registration since their first registration process.
- The student reported that they liked everyone being in the gym together. It prevented too much walking back and forth.
- SUSLA seems like it is so unorganized when you register.
- The student reported that students are somewhat prejudiced when it comes to attending SUSLA. It is a perception problem. For example, students might have one bad experience here at SUSLA and as a result, inflate the issue to make it seem like it is worse or bigger than what it actually is.
- Faculty shouldn’t socialize in the gym while registration is going on. It makes other students wait too long while they are not really helping the other students. One student reported having this experience.
- The student was told that they have to wait 24 hours to get their student ID because something was not completed by admissions. The student was told to come back. The student paid $20 that day for the application fee. The cashier at the time was somewhat rude and told the student, “I hope you don't need no receipt”.
- The student reported that they did not mind walking to the building across the street to complete their schedule, but not three or four times.
- The student reporting at one point having to go to two different persons before getting the right answer. The student felt like the office worker did not fully understand the problem and gave information based on their assumption of the problem. The student asked questions, but the office worker just did not respond.
- Books are too expensive.
- Business stats books are not available in the bookstore.
- Need to help students understand more how to use the access code with the books.
- Paid $425 for a book and the instructor did not use the book.
- Concerned about the price of book buy back.
- Students reported that they love their instructors.
- Instructors very good at what they do and they care.
- Student stated that during registration there is a paper list with all of the classes listed under the different areas--reminiscent of a library system. One student liked that process and one student indicated that it was too much back and forth with the list—trying to put a class in the schedule from the list and then finding out the class closed

that fast and then going back to the list to find another course—too archaic. While the process is improved, we still need to improve more.
- Student stated that the paper list with the list of available courses during registration did not coincide with what was available online which made it frustrating and confusing.

Financial Aid
- Student reported that they went to financial aid but said they were closed—financial aid should not be closed.
- Financial aid has improved 100% from 2012 to 2016--they are friendlier and more knowledgeable.
- Financial aid office seemed to be more professional this year than other years.

Other General Comments
- Students reported that they like the student activities and that students are better about participating.
- Students felt like the level of student engagement is good, namely mentioning going down to Baton Rouge for the rally. Students spoke very positively about this initiative.
- The students appreciated involving them in the chancellor selection process.
- SUSLA should do better about predicting problems and identifying solutions to those problems
- Both students said that they love Southern and happy that they are here.
- Said daughter transferred to BPCC because she was upset with Southern and now she is back here stating that BPCC was worse than Southern. Namely, BPCC locked her daughter out of the classroom when the student was late attending class.

In what ways would you streamline or improve the registration process?
- Number one aspect of the entire enrollment management process is to improve the organization of everything.
- Parking--build parking fee into tuition and fees so that students can automatically get their parking decal. Although many students do not have cars, the student felt like the University should charge anyway because they also don't do band or newspaper, but the still pay a student fee for it—so why not.
- Little more organized... Don't know which way to go. Sometimes there are no signs.
- Need computers in the gym. Need functional computers that's hooked up to all of the proper systems.
- Clear communication between faculty and students and faculty and staff.

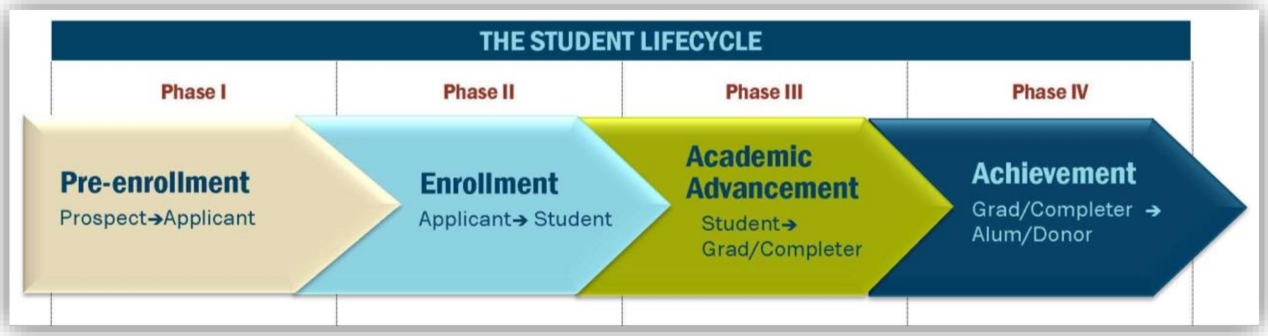
END OF TRANSCRIPT

APPENDIX E: ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES AND/OR RESOURCES

Overall Enrollment Management and Beyond –The Student Life Cycle

Use the Achieving the Dream Website (resources) for many examples of student interventions that have worked at other community colleges.

http://achievingthedream.org/resources/achieving-the-dream-interventions-showcase



Getting the Right Students: Drexel's Student Lifecycle Management Transformation
By: Matt Erickson

January 27, 2014

It's a funny thing about numbers: Depending on how you look at them, they can tell different stories. And they can all be true.

Take, for example, the enrollment numbers that officials from Huron Consulting Group presented to Drexel's senior leadership earlier this year.

For years, Drexel's enrollment strategy was all about volume. For a university with grand ambitions, growth was paramount. That meant recruiting and enrolling as many students in each freshman class as possible. And that strategy had worked: More applications were rolling in, and more students were coming through the doors, than ever before.

But viewed through another lens, the numbers told another story, as well. Though the volume strategy had worked, things might look different in a few years unless Drexel made a shift.

As of 2013, only 9 percent of the undergraduate students admitted to Drexel wound up actually enrolling. Since 2008, Drexel had more than doubled the number of applications it had received — but for every 35 additional applications generated, only one new student came to campus. And once those students did enroll, only 68 percent of them graduated within six years.

Add it all up, and the University was on the road to enrollment troubles, even if the books looked fine for now. Too much time and money was being spent recruiting students who would never sit in a Drexel classroom. And of those students who did come to campus after thousands of dollars were invested to get them there, too many were leaving before they graduated.

"It was glaring how different Drexel was from some of its peers" when it came to such metrics, said Rose Martinelli, a manager for Huron Education who helped present that information to the University's leaders. Throw in the fact that forecasts projected the number of high-school graduates in the Mid-Atlantic to shrink over the next decade, and it was clear that the volume-based strategy might no longer be the best one.

That meeting was an "aha moment." Martinelli said. It became clear that for Drexel to thrive into the future, it would need to transform how undergraduates come into, and move through, the University.

About a year later, University leaders and consultants from Huron are deep into an effort to do just that. Known as "Student Lifecycle Management" (SLM), this initiative now involves 10 different committees of faculty and professional staff working to instill a new approach focused on building relationships with students that start years before they come to Drexel and continue through and after graduation.

"Look at the student experience through the eyes of the student and not the eyes of the administrator: That is the fundamental change here," Martinelli said.

The Numbers

This story started when, back in late 2012, Drexel hired Huron consultants to examine how efficiently the University was operating. What they found were several indicators suggesting that Drexel's finances and reputation could be in trouble as the years passed without some changes.

Graduation rates were too low, admission rates were too high and yield rates — the percentage of admitted students who enroll — were downright tiny.

Drexel was spending a lot, more than $12 million per year, to attract applications for prospective undergraduates. And it was getting applications in impressive numbers, more than doubling its number of applicants from fewer than 21,500 in 2008 to more than 43,000 in 2013. And that contributed to larger freshman classes: In 2013, nearly 3,100 students enrolled as first-time freshmen, an increase of more than 600 from five years before.

But this "volume-based" approach to enrollment, Martinelli said, was resulting in diminishing returns. Each year Drexel needed to attract more and more applicants to grow its enrollment, and by 2013 its yield was less than 10 percent, down from 17 percent in 2008.

Drexel's recruitment was focused on filling the mouth of an enrollment funnel with more and more applications each year, hoping at least some of those applications would turn into new students and, in turn, graduates. But it was a pattern that couldn't be sustained.

“You can’t keep finding 35 new applications for every new student year after year after year,” said Pete Fritz, another manager for Huron Education.

That’s why a key plank of the Student Lifecycle Management effort is to shift from attracting as many applicants as possible to attracting the right applicants. But the right applicant for one Drexel college might not be the same as the right applicant for another.

Having a Voice
As dean of Drexel’s College of Arts and Sciences, Donna Murasko oversees departments ranging from English and Philosophy to Biology. And if there was one common complaint from her faculty about the way their students arrived at Drexel, Murasko said, it was that those students were all admitted by the same criteria, whether they were going to be studying mathematics or history.

“Faculty always had some concerns that the students who were coming to Drexel weren’t the ones who were really best for their particular program,” Murasko said. “They had an impression that we were admitting a generic student.”

And it was true that every Drexel applicant, in general, was judged on the same criteria — largely GPA and SAT scores — regardless of what his or her major would be, or even which college or school he or she would enter. Thanks to Student Lifecycle Management, though, that is no longer the case.

The Division of Enrollment Management — for which Martinelli currently serves as interim leader — now invites Drexel’s colleges and schools to participate in a more holistic admissions process, admitting students based on their own research into what leads to success in their particular discipline. Except in the Westphal College of Media Arts & Design, where students submitted portfolios as part of the admissions process, that was not happening before.

As her college has taken part in that process for the first time this year, Murasko said, her faculty have gotten a bit of a spring in their step.

“Knowing that you have a voice just gives you a reason to be much more invested throughout,” Murasko said.

The new “best-fit” approach will also affect the way Drexel recruits. To really evaluate whether students fit at Drexel, Martinelli said, will require a “relational approach” rather than a “transactional approach” to recruitment. That means reaching out to students from when they first start thinking about college, perhaps as early as seventh or eighth grade, and sending a clear message about what Drexel can offer — namely, experiential learning and the valuable co-op program.

“It’s a much longer recruitment cycle where we actually try to create a relationship with a student early on,” Martinelli said.

That’s hard to do when the aim is to draw as many applications as possible, though, so it may mean that the total number of applicants falls back below 40,000, rather than continuing its rapid rise. But that smaller number of applicants should have a greater interest in the University, allowing for freshman class sizes to remain stable. The new approach also means sometimes looking beyond the numbers when it comes to admissions.

For example, one special case this year drew the attention of Enrollment Management leadership, Martinelli said. This applicant might not have been admitted if the decision were based solely on grades or test scores. But he had a background that indicated those numbers didn't tell the whole story: His mother was undergoing cancer treatment while he was in high school, forcing a temporary transfer elsewhere in the country.

"You go, 'My gosh, this is a great kid who's doing fairly well in a challenging circumstance,'" Martinelli said.

And now he'll have the opportunity to do well at Drexel, if he chooses to come: He was admitted in December.

Meeting Needs

Of course, Drexel's future does not just depend on getting students in the door. There's also the matter of ensuring they succeed.

One of the troubling metrics cited by the consultants was Drexel's six-year graduation rate, which sits at 68 percent. President John Fry has said that number should rise to at least 80 percent.

Many students who don't remain at Drexel through graduation, Huron found, have a mixture of academic and financial issues. That, Martinelli explained, can be partly attributed to the way Drexel has awarded financial aid.

Drexel's aid has generally correlated more with students' academic ability than their financial need. That means that less well-prepared students tended to be the ones getting less aid and taking out large amounts of loans. And when those problems eventually pile up, those students would sometimes end up leaving Drexel with no degree and a pile of debt.

"It's hard for them to go anyplace else after that point," Martinelli said. Drexel, meanwhile, would be left with an empty spot in that student's class, missing out on future tuition revenue. "Once you lose those students, you can never recoup those same dollars," she added.

That's why Drexel's new aid philosophy will shift to focus more aid on meeting students' need, aiming for all students who enroll to be financially equipped to succeed at the University. The plan is to provide students with grants totaling a certain percentage of their need — possibly 40 percent to begin, with increasing percentages in the future boosted by fundraising — after family contributions, government aid and other factors are included. Merit aid will also continue, in an attempt to attract top students.

The new aid philosophy could also help attract a student body that's easier to teach. The past practice has been to award a good deal of aid to strong students who apply early, then award other aid to students who were initially placed on a waitlist in an attempt to shore up enrollment numbers. This has resulted in a “bimodal” distribution of students, Martinelli said: One group that’s well-prepared for Drexel’s rigor, and one that’s less prepared.

“You’re almost, in a way, trying to teach two different classes at the same time,” Fritz said.

The new strategy should change the distribution so that more students are in the middle of the academic spectrum, allowing for more effective teaching.

In addition, a new advising infrastructure will aim to help students succeed after they’ve enrolled and figured out finances, said Adam Fontecchio, associate dean for academic affairs in the College of Engineering. Just as the new one-stop student service shop Drexel Central has helped eliminate service barriers, new advising technology will help different University offices to record and share information about students to provide more coordinated help.

And now that colleges and schools are taking part in the admissions process, they can study what characteristics in incoming students tend to lead to success in different programs — and anticipate which students might need additional support.

A Continued Rise

All these changes won’t go into place at once; they’ll take some three to five years to implement. But added together, Martinelli said, she believes all these changes will shore up the University’s finances through increased retention and graduation rates, improve metrics that contribute to Drexel’s reputation and even change the way prospective students think about the University. And fewer students would apply to Drexel as a backup option.

“We need to change the conversation,” Martinelli said. “We’re not a safety school. We’re a chosen school.”

By proactively making these changes before finding itself in a crisis, she said, Drexel can ensure it continues its two-decade-long ascent.

And the timing may be perfect for this shift, Murasko said. Before now, Drexel needed to focus on recruiting by volume in order to grow. But the University has now made enough of a name for itself that it no longer needs every applicant it can get, she said. Now, it’s time to find the right ones.

“Drexel has gotten to a stage in its development where we should focus on the students who really will benefit from the philosophy of Drexel,” Murasko said, “which is experiential learning and the thought of taking their skills and using them entrepreneurially in the future.”

<u>Who’s Making it Happen</u>

Drexel’s Student Lifecycle Management initiative is wide-ranging, covering many parts of the University. So helping with the effort have been 10 different committees made up of professional staff and faculty, each tasked with planning and executing a different piece of Drexel’s student-life evolution.

Here's a breakdown:

Student Lifecycle Management Governance Committee
Co-chairs: Helen Bowman, senior vice president for finance, treasurer and chief financial officer; Joan McDonald, senior vice president for enrollment management (now retired)
Mission: The governance committee is the overarching group working to make the Student Lifecycle Management evolution happen, incorporating members from a variety of University offices.

Selection Redesign Committee
Co-chairs: Erin Finn, assistant vice president for admissions; Elaine Varas, senior executive director, Student Financial Aid office
Mission: Its charge is to modify the way the University admits undergraduates, with the goal of improving retention, acceptance and yield rates. It's already implementing some changes for 2014, including a great involvement for colleges and schools in selecting students likely to succeed in their majors.

Advising Task Force
Co-chairs: Peter Franks, vice provost for career education; Antoinette Torres, associate vice provost for academic advising, retention and diversity
Mission: This group is charged with developing recommendations for enhancing student advising, with an eye on improving student satisfaction, success and retention and graduation rates.

Advising Technology Committee
Co-chairs: Jan Biros, vice provost for budget, planning and administration; Adam Fontecchio, associate dean for academic affairs, College of Engineering
Mission: For about the past six months, this panel has worked to put in place a new system that better shares advising information from different offices. For example, an adviser from a student's college can share notes with advisers at Drexel Central. The committee's next task will be to integrate different information systems used around the university.

Integrated Marketing and Communications Committee
Co-chairs: Jim Katsaounis, associate vice president for university communications; Casey Turner, assistant vice president for recruitment
Mission: This group is working to help Drexel better tell its story and convey its unique features to prospective students and the general public — not just at the University-wide level, but at the level of individual colleges and schools, as well. The committee revised the University's key messages and invited communicators from throughout Drexel to a storytelling training event, and it is now working with staff from different colleges, schools and departments to develop their own messages and identify stories to tell.

Annual Bill Communications Committee
Chair: Lori Doyle, senior vice president for university communications
Mission: Drexel will shift from annual to quarterly billing starting in fall 2014, after students and their parents expressed confusion and dissatisfaction about the annual system. This

committee is working to develop a strategy to communicate that change to students, parents and others around Drexel.

EM-NTR Model Committee
Co-chairs: Nicole Verretti, associate vice president for financial planning; Rob Mirabile, assistant vice president for enrollment analytics
Mission: The acronym stands for "enrollment and net tuition revenue." This group is working to create a model that can project how different strategies for enrollment and financial aid would affect enrollment, tuition revenue and characteristics of incoming freshman classes such as socioeconomic factors, SAT scores and diversity.

Orientation Sub-committee
Co-chairs: John Cooke, associate dean of students for student affairs; Melanie Kraus, assistant director, Steinbright Career Development Center
Mission: Under the larger umbrella of the Advising Task Force, this group will set goals for recruitment and orientation events, as well as the UNIV 101 seminar class, with the aim of increasing enrollment yield and student retention for new undergraduate students.

Registration Task Force
Co-chairs: Alisa Abadinsky, assistant vice president for student financial and registration services; Jan Biros, vice provost for budget, planning and administration
Mission: This task force will consider possible improvements to the way students move through enrollment and course registration. Goals are to ensure the proper time to degree, improve students' satisfaction and retention and a smoother workflow among offices and staff.

Academic Capacity Committee
Co-chairs: Joan McDonald, senior vice president for enrollment management (now retired); Donna Murasko, dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Mission: This committee, which is now finished meeting, considered recommendations from Huron Consulting Group about recruiting students likely to succeed at Drexel and improving retention.
- See more at: http://drexel.edu/now/archive/2014/January/Student-Lifecycle-Management/#sthash.DOGe1O48.dpuf

Promising Practices for Improving Student Success

Past initiative — Conducted September 1, 2011 - August 31, 2014

Community colleges across the country are rising to the challenge of improving student success and college completion. As they grapple with that challenge, they quite naturally raise questions about what exactly they should be doing. What is known about effective educational practice? What makes a practice effective? And how do we bring effective practice to scale, turning small accomplishments into widespread improvement?

To help colleges answer these questions, the Center has launched a new project focused on Identifying and Promoting High-Impact Educational Practices in Community Colleges. With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Lumina Foundation, the Center will conduct data analysis, hold focus groups with students and faculty members, and continue review of work underway in community colleges. This work will contribute significant new knowledge about promising practices and how they can promote student persistence and completion in community colleges.

To begin, the Center has identified 13 promising practices in community colleges—practices for which there is emerging evidence of success: from the extant research and from multiple colleges with multiple semesters of data showing improvement on an array of metrics, such as retention and course completion. Those practices are briefly described below.

Material is adapted from the Center's 2012 national report, *A Matter of Degrees: Promising Practices for Community College Student Success.*

Assessment and Placement

Completing developmental education requirements early is related to higher overall achievement, and students can't complete if they don't enroll. Research suggests that students who take developmental education courses *during their first term* are more likely to complete their developmental sequence than are students who do not attempt any developmental courses during their first term.*

Making sure that students take the right classes is a multistep process. Colleges should create opportunities for students to participate in review or brush-up experiences before placement tests to minimize the amount of remediation students need. Then, after students have been assessed, students who need remediation should be placed into developmental pathways where they will have a chance to succeed rather than multiple opportunities to fail.

* Weissman, J., Silk, E., & Bulakowski, C. (1997). Assessing developmental education policies. *Research in Higher Education 38*(2), 187-200.

Orientation

Orientation can be a single two-hour session that helps students find their way around campus, explains registration, and mentions support services. It also can be incorporated into a full-semester program, such as a student success course. Or it can be anything in between. Typically, however, an orientation is an experience that helps students know what they most need to know before classes begin.

Research shows that orientation is one component of a successful remediation program for at risk students.* Those who participate in orientation have higher rates of persistence than their non-participant peers.**

*Boylan, H., & Saxon, D. (2002). *What works in remediation: Lessons from 30 years of research.* Prepared for the League for Innovation in the Community College. Retrieved from http://inpathways.net/Boylan--What%20Works.pdf

**Gardner, J. (1998). *The Changing role of developmental educators in creating and maintaining student success*. Keynote address delivered at the College Reading and Learning Association Conference, Salt Lake City, UT.

Academic Goal Setting and Planning
Attaining a goal becomes dramatically easier when the goal is specific and the path to reaching it is clear. Defining this path is the work of academic goal setting and planning.

While academic planning certainly includes course selection, community college students need advising that helps them set and maintain long-term goals. This type of advising and planning centers on creating a clear path from where they are now to their ultimate educational goals. Regular advising provides opportunities to update the plan to respond to changing goals, interests, or circumstances. The academic plan keeps students focused because it shows how each course brings them closer to a key milestone and ultimately, to the certificate or degree they seek.*

*Kuh, G.D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J.H., Whitt, E.J., and Associates. (2010). *Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Registration Before Classes Begin
Students who register after the first meeting of a class (late registration) may be decreasing their chances for success before even walking through the classroom door. Late registration correlates with lower grades* and lower reenrollment the following term.** Many colleges, however, continue to permit late registration. Moreover, even college with policies forbidding late registration tend to be inconsistent in enforcing them.

Some colleges permit late registration because they do not want to turn interested students away. But colleges do not have to block the door to late registrants. Instead, they can offer options, such as late-start classes or intensive experiences for refreshing academic skills.

*Ford, G.G., Stahl, K.J., Walker, M.E., & Ford, A.M. (June 2008). Better late than never? The relation of registration data to class performance. *College Student Journal, 42*(2), 402-407.
**Freer-Weiss, D. (2004). Community college freshmen: Last in, first out? *Journal of College Student Retention Research Theory and Practice, 6*(2), 137-154.

Accelerated or Fast-Track Developmental Education
The longer it takes a student to move through developmental education into a credit program, the more likely he or she is to drop out of college.*
Accelerated or fast-track developmental programs both enhance learning and engagement and help students move to college-level work more quickly. A growing number of colleges are designing accelerated or fast-track developmental education programs so students can focus on specific, targeted issues for remediation; move through developmental education at their own pace; and most important, move into college-level work more quickly.** Well-designed accelerated programs are efficient, and students in these intensive courses perform equally as well, or better than, students in traditional developmental education in terms of course completion, credit accumulation, and persistence.***

*Bettinger, E.P., & Long, B. (2009). Addressing the needs of under-prepared students in higher education: Does college remediation work? *Journal of Human Resources, 44*(3), 736-771.

**Center for Student Success/RP Group and The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges Basic Skills Initiative. (2009). *Promising practices for transitioning students from adult education to postsecondary education: A review of the literature with implications for California community colleges.* Retrieved from http://basicskills.publishpath.com/websites/basicskills/images/promising-practices.pdf

***Cho, S. W., Kopko, E., Jenkins, D., & Jaggars, S. S. (2012). *New evidence of success for community college remedial students: Tracking the outcomes of students in the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP).* Retrieved from http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/ccbc-alp-student-outcomes-follow-up.pdf

First-Year Experience
First-year experience programs create a small community within the larger campus for first-year students, helping them build relationships with other students as well as faculty and staff.

Students who participate in first-year experience programs demonstrate more positive relationships with faculty, greater knowledge and use of campus resources, more involvement in campus activities, and better time-management skills than their non-participating peers.*

*Brownell, J.E., & Swaner, L.E. (2010). *Five high-impact practices: Research on learning outcomes, completion, and quality.* Washington DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Student Success Course
Student success courses help students build knowledge and skills essential for success in college, from study and time-management skills to awareness of campus facilities and support services. Students who enroll in Student success courses are more likely to obtain degrees and transfer to four-year institutions.*

*Offenstien, J., Moore, C., & Shulock, N. (2010). *Advancing by degrees: A framework for increasing college completion.* Retrieved from Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Policy website: http://www.csus.edu/ihelp/Pdfs/R_advbydegrees_0510.pdf

Learning Community
Learning communities generally involve a group of students taking two or more linked classes together as a cohort, ideally with the instructors of those classes coordinating course outlines and jointly reviewing student progress.

Learning communities build a sense of academic and social community and increase engagement among students and faculty, all of which lead to a variety of positive outcomes. These may include improved academic achievement in terms of GPA, credits earned, and self-reported learning.*

The literature suggests that participating students also demonstrate greater progress in academic subjects, indicate increased satisfaction with the college, and report greater use of student support services. Taken together, according to some studies, these lead to improved retention and learning outcomes.**

*Moore, C., & Shulock, N. (2009). *Student progress toward degree completion: Lessons from the research literature*. Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy publication retrieved from http://www.csus.edu/ihelp/PDFs/R_Student_Progress_Toward_Degree_Completion.pdf

**Bourdon, C., & Carducci, R. (2002). *What works in the community colleges: A synthesis of literature on best practices.* Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Graduate School of Education.

Class Attendance

Attending class is a key element of succeeding in college, and emerging evidence indicates that class attendance policies have value. For example, researchers have found that students' class attendance is the best predictor of academic performance in college – it more reliably predicts college grades than do high school GPA, SAT scores and other standardized admissions tests, study habits, and study skills.*

*Crede, M., Roch, S.G., & Kieszczynka, U.M. (2010, June). Class attendance in college: A meta-analytic review of the relationship of class attendance with grades and student characteristics. *Review of Educational Research, 80*(2), 272-295.

Alert and Intervention

Early academic warning processes typically are triggered when faculty members identify students who are struggling and notify others in the college who step in to support the students. Colleges might follow up with students by e-mail, text, social media, or telephone and encourage them to access services, such as tutoring, peer mentoring, study groups, and student success skills workshops.

Some research suggests that when colleges make students aware of their academic difficulties and point students toward available support services students are more likely to successfully complete the course in question and to persist over the long term.*

*Bourdon, C., & Carducci, R. (2002). *What works in the community colleges: A synthesis of literature on best practices.* Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Graduate School of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED471397).

Experiential Learning Beyond the Classroom

Experiential (hands-on) learning, such as internships, co-op experience, apprenticeships, field experience, clinical assignments, and community-based projects, has multiple benefits. It steeps students in content, and it encourages students to make connections and forge relationships that can support them in college and beyond.

Tutoring

Studies suggest that participation in tutoring is associated with higher GPAs and pass rates.* Tutoring also provides much-needed peer support and academic intervention for students who traditionally struggle with the transition to college life.**

*Boylan, H., Bliss, L., & Bonham, B. (1997). Program components and their relationship to student success. *Journal of Developmental Education, 20*(3), 2-4, 6, 8.
**Kuh, G.D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J.H., Whitt, E.J., and Associates. (2010). *Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Supplemental Instruction

Supplemental instruction typically involves a regularly scheduled, supplemental class for a portion of students enrolled in a larger course section. Supplemental instruction may be taught by the class instructor or a trained assistant, often a former student who was successful in the class.

Supplemental instruction, like tutoring, may increase the impact of classroom instruction by providing extra time for skill practice. Students participating in supplemental instruction earn higher grades than their non-participant peers; preliminary evidence also shows them persisting and graduating at higher rates than non-participants.*

*Pascarella, E.T., & Terenzini, P.T. (2005). *How college affects students: A third decade of research (Vol.2).* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

ADMISSIONS

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Excerpt from "U.T. System White Paper: Best Practices in Admissions Processes for Undergraduate and Professional Programs, Prepared by the University of Texas System Office of Academic Affairs July 2014"

Encourage **accurate** and **timely communication** between students and admissions staff. Provide a single contact point to manage questions from prospective students. For example, a designated website with email account can be set up for prospective students to address their questions. The account should be consistently monitored to ensure rapid responses to questions. A single source for official communications to applicants can also prevent confusion for students. Students could be referred to individuals in various departments for additional information, but such referrals would be issued from the single contact point. Some universities centralize communication to a single office on campus, reducing the frustration and burden on program directors to respond to inquiries. Establish appropriate policies that address prospective student's rights to privacy. Ensure that prospective students understand that all communication with admissions staff may be considered as part of the application review, including email correspondence and phone calls. Admissions policies should include a statement on the university's use of social media in the admissions process. Provide a way for students that are denied admission to gain information that will guide them in strengthening future applications. This can be as simple as providing information about the characteristics of the entering class (average GPA, average test scores, etc.).

Excerpt from the American Council on Education
Enrollment Success Factors at Dickerson College
I feel strongly that when we enroll a student, we enter into a moral contract to help that young person succeed. We know that the first year can be the most challenging part of a college career, as students leave the comforts of home to perform demanding academic work in a new environment with new people. We also know that to succeed, students first need to feel like they belong. Last year, we took a fresh look at our approach to student life, paying particular attention to building this sense of belonging. That examination resulted in some significant changes to our approach, as well as some enhancement of longtime initiatives.

We began this August by bringing students together in new and meaningful ways even before they officially began the academic year. Through a variety of **pre-orientation programs**, groups of <u>10 to 15</u> incoming students spent several days pursuing a shared interest such as whitewater rafting, hiking, theater, multimedia, diversity, or sustainability. Our goal was to help these new students form friendships on campus before their college careers officially started. We soon learned we were on the right track when the programs proved so popular that we needed to add additional options.

Also during the summer, each of our incoming students selected a **First-Year Interest Group**, or, as we affectionately call it, a FIG. These groups also are based around shared student interests, such as entrepreneurship, sustainability, outing experiences, or spirituality. They are led by faculty, staff, and upper-level student mentors who engage the students in shared experiences throughout the year. Through regular gatherings and excursions, these groups allow first-year students to develop bonds with peers and adult mentors on campus, providing a system of layered support that can help them navigate the sometimes-challenging college terrain.

Additionally, we continued another effort that highlights the direct contact our students have with our expert faculty. **Every incoming student receives a call from a faculty member who personally guides the student though the course-selection process**. Each student is able to talk through options and tailor course selection to his or her needs. These personal connections are at the heart of a small, residential liberal-arts college experience.

We also communicate with students regularly throughout the enrollment process in a variety of ways, including a **special class Facebook group** in which staff and upper-level students answer questions and provide helpful hints.

Perhaps most importantly, campus faculty and staff collaborate, crossing divisional boundaries and working in concert to ensure a unified, seamless experience for our new students. A **New Student Planning Committee**, made up of representatives from all areas of the college, including student life, academics, athletics, financial aid, health, and wellness, meets regularly from May through August to take an interdisciplinary approach to welcoming the next class.

We already are seeing the benefits of this enhanced approach, and not just through the comments of first-year students and their parents. Upper-level students also are excited to help build a sense of community among our newest campus members, and they feel a renewed sense of engagement with Dickinson.

Nancy A. Roseman is the president and a professor of biology at Dickinson College (PA).

Excerpt from the Enrollment Management Report: Practical Guidance in Recruitment, Admissions, Retention, and Financial Aid, Volume 17, Issue 8, November 2013

Improving communications. The communications plan for the summer included:

Centralized and branded emails. Admissions was responsible for delivering them, but communications could come from offices around campus.

Facebook page for the admitted class. It helps the students get to know each other through the summer months. The director of social media in the admissions office shares administrative privileges with orientation staff members.

Instagram and Twitter. Officials adopted these because students use them. “They’re Instagramming admissions packets and scholarship letters,” Browne said.

Live online chats. Officials use Google Hangout and Skype. Students ask questions such as “How do I order my books?” or “What does this part of my schedule mean?”

Photo contests. Postcards are sent as reminders to participate in them.

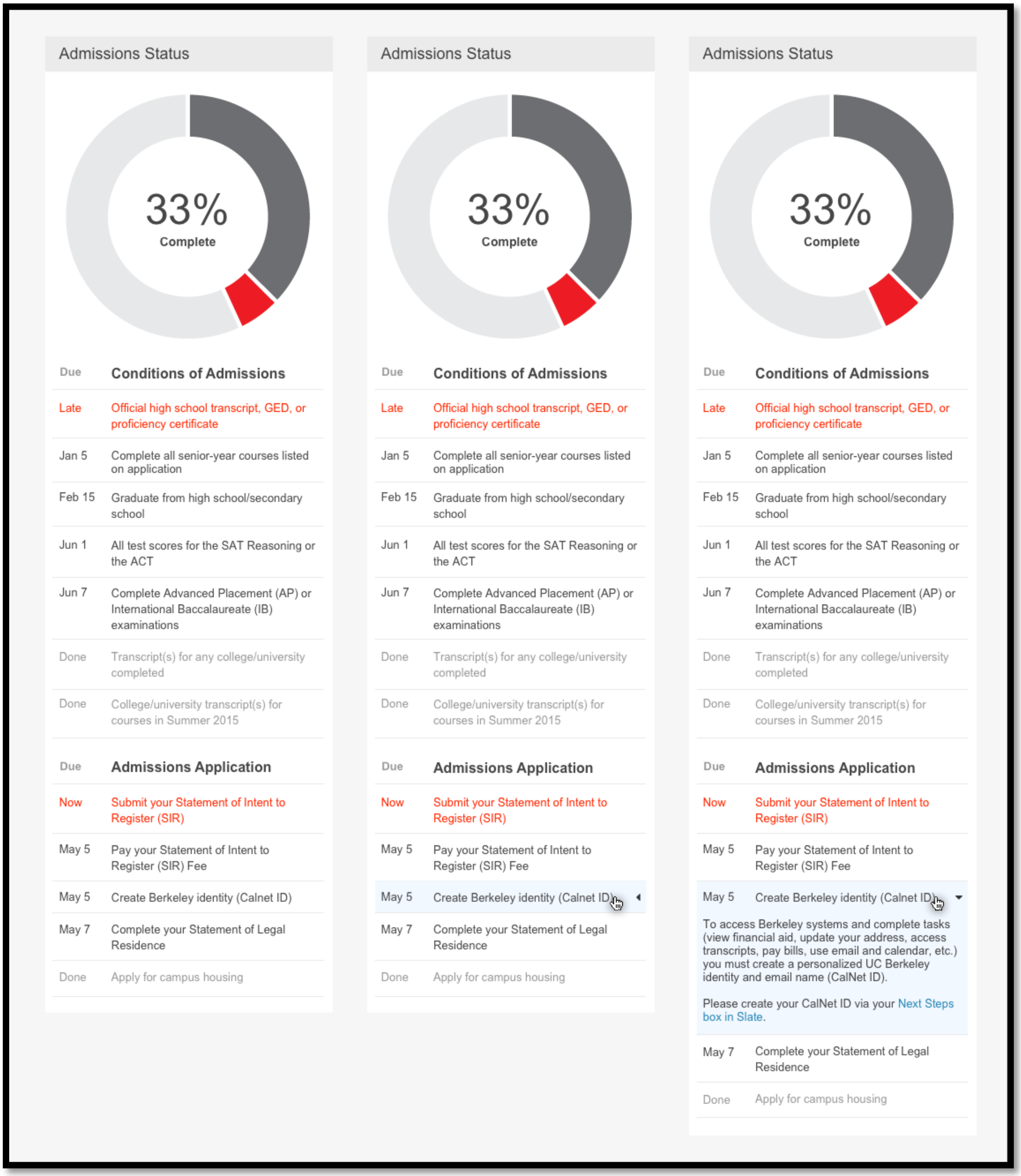
Blogs. Entering students gain information and feel connected through the personal writing style.

Counselor involvement. Counselors maintain their relationships with admitted students and families through the summer. That way, the students can turn to someone familiar if they have questions.

Forming a new student transition committee. It is responsible for orientation. Participating units include admissions, orientation, residence life, health services, public safety, student affairs, financial aid, the registrar and academic advising. “The handoff from admissions has to be done well,” Fabian said.

Creating a unified new-student form. Rather than each office sending forms to students that ask many of the same questions, students complete one form electronically. Browne started developing that form in October for use the next summer. He knew he needed to meet with officials in all the relevant offices to make it effective. Student affairs and admissions need to have a partnership for the new-student transition to go smoothly, Browne said. That requires officials from the two offices to understand each other’s needs and challenges, Fabian said. Admissions officials who want to work with student affairs will enjoy a warmer reception if they demonstrate that they understand something about that field, he added.

UC Berkeley Admissions Checklist Integrated with Its Learning Management System



TESTING

Baltimore Community College Testing Home Page
http://www.ccbcmd.edu/get-started/placement-testing

Central Piedmont Community College
https://www.cpcc.edu/testing_assessment/placement-testing

Community College of Philadelphia
http://www.ccp.edu/getting-started/what-are-placement-tests

ADVISING

Subscribe to the NACADA Listserv for free at: NACADA maintains many LISTSERV® lists for global discussions of academic advising issues. Most lists are available to both NACADA members and non-members. Subscribers are encouraged to use these lists for discussion and to ask informal questions. Many subscribers seek similar advising programs for benchmarking; guidelines for such postings can be found at http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/structure-conversations.htm#ask .

Excerpt from Academic Advising Today, Best Practices in Advising Non-Traditional Students, Georgia Southern University

Flexible Advisement and Early Registration Options
Because non-traditional students typically have more life experiences and responsibilities than traditional students, specialized advisement and registration methods are necessary. Offering an early registration period for non-traditional students gives them the opportunity to register for class times that fit their schedule. If a separate orientation is not possible, advisors can plan a breakout session during orientation targeting non-traditional students. Advisors also need to provide flexible advisement options, such as online or phone advisement and extended evening hours.

Bentley-Gadow, J. E. & Silverson, K. (2005).The sequential advising model for group advising: Modifying delivery venues for freshmen and transfer students.Retrieved from the *NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources* Web site: http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Group-advising-model.aspx

Group Advising Procedures for Freshmen

Phase I (Large Group)
Phase I begins with our New Major Orientation meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to present departmental and university requirements pertinent to teacher education majors. These are planned for the sixth week of the semester thus allowing new students

time to become acclimated to the university environment. Students are informed of meeting dates via letter. Three meeting times are scheduled to accommodate the number of students.

During New Major Orientation meetings, students receive three management tools that were developed by staff in our center: 1) student timeline, 2) referral resource pamphlet, and 3) reminder postcard.

The student timeline is a one-year calendar of selected dates. This tool helps freshmen set goals and make preparations to meet crucial deadlines that could significantly impact their rate of progress through the program of study.
The referral resource pamphlet is a three-page booklet with an abbreviated list of frequently used campus resources. Although the same information can be accessed from the university catalog or web site, the pamphlet serves as a ready resource for addressing many of the immediate needs of students.

The reminder postcard is a 3x5 card pre-printed with notification information regarding upcoming Pre-Registration meetings. Its purpose is two-fold: 1) track attendance (attendance is recorded in students' internal office files), and 2) remind students of Pre-Registration meeting dates. At the conclusion of each New Major Orientation, students are instructed to self-address these postcards; we collect them as students exit the meeting.

The second large group meeting in Phase I is the Pre-Registration meeting. Again, three sessions are needed to accommodate the number of students. Students are notified of meeting dates via mail using the reminder postcards described earlier. These meetings are scheduled one week prior to the start of registration for the Spring semester.

We have three objectives for our Pre-Registration meetings. First, we instruct students on how to read their degree audit, an official document from the Registrar's office that delineates the courses required to complete the student's degree program. We require students to bring a copy of their audit, found on the university web site, to the Pre-Registration meetings. Second, we provide course suggestions for the Spring semester. Third, we explain registration procedures for scheduling classes.

University policy requires freshmen to meet with an advisor before they access the on-line registration system. To ensure that this obligation is met, freshmen have an electronic hold placed on their registration that prevents them from scheduling courses. Advisors remove these holds after students have attended a Pre-Registration meeting. To validate their attendance, students record their name and student identification number on an index card at the conclusion of the meeting. The cards are collected and used to record attendance in students' internal office files and to remove registration holds. Students who do not attend a Pre-Registration meeting must schedule an individual meeting with an advisor.

Phase II (Small Group)

Phase II of the Sequential Advising Model involves **Academic Planning Meetings,** small group sessions in which advisors present information that pertains exclusively to students' academic majors. Here freshmen are allowed to officially declare their major and begin formulating a four-year plan. Groups are limited to eight students so advisors can address individual questions in greater detail and encourage group discussion.

Academic Planning meetings begin during the third week of the second semester. Letters invite students to attend; students are obliged to contact the Advising Center to reserve a seat. Students are required to bring their degree audits to this session.

Each Academic Planning session begins with students receiving a prepared folder that contains a declaration of curriculum form and other materials relative to their degree programs. They are instructed to bring this folder to all future advising appointments. The folders have proven to be a good organizational tool for students; subsequently, they come to advising appointments better prepared, making for a productive and meaningful appointment.

After students declare their major, they are provided with a Sample Semesters sheet, a front/back page developed by our staff that illustrates a tentative four-year academic plan for a specific major. Note: these sheets do not replace any official university document, e.g., catalog information, therefore the sheets carry a disclaimer statement.

Next, we teach students to align their Sample Semesters sheets with their degree audits by crossing out completed course work and figuring remaining hours. This process allows students to visualize their progress within the program relative to the number of courses and semesters remaining. This visualization gives students a partial answer to the time-honored question 'how long will I be in school?' More importantly, degree audits, coupled with the Sample Semesters sheets, provide students with a methodology for designing academic plans in a manner that reflects their goals.

Group Advising Procedures for Transfer Students

Use of the Sequential Advising Model for transfer students, drawn from the program outlined for first year students, has eased the transition experience for our transfer students.

Transfer Student Phase I (Large Group)

Our initial contact with transfer students is a one-hour, large group Transfer Orientation organized in cooperation with the university's central academic advising office. Before we advise students, they are greeted by an orientation staff and provided with an updated copy of their degree audit which delineates all submitted transfer work. Next, students planning to declare a major in elementary, early childhood, or middle level education are assembled and sent, as a group, to meet with us. In previous years, this meeting focused solely on the information transfer students needed to schedule classes for their first semester at our institution. Although scheduling is still a priority, we now incorporate the program management techniques into the orientation.

The Transfer Orientation opens with each transfer student receiving a folder of materials similar to those provided to freshmen during Academic Planning meetings. Materials include: 1) registration items, 2) forms for declaration of curriculum, 3) sample semester sheets for majors in our department, 4) referral resource pamphlet, 5) student timeline, and 6) invitation to attend a Phase II small group meeting. Essentially, this orientation program is a condensed version of the information and training provided to freshmen during New Major Orientation and Pre-Registration meetings. Additionally, transfer students are given explicit instructions for locating and logging onto the university's computer system as well as contact information for gaining access to their university email accounts. As more communication takes place electronically, students are encouraged to access the university's information loop.

Phase II (Small Groups)
Small group meetings are 45-minute sessions devoted to providing step-by-step instructions for deciphering the degree audit so that it becomes a meaningful and useful planning tool. Previously, during Transfer Orientation, students were dependent on advisors to help them determine courses needed based on their degree audit. The small group sessions are intended to foster independence so that students can learn to manage their own programs. Multiple sessions are offered during the third, fourth, and fifth week of the new semester. The invitation to small group meetings, which students receive during Transfer Orientation, instructs them to contact our center to reserve a time.
Students are required to bring their degree audits to small group sessions. Under our guidance, they highlight courses needed, calculate total credits, figure remaining credits, and compute the number of remaining semesters. Like the meetings with freshmen, students are instructed to align a Sample Semesters sheet with the degree audit in order to outline remaining semesters. As students work through this process, the abstract nature of program planning becomes more concrete.

Discussion
After implementing the Sequential Advising Model in the fall of 2003, we observed that students who attended both Phase I and Phase II meetings demonstrated a competence in understanding the basics of program planning; thus, they could make adjustments in their programs independently. This competence was evident in the steady decline in the number of scheduled appointments since that time. Currently, our records indicate a 34% decrease in the number of individual appointments, with the majority of the decrease occurring in basic information sessions. We also noted a significant reduction in routine telephone and email traffic. Equally as important, student evaluations of Phase I and Phase II meetings were consistently positive. Comments included: 'the meetings really cleared up my confusions about my program'; 'the sample semesters sheet was very helpful'; and, 'at first, I didn't understand my degree audit, but after attending the meetings, I know what I have and what I need'.

It should be noted that attending both Phase I and Phase II meetings did not result in totally independent students. There is always a need for further guidance. While the numbers of students who came to our office for assistance in basic program planning issues decreased, the nature of the questions that students brought to us illustrated a greater understanding of their program requirements and if their plans needed to be modified. Subsequent discussions during individual advising meetings focused more on the impact modifications could make in the short- and long-term. For example, more students questioned the benefits and practicality of adding a second major. Similarly students more often grappled with issues concerning marketability versus personal interest when choosing a minor. Other discussions involved incorporation of study abroad opportunities into academic plans, or how to best prepare for graduate studies.

Conclusion

Gordon (1998) stated, 'As in our past, the future of academic advising is inextricably intertwined with the fate of higher education. Advising has been affected and influenced by many of the trends and issues confronting higher education' (p. 7). Indeed, after repeated budget shortfalls, our advising center has been challenged to effectively serve its advisees with limited staff and diminishing resources. We have responded to this challenge by developing the Sequential Advising Model: a delivery system which provides freshmen and new transfer students with the information and materials needed to become informed managers of their academic programs. As a result, advisors have had more time during individual appointments to help students further develop their academic programs and related personal and professional goals.

REGISTRATION

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This list is for members who are registrars at small colleges. To subscribe: Please visit: http://maillists.samford.edu/mailman/listinfo/scr-l

General Registrar listserv: This list is for members involved in records and registration. To subscribe visit http://listserv.gsu.edu/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=REGIST-L&A=1

See AACRO's website for recent best practice publications.

Top Ten Enrollment Management Trends (Excerpt from Linked In, 2014)

10) Student lifecycle management will be your next directive

When I worked in enrollment management at a regional private school in Connecticut, many of my colleagues would lament how "involved" we had to be at areas outside of admissions ... Running check-in and registering students for classes at orientation, proctoring placement tests, helping at move-in day ... the list goes on and on.

The reality is that in many ways my prior institution was ahead of the curve with how entrenched enrollment management really is. True enrollment managers cannot only look at recruitment. They need to think about retention as well ... and ultimately down the road need to think about supporting students in their careers.

Does this mean an admissions counselor is going to wear every hat on campus? No. But what it does mean is that top enrollment officers need to look back to #1 on my list and truly evaluate every interaction students are having throughout their entire academic journey at their school and ensure they are doing everything they can, in the most cost-effective way, to support them.

FINANCIAL AID

See Sinclair Colleges SAP policy and procedures:
https://www.sinclair.edu/enroll/finaid/financial-aid-policies/satisfactory-academic-progress-sap-policy/

See Houston Community College's SAP policy and procedures:
http://www.hccs.edu/programs/financialaid/satisfactory-academic-progress/

UC Berkeley's SAP Appeal Process Visual

FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS OFFICE • DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS
SAP
Have you received a message in MyFinAid advising you to complete an SAP Appeal? Not sure what steps to take to re establish your financial aid eligibility? Follow these simple steps or see an adviser in Cal Student Central for assistance.
Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Appeal Process for Undergraduate Students
Preparing Your Appeal
Calendar
Be aware of key deadlines, including cancellation and tuition/fee refund dates and the SAP Appeal deadline. Make advising appointments ASAP.
Write Your Letter
Your letter of explanation should include the exceptional circumstances that may have prevented you from meeting financial aid SAP requirements.
Give Examples
A.
B.
C.
In your letter, include changes you will make or resources you will use to ensure your future academic success (e.g. EOP advising, counseling, tutoring, etc.).
Gather Documentation
Complete appeals; include documentation to support your letter of explanation (e.g. medical documentation, pay check stubs, transcripts, etc.).
Meet Your Academic Adviser(s)
Discuss your circumstances, review your transcript and your supporting documentation, and prepare a manageable academic plan.
Prepare Backup Plan
PLAN A
PLAN B
If your appeal is not approved, you may need to seek alternative enrollment options or sources of funding.
The Financial Aid & Scholarships Office strongly encourages you to submit your appeal as soon as possible. The deadlines for SAP Appeals are: September 11, 2015 for fall 2015 and February 5, 2016 for spring 2016.

Education Advisory Board | Business Affairs Forum

Increasing Efficiency in Admissions and Financial Aid Offices

Custom Research Brief

2) Effective Admissions and Financial Aid Structures

Leadership

Vice Presidents for Enrollment Management Oversee Admissions and Financial Aid

Directors of admissions and financial aid typically report to the same senior administrator for student services, often a vice president or assistant provost for enrollment management. Enrollment management administrators oversee admissions and financial aid functions and the registrar's office. Institutions assign other responsibilities to enrollment management units as well (e.g., student success, institutional research), but contacts caution against too many responsibilities for one position.

Enrollment management committees coordinate between admissions and financial aid functions if institutions do not employ enrollment management administrators. At **University F**, the dean of admissions reports to the provost, and the dean of financial aid reports to the chief operating officer. The disconnected reporting structure increases the importance of cross-office collaboration and communication, particularly on significant changes to their financial aid program. Deans developed an eight person team to discuss their financial aid program and ensure opportunities for communication. The team includes:

- Dean of admissions,
- Dean of financial aid,
- Two admissions staff members,
- Three finance representatives, and
- A representative from the chief operating officer.

The team meets twice per week while making major decisions (e.g., to determine the financial aid plan for the next year), but meets less frequently throughout the year to maintain coordination. Other institutions' enrollment management committees review institutional enrollment targets and approve enrollment figures for use in budget requests.

Directors and Multiple Associate Directors Provide Oversight and Ensure Coordination

Directors oversee major office strategies but rely on associate and assistant directors to guide office functions and provide day-to-day management. At **University D**, the deputy director for financial aid manages all aid distribution, which allows the director to dedicate time to fund availability and accounting. Associate and assistant director positions provide opportunities for professional advancement within the office, as well, and offer greater leadership opportunities for junior staff.

Small teams of fewer than ten staff enable supervisors to meet individually with their staff for weekly check-ins and informal performance reviews.

Admissions Directors Primarily Organize Staff by Function and Service Audience (e.g., External or Internal)

Directors often divide staff between external recruitment and internal functions such as application processing and course articulation management.

Contacts rarely assign staff to unique functions; more frequently, each staff member contributes to functions such as prospect management, post-admissions recruiting, and new student transaction services

External Outreach and Recruitment

External outreach and recruitment typically include outreach staff who manage events such as college fairs or campus visits, staff based in regional recruitment centers, and admissions counselors. Outreach event staff manage counselor travel, schedule counselors for college fairs and presentations at high schools, and organize campus events for prospective students. Associate directors typically oversee outreach conducted by admissions counselors.

Prospect Management

7 Staff

Seven staff at **University C** operate their customer relationship management system and guide prospect management.

Recruitment centers predominantly support in-state recruitment. **University E** operates seven recruitment centers across the state. These centers increase accessibility to prospective students and build connections between regional communities and the University. Centers house a director, one financial aid officer, three to four counselors, and administrative staff.

Internal Functions

Internal staff process applications or provide support services to recruitment and application staff. Application processing includes document management (e.g., open and sort mail), application review, and course articulation.

Directors often assign application review staff regions with which to develop familiarity, regardless of whether staff review applications by applicants' region. Regional expertise (e.g., knowledge of high schools, opportunities available to students) enables staff to holistically review applicants and improves communication between staff and applicants. For high schools in their region, staff must ascertain:

- Grade distribution,
- Number of available advanced placement or international baccalaureate courses,
- Average number of advanced courses taken by students in the top ten percent of the class,
- Options for dual enrollment and challenge of dual enrollment compared to advanced courses, and
- Available mathematics and sciences courses.

Cross-Train Admissions Staff

Directors train admissions counselors to review applications and validate transcripts to stabilize their workload throughout the admissions cycle. Processing staff learn to perform recruitment functions such as presentations and prospective student counseling.

Admissions counselor positions and application review positions require distinct skill sets, however. Successful admissions counselors possess excellent people skills (e.g., outgoing, personable); application reviewers are highly detail-oriented. Candidates rarely exhibit qualifications for both roles. To prepare staff to perform both roles, directors:

- **Train counselors and reviewers one year before they adopt additional responsibilities**. A one year delay enables a gradual transition and allows time to relocate staff who will not transition to new responsibilities.
- **Establish teams of two staff members and include both skill sets**. The detail-oriented application reviewer shadows the admissions counselor's recruitment presentations at first. Over time, the staff equally share presentation responsibilities. The reviewer finally leads presentations with support from the admissions counselor before teams disband and recruit individually.

Directors cross-train staff even if staff perform specialized functions (e.g., only recruit students). Cross-trained counselors and application review staff better serve students because they can answer basic questions related to their colleagues' responsibilities.

Office support services include:

- **Data and research.** Offices require one to two staff members to analyze office data and conduct internal research. They provide statistical support and answer requests for information from institutional research offices and state legislators.
- **Creative services.** Creative services staff develop recruitment publications for outreach staff to distribute.
- **Technical and operational staff.** Operational staff maintain systems such as customer relationship management systems and provide administrative support (e.g., open mail, answer phones).

Create an International Admissions Unit

Directors create units within admissions offices to recruit and review international applications more effectively.

Recruitment

International recruitment staff maintain strong online presences to reach students unlikely to visit domestic campuses. Staff develop strong alumni networks so alumni serve as connections to the university abroad.

Application Review

Staff require expertise and training to review international applications. International applications require additional care to ensure staff enter names properly in records and enter appropriately formatted dates.

At **University E**, one associate director oversees three assistant directors in the graduate and international admissions unit; these staff process all international applications and review undergraduate applications for admission. Graduate school faculty members evaluate international applicants for graduate programs.

Financial Aid Organization

Financial Aid Generalists Typically Conduct Direct Student Services but Technical Staff Often Specialize

Contacts at **University D** largely organize their staff by functional areas. Five student services staff manage general student questions, but other staff serve in specialized functional areas such as:

- Accounting,
- Compliance,
- Packaging and research,
- Scholarships,
- Study abroad,
- Summer aid, and
- Technology maintenance and support.

University G employs cross-trained financial aid counselors who provide all direct student services; technical and processing staff provide support for counselors. Nineteen financial aid counselors alternate shifts answering questions by phone, email, or in-person. They assist students with tasks such as income or satisfactory academic progress appeals. Approximately ten technical and processing staff perform indirect service functions, such as account establishment and file creation.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Cross-Trained Financial Aid Counselors

Strengths of Cross-Trained Counselors:

- **Counselors serve all students' needs**. Students and their families appreciate that each counselor can respond to any request. Cross-training reduces bottlenecks that occur if only one staff member performs certain services (e.g., identify independent and dependent students).

Weaknesses of Cross-Trained Counselors:

- **Counselor positions demand extensive qualifications and training**. Successful cross-trained counselors maintain up-to-date knowledge of all program policies, develop familiarity with all financial aid systems (e.g., Common Origination and Disbursement site), work well with people, and effectively perform detail-oriented processing tasks.

Directors often assign students to staff alphabetically, but geographic assignments:

- **Improve collaboration with admissions counselors.** Admissions counselors often receive geographic assignments and, if financial aid counselors receive similar assignments, counselors develop working relationships as they repeatedly work with the same staff across offices.
- **Increase staff familiarity with state regulations and aid environments.** Financial aid staff benefit less from familiarity with regions than admissions staff, but contacts suggest geographic assignments improve staff knowledge.

Directors in geographic-based assignment models more frequently reassign territories to ensure balanced workloads, as the number of applications by region fluctuates more dramatically than the number of applications by last name. Reassignments do not create excessive burdens on directors or staff.

Technology Use

Modern Electronic Management Systems Significantly Improve Office Functions

Outdated management systems constrain staff procedures; a past system at **University D**, for example, allowed staff to view only 99 of their over 1,200 scholarship funds. Financial aid staff had to constantly rotate funds in the system to perform their duties before they adopted the PeopleSoft management system.

Contacts caution directors to adjust their processes to workflows within management systems (e.g., PeopleSoft), rather than adapt management systems to fit current processes. Directors often derive greater benefits (e.g., reduced processing time) if they streamline their processes to mirror system functionalities because modifications increase system complexity and complicate future transitions.

Services for Graduate Students

Distinct Admissions and Financial Aid Staff Often Serve Graduate Students

Central directors of admissions and financial aid prefer for graduate staff to report to their offices, however, to maintain oversight for their responsibilities. At **University D**, three graduate schools employ full-time staff members who provide dedicated support for their students' financial aid services. These staff report to the financial aid director and receive institutional financial aid training but work on-site at the graduate school locations; graduate school deans fund their salaries.

Typically, admissions staff in central admissions offices process graduate applications (e.g., receive forms, input information) but staff within graduate schools review applications for admission.

3) Strategies to Increase Efficiency

Admissions and Financial Aid Strategies

Paperless Processes Streamline Admissions and Financial Aid Functions

Admissions staff reduce paper applications, whether through online student applications or reductions in application materials, to decrease staff time dedicated to processing. The paperless application process at **University A** enabled the admissions office to maintain consistent staff levels despite dramatic increases in the number of applications. Application volume more than doubled in the past decade but the office has not needed to increase staff levels.

Staff in the financial aid office at **University D** eliminated lengthy paper forms for outside scholarships to decrease student and staff labor. Staff now process outside scholarships entirely within PeopleSoft.

Paperless systems typically allow multiple staff to view student data simultaneously and allow remote staff (e.g., traveling admissions counselors) to view information outside of offices.

Reduction in Processing Time

4 Days

The online application system at **University A** reduced the application processing time to one day. In the past, staff spent three to five days to receive applications, enter data, and match transcripts before they could begin application reviews.

Investments in Personnel (e.g., Salaries) Increase Staff Expertise and Continuity

Directors cite staff expertise and continuity as important factors in office efficiency.

Strategies to Invest in Personnel

Encourage Professional Development	Directors encourage staff to pursue professional development opportunities to increase office expertise. Contacts at **University A** send staff to standard conferences (e.g., National Association for College Admission Counseling) but also invite staff to seek out more varied conferences to develop alternative perspectives; a staff member attended the South by Southwest festival in 2013, for example.
Create Internal Advancement Opportunities	Staff regularly remain at **University D** for decades and increase their capabilities and efficiency throughout their tenure. Leadership positions, such as associate dean of operations, provide staff with internal advancement opportunities and distribute management responsibilities.
Seek External Expertise to Fill Knowledge Gaps	Directors balance internal promotions with external hires to ensure diversity of perspectives and expertise. Insufficient accounting expertise at **University D** motivated administrators to elevate an accountant position within the financial aid office to "senior accountant" and offer a higher salary. The more senior position secured a highly qualified candidate, a certified public accountant with 15 years of experience.

Centralized Business and Technology Services Increase Specialization but Decrease Staff Access

Centralization of services often combines administrative services from enrollment management units such as admissions, financial aid, and registrar's offices. One office manages business functions (e.g., payroll, human resources) and technology services (e.g., computer support) for all units.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Centralized Business and Technology Services

Strengths of Centralized Services:

- **Technology professionals oversee technology staff**. Oversight by qualified professionals increases staff performance.
- **Larger service population enables infrastructure improvements**. At **University G**, centralization enabled creation of a server farm.
- **Staff improve efficiency**. Units typically experience different peak periods (e.g., high admissions volume in the fall) so centralization stabilizes workloads across the year.

Weaknesses of Centralized Services:

- **Directors cannot immediately reduce staff levels**. Staff reductions typically occur gradually, often through voluntary retirements, which slows efficiency gains.
- **Unit staff perceive declines in service access and quality**. Admissions and financial aid staff prefer support staff within their units for direct access.
- **Centralized staff must prioritize requests by department.** Conflicts arise due to competition for services among departments.

Efficient Admissions Processes

Efficiency Increase

75%

Contacts at **University C** estimate adoption of self-reported academic records reduced their manual application processing by 75 percent. Staff no longer calculate grade point averages from official transcripts or verify students' completion of four years of math and English; the electronic system automatically produces that information.

Self-Reported Academic Records Significantly Reduce Application Processing Time

Many institutions accept self-reported academic records rather than require all applicants to submit official transcripts. Benefits of self-reported academic records include:

- **Increased applicant accountability.** Applicants control all application materials (e.g., fees, academic record) and do not rely on high school staff to submit transcripts.
- **Reduced processing period.** Application review at **University C** lasts a maximum of 15 days rather than the previous 30-day period.
- **Improved ability to identify and address incomplete applications.** Staff at **University C** easily locate applications if students call to submit additional information (e.g., forgotten test scores). With paper-based applications and official transcripts, staff could not assist students with incomplete applications until they processed all applications.

Staff typically review final transcripts for accepted students to verify applicants' self-reported academic records. Admissions staff at **University B** review transcripts for approximately 8,000 accepted freshmen and transfer students, less than ten percent of all applicants.

Pilot phases allow staff to test self-reported academic records for their institution. **University C** accepted self-reported academic records for students in one state high school and international applicants in 2011 before accepting self-reported academic records from all students in 2012.

!

Use of the Common Application Precludes Acceptance of Self-Reported Academic Records

Institutions that accept the Common Application cannot currently accept self-reported academic records. Association of American Universities members, however, are advocating for the Common Application to allow self-reported academic records. Contacts expect the Common Application, Inc. to adopt self-reported academic records by 2015.

School Representatives Assist with Post-Admission Recruitment

Admissions directors collaborate with school and department representatives for post-admission recruitment because contact with future faculty and peers more effectively persuades admitted students to register. Admitted students prefer to hear from their future departments rather than admissions staff once they have received their acceptance letters. Limited resources motivate school representatives to prioritize students for recruitment; they typically reach out to highly-qualified students for particular programs (e.g., engineering, nursing) or admissions staff identify students who contribute to institutional initiatives (e.g., diversity goals).

School-specific recruitment methods include:

- **Personalized outreach**. Admissions staff arrange for current students or professors in departments to contact admitted students by phone or email at **University E**. Contacts report significant conversion of admitted students to registered students after they speak with department representatives.
- **Invitations to school-specific open houses.** In addition to institution-wide admitted students' events, school representatives invite high-priority applicants to spend a day with faculty and students in their future departments. At **University E**, students who attend these events demonstrate higher deposit rates than students who decline invitations to school-specific events.

Admissions Staff Conduct Post-Admissions Recruitment in Localities

Post-Admissions Recruitment

20 Staff

Twenty admissions staff members at **University C** participate in post-admissions recruitment.

Admissions directors send recruitment staff to major metropolitan areas and regions adjacent to campus to decrease the influx of admitted students on campus. Major metropolitan areas offer sufficient populations to make off-site admitted students' receptions an effective use of office resources. Off-site events for local admitted students decrease demand for space on campus for students most likely to visit.

Staff Develop Unique Materials and Events for Post-Admissions Recruitment

Admitted students at **University A** can attend dedicated campus tours from the end of March to the end of April, the peak time for admitted students to visit campus. Staff host one to two admitted students' tours daily that review on-campus services (e.g., location of bursar's office), important dates (e.g., orientation), and offer introductions to the campus as a future student. The rest of the year, staff host only prospective student tours that address an audience that has yet to apply.

Contacts prefer daily admitted students' tours to a single admitted students' day because:

- **Tours offer greater flexibility**. Admitted students can attend tours any day over a four-week period, which increases the likelihood they will visit campus compared to a single opportunity.
- **Tours offer greater intimacy.** Ten admitted students typically attend each tour, which ensures overall groups of approximately thirty students and family members.

4) Transition Strategies and Outcomes

Transition Initiation

Gradual Initiation with Frequent Discussions Increases Staff Acceptance

Directors often expect multi-year transitions to secure staff acceptance and complete training.

1

Identify Strengths and Weaknesses of Current Processes

Directors dedicate approximately six months to identification of current processes' strengths and weaknesses. They observe procedures and meet individually with staff to review their perspectives on office roles and organizations. Common weaknesses include:

- **Staff responsibilities create bottlenecks**. At **University G**, one staff member determined if students were dependent or independent for financial aid purposes; students frequently waited for determinations because no other staff could assist them.
- **Staff organization prevents effective communication and engagement**. Staff at **University B** had few opportunities to interact with their direct supervisors and explained to administrators they felt their concerns were unheard.

2

Present Transition to All Staff

Directors present transitions to all staff simultaneously to ensure equal communication and prevent rumors. Presentations explain how transitions meet staff concerns (e.g., eliminate bottlenecks) and invite input from staff. Directors initiate discussion through questions such as:

- What is the best way to accomplish our goals?
- What challenges do you expect in this transition?
- What timeline do you recommend?

3

Discuss Transition in One-on-One Meetings with Staff

Directors follow up with individual staff members to solicit their feedback on transition plans and reassure them of their continued places in the office. Directors invite criticism of transition plans and goals so they can collaborate with staff to resolve perceived problems. One-on-one meetings also allow directors to identify staff members' strengths and how they can contribute to the success of transitions.

Training

Pre-Transition Trainings Prepare Staff for New Roles; Post-Transition Trainings Maintain Capabilities

Pre-Transition Training

Cross-training prepares staff to adopt multiple roles within offices (e.g., admissions counselor and application review). Directors host large trainings for all staff to learn office procedures but also identify opportunities for skill development within staff cohorts. Cross-training for admissions staff members, for example, includes tactics to perform detail-oriented work for eight hours in addition to application review procedures. Directors invite academic support staff to deliver study skills presentations similar to those they give to students. Review staff require training to deliver admissions presentations to large groups of potential applicants. Participation in workshops such as Toastmasters prepare review staff for recruitment responsibilities.

Extensive training for one staff member prepares offices for major technological transitions (e.g., campus-wide PeopleSoft adoption). Staff appreciate an in-house expert who can guide their transition to new technologies. Representatives from each functional unit at **University D** relocated to the information technology unit for two years to prepare for their transition to the PeopleSoft system. Staff received salary raises upon return to their original unit because of their additional skills and responsibilities. The financial aid representative now serves as the assistant director for financial aid technical processes.

Post-Transition Training

The financial aid office at **University G** closes to students for four hours each week to allow all staff to attend a business meeting and trainings. Meetings and training topics include:

- Financial aid topics (e.g., verification requirements, processing procedures),
- Systems (e.g., in-house systems, student portal, state web grants system),
- Soft skills (e.g., management of angry students, referrals to other offices),
- Staff development (e.g., wellness programs), and
- Staff appreciation (e.g., annual appreciation breakfast).

Staff Engagement

Inclusive Decision-Making and Communication Increase Staff Engagement

Primary concerns during transition include elimination of positions and reorganization without staff input. Directors include staff in decision-making and improve their internal communication to reassure staff they benefit from transitions.

Strategies to Improve Internal Communication

Require Supervisors Meet Individually with Staff Once Every Two Weeks

Half hour meetings suffice to improve communication between supervisors and their staff. Directors encourage supervisors and staff to maintain continuous lists of topics to discuss (e.g., concerns, ideas for improvements, upcoming projects). Biweekly meetings create opportunities for informal performance reviews so staff can improve their performance throughout the year.

Host Regular (e.g., Monthly) Meetings of All Unit Staff

Monthly or quarterly meetings mitigate siloes among staff teams and improve collaboration. Directors review each team's current responsibilities and invite staff to ask questions of leadership and colleagues. Meetings also include team building and engagement activities such as games to increase participation.

Organize Annual Events for All Staff

All admissions staff at **University B** participate in a week-long summer event, including staff from regional offices. The event includes team building activities, updates on office responsibilities, and strategic planning.

Meetings at **University B** offer staff opportunities to develop relationships and build a more collaborative office environment. When a significant increase in international applications increased the international admissions unit's workload, another unit volunteered to assume their shifts to assist walk-in students or students who call the office with questions for one month.

Staff Reductions Through Natural Attrition Ease Staff Concerns

Staff retirements or resignations allow directors to reconsider staff structures without elimination of current staff.

Process to Determine Positions' Futures after Staff Attrition

Do we still need a staff member to fill this position?

No. → Eliminate position. Redistribute any remaining responsibilities to other staff.

Yes. ↓

Do we need the position to perform the same responsibilities?

No. → Redefine position responsibilities.

Yes. ↓

Do we need the same skills and experience to perform these responsibilities?

No. → Identify skills or experience current staff lack (e.g. familiarity with highly selective admissions) that candidates for this position should exhibit.

Yes. ↓

Advertise the position with the same required qualifications and responsibilities as before.