



The Evolving Role of Faculty in **Student Success**





EAB

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Executive Summary

The Evolving Role of Faculty in Student Success

An Organizational Dilemma—Who Owns Student Success?

No one unit, office, or individual can truly “own” student retention and completion, given the incredible complexity of students’ experiences on campus. From enrollment management and student affairs to advising offices and undergraduate colleges, dozens of organizational units on campus can (and should) stake a claim to student success. Making a meaningful improvement in retention and graduation rates requires extensive coordination among all of these stakeholders.

Central investments in support staff, technology, and new services make only a marginal difference when they are not embraced or fully adopted across campus. The student success literature is now replete with well-documented recommendations for improving outcomes, but practices and technologies are only as powerful as the culture in which they are implemented. Many high-impact practices are stuck in small-scale pockets on campus or have simply faded away over time, as grant funding and enthusiasm dissipate.

Without engagement among faculty, most top-down student success initiatives are doomed to fail, either through outright opposition or because of a limited reach. Critical reforms that pertain to curricular requirements, academic policies, advising practices, and transfer articulation all rely on the willingness of faculty to redesign the institutional approach and carry out a new set of procedures, but many academic administrators have neglected to involve faculty from the outset.

While it is well-known that faculty-student interaction is key to student success, few institutions have clearly articulated expectations for the academy in supporting persistence. Everyone supports student success in principle, but in practice, aiding the institutional cause requires clarifying exactly what behaviors are required of individual faculty members and academic units.

The Role of Individual Faculty Members and Instructors

The most important responsibility of individual faculty members is to enhance the student learning experience. Pedagogical innovations shown to improve student success are abundant on many campuses, but instructors often lack the training or the support needed to replicate those innovations in their particular context. Administrators should reduce the opportunity costs of experimentation in the classroom and leverage faculty leaders to expand effective teaching techniques across departments.

Faculty utilization of early warning systems to identify at-risk students depends on their flexibility and on their perceived impact. More than three quarters of colleges and universities in the US have developed or purchased an early warning system, but they are woefully underutilized. Allowing faculty members to customize the threshold for academic risk and the intervention protocols can help to expand the ranks of willing participants. The provost and academic deans must reinforce the importance of early alerts among faculty, and demonstrate their impact on getting help to students in a timely matter.

Student support efforts tend to target the most- and least-at-risk students; faculty-student mentoring should address those in between. If students fail to establish a meaningful connection to campus in their first year, they are more likely to struggle as they enter the upper division. Targeting faculty mentoring programs toward students who are academically on track, but not engaged in a learning community or student organization can help to build broader involvement among this critical group.



Faculty as Individual Contributors

Helping Faculty Members to Reach, Teach, and Support the Students Who Need Them Most

-
- Enhance the Learning Experience
 - Flag Signs of Student Risk
 - Mentor Rising-Risk Student Groups

A Profusion of Pedagogical Advances

In clarifying how individual faculty members can support their institution's student success goals, the first important activity to consider is teaching. The classroom comprises the biggest opportunity for faculty to impact, inspire, and engage students.

Critics of higher education often lament a perceived lack of innovation in the classroom, leading, they say, to stagnant student learning outcomes, outdated curricula, and ultimately poor completion rates.

There is no shortage of pedagogical innovation across the sector, however. From public research universities to private baccalaureate colleges, we have identified groundbreaking approaches to instruction that promise tremendous results.

Advances in active learning, for example, have illustrated dozens of alternatives to the traditional lecture that can dramatically improve outcomes in introductory STEM courses.

Faculty in a variety of disciplines have mapped concrete skills and outcomes to syllabi, helping their departments systematically measure and improve the learning experience over time.

Institutions Across Segments Experimenting with Curriculum and Delivery

Public 4-Year



Accelerated Degree Pathways



iAMSTEM Active Learning Redesign



Adaptive Learning in First-Year Math



Alternative Classroom Designs

Private 4-Year



Competency-Based Education



Course Modularization



Prior Learning Assessment



Online First-Year Gen Ed Courses

Canadian 4-Year



Entrepreneurship Incubators



Competency-Focused Syllabi



Teaching-Stream Faculty Rank



Active Learning Lecture Software

Public 2-Year



Open Course Library



Predictive Academic Analytics



Employer Curriculum Collaborations



Student-Centered Developmental Math

Scaling Learning Innovations

The challenge for college and university leaders is not, then, in creating innovation from scratch; instead, they must focus on identifying innovative faculty members, supporting and rewarding their efforts, encouraging others to emulate their practices, and channeling those practices toward institutional priorities—with student retention and completion at the forefront.

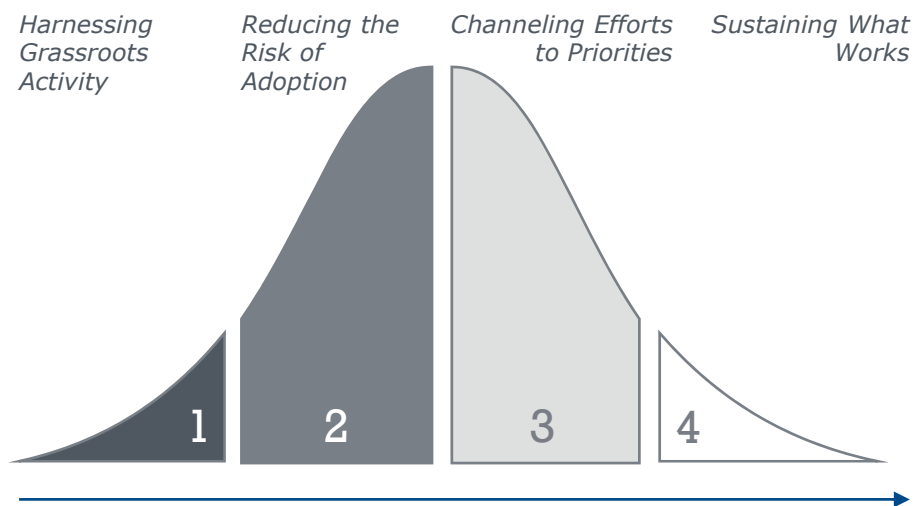
Progressive institutions are increasing the ranks of great instructors on their campuses—leveraging entrepreneurial faculty and instructional design staff to reward and expand great teaching.

But many schools still face “the perpetual pilot problem”—the tendency for institutions to invest heavily in small, singular experiments, but ultimately fail to inflect the larger pedagogical culture on campus.

Most campuses suffer not only from this problem, but from an under-resourced and under-staffed center for teaching and learning as well; these shared service units are often viewed as punitive in nature, rather than as safe spaces for experimentation or as incubators of innovation.

From Early Adopters to Campus-Wide

The Learning Innovations Adoption Curve



Surfacing and Supporting Innovators

- Identify innovative faculty
- Reduce risk of investment

Aligning with Institutional Initiatives

- Prioritize complementary room and facility assignments
- Provide effective departmental incentives for course redesigns

Lowering Opportunity Costs

- Demonstrate effectiveness of alternative pedagogies
- Increase confidence in technology
- Hardwire social rewards

Prioritizing Innovation in the Academy

- Reconsider the role of innovation in promotion and tenure
- Document learning innovations and explore new instruction-focused roles

Don't Let Classroom Contact Go to Waste

Just as classroom interaction provides a context for learning, it also provides an occasion for faculty to identify and support students at risk of failure or disengagement.

As important as academic advising is to student success, students might spend only one or two hours per term with their designated advisor. In contrast, a student taking a full course load might spend 225 hours with faculty in the classroom over the course of a term.

Attendance and early grades are both powerful predictors of student attrition risk and can be gathered within the first few months of class. Mississippi State University (MSU) found that students who miss three or more sessions of a given class have a first-term GPA that is 1.6 points lower than those without attendance problems. These students are not just less academically prepared—their internal data showed that both groups had similar standardized test scores.

Early or midterm grades are also important predictors of longer-term success, across a variety of disciplines.

As a result, the majority of postsecondary institutions have invested in early warning systems, designed to help faculty to “flag” signs of student risk in the classroom and better target support services to those in need.

Leverage Faculty-Student Interactions to Aid Risk Identification and Engagement Strategy

Average first semester student hours spent...



1

...in an
advising office



225

...in a classroom,
assuming full
course load

Powerful predictive metrics right under our noses

1.6

First-year GPA gap
between students
with and without
attendance problems

(Mississippi State
University, 2013)

In all cases analyzed, midterm and first-exam grades strongly predicted final grades ... Midterm and final grades were also strongly correlated in a variety of other academic disciplines at the liberal arts college, including the humanities, the social sciences, and the fine arts.”

James Barron & Philip Jensen

Journal of College Science Teaching
(2014)

In response, extensive deployment of early warning systems in higher education

74%

Public
Universities

78%

Private
Universities

68%

Community
Colleges

Getting from Acceptance to Buy-In

The existence and even ubiquity of early warning systems in higher education does not mean that they have been effective in preventing attrition.

Many institutions fail to garner initial support from faculty at the outset, typically because of poor user design, a lack of communication and training, and unclear protocols for referring students to services.

Still others reach a small number of willing instructors, but fail to achieve enough adoption to meaningfully improve student outcomes. These institutions have made strides in making their grade, attendance, and risk reporting systems user-friendly, but have failed to allow for sufficient customization among faculty or to convince the faculty of the critical link between early intervention and long-term success at the institution.

The following practices can dramatically improve early warning system adoption by addressing the shortcomings listed above.

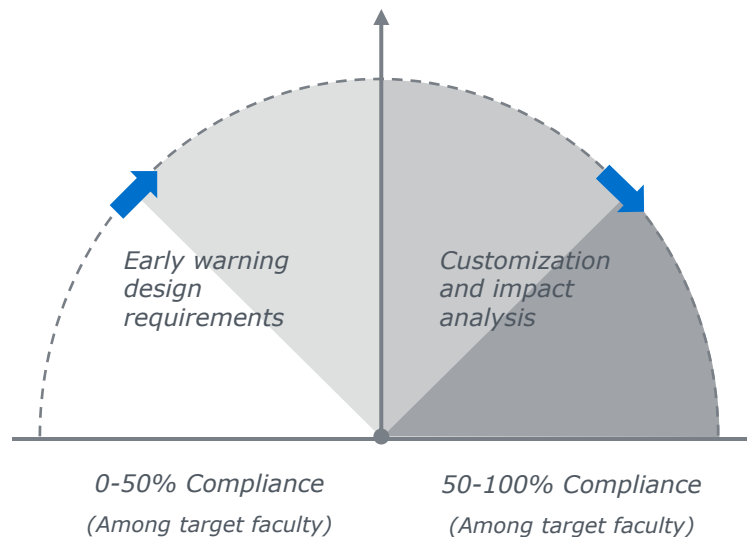
System Design Only Part of the Challenge

Garner Initial Support

Faculty and staff trained on early warning system
Reporting and response processes are clear

Achieve Full Adoption

Faculty convinced of system's impact
Processes customized to promote further use



“Right now, faculty do not clearly see the correlation between what happens to a student in their classroom and what happens to that same student at the institution. That is a gap we have to fix.”

Dean, Large Public University

Alay Initial Concerns by Streamlining System

Building momentum during the early development and deployment of an early warning system requires attention to the basic design principles featured on the right.

The system should be simple—giving faculty a single referral point for any student concern (not a list of a dozen support offices and contacts to memorize), ensuring that teaching assistants and contingent faculty are trained on its use, and deployed primarily in high-risk courses taken by first-year students.

Alerts should also be handled in a way that is sensitive to both student and faculty concerns about privacy, tone, and intervention triggers.

The most effective systems limit full access to alert records, but encourage broad utilization of the flag system. Student support staff and advisors should also ensure that faculty are notified both of an alert's receipt, and of the resulting action taken.

California State University – Northridge, for example, developed a streamlined, effective early warning system to flag students with attendance and performance problems.

Early Alert Processes Should Be Simple, Strategic, and Sensitive to Student and Faculty Concerns



Making It Simple

Single Referral

- Faculty given option to suggest specific response, but able to send all alerts to single office

Target High-Risk Courses and Students

- Focus compliance efforts at highest-impact populations

All-Inclusive

- Single system for logging academic, attendance, and behavioral alerts

Includes Assistants

- Train graduate and teaching assistants to ensure coverage of introductory course sections



Addressing Faculty Concerns

Student Privacy

- Faculty, advisors, RAs, and support staff able to submit alerts, but full access limited

Positive Messaging

- Students encouraged to take clear action steps, rather than simply alerted of risk

Follow-up

- Faculty informed of alert receipt, as well as progress and resolution of cases

Flexible Faculty Role

- Faculty able to decide whether and how to get involved with student issues

Allow for Flexible Application

To move beyond the initial deployment of an early warning system and build broader faculty engagement, consider allowing for flexibility in its application.

Student success staff at West Virginia University (WVU) found that the ability to customize aspects of their alert process was central to garnering faculty buy-in.

First, rather than insisting on one particular week during the term to collect midterm or early exam grades, WVU allows each instructor to determine when, between weeks three and six, to report whether students are at risk for failure.

Second, rather than having one grade threshold by which to assess all student risk, WVU allows faculty to determine what constitutes "on track" or "off track" for their students. This approach avoids a lengthy debate about whether a "C," for example, is cause for alarm on each particular assessment in each specific course.

Finally, faculty can select and rank the kinds of resources or referrals they think are appropriate for a given student. Faculty can recommend tutoring, supplementary instruction, additional office hours, or leave the decision up to the early warning office, for example.

Instructor-Specific Time Window and Grade Scale Improve Adoption



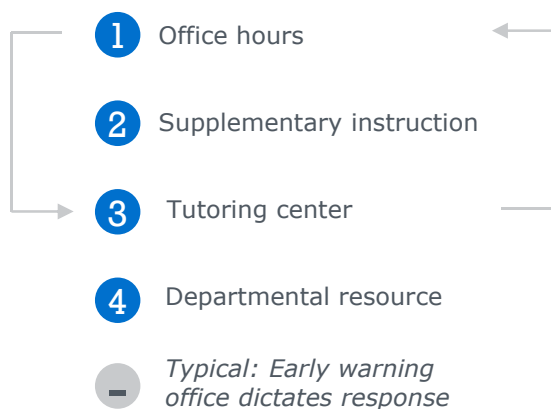
Faculty asked to determine best early assessment point



Faculty determine assessment that constitutes "on track"



Faculty able to choose and prioritize resources sent to students



Illustrating Impact

Understandably, faculty members often view these systems as yet another reporting process they're meant to comply with, as opposed to a critical tool that can make the difference in whether a student completes their degree or drops out of college.

To change that perception, messaging about early alerts should come from the provost or other academic leaders that faculty feel accountable to rather than a central student success office or staff member. It is no surprise that the institutions enjoying the highest participation rates among faculty tend to send introductory and reminder notices about the systems through the provost. Department chairs and deans then follow up with individual instructors that have not reported early academic alerts or midterm grades.

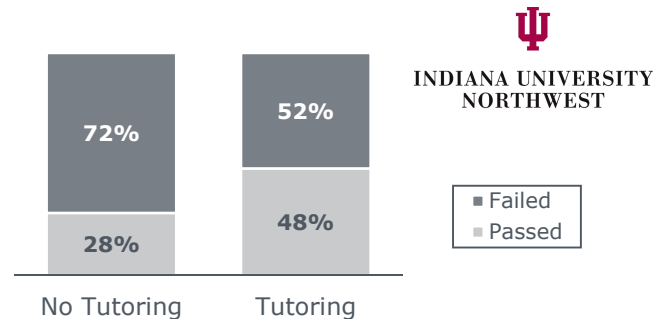
The administration should also evaluate and report on their early warning system's impact. For example, Indiana University Northwest publishes data on how students who are flagged and then use academic support services perform, compared to those who are not flagged or are flagged and fail to use the resources. Revealing the impact of these interventions helps to overcome faculty skepticism.

Alerts Serve to Help Students Succeed, Not to Punish Bad Teaching

1 Promotion and compliance messaging should come from academic leaders

- Provost reminds faculty each term of relationship between early risk indicators and attrition
- Department chairs and deans contact faculty who fail to submit necessary alerts (not central support office or academic advisors)

2 Demonstrate increased utilization of support services and effect on grades, retention



More Than Compliance at Stake

"If instructors and staff are not aware of how the systems work or why they are structured the way they are, and if the only messages they receive about it are regarding participation, a significant opportunity for campus-wide discussions about retention and student success has been missed."

"Early Alert Project Action Team: Final Report"
Western Michigan University (2014)

Early Neglect Can Lead to Late Attrition

Most universities have spent decades investing in support resources for both their highest- and lowest-risk students. So called “high flyer programming,” including undergraduate research opportunities, honors colleges, study abroad, and living-learning communities is often sought out by high-performing students. Students with common risk signs (first generation, low test scores, remediation needs, etc.) are often given extra resources as well.

The challenge, as Vince Tinto explains on the right, is to engage students traditionally left out of these programs.

While students in the middle of the preparedness spectrum might not show obvious signs of risk in their first term or two, they often encounter problems later in their academic career—when faculty are uniquely positioned to help. But without experience or established relationships with faculty, these students might not be willing to reach out for the assistance they require.

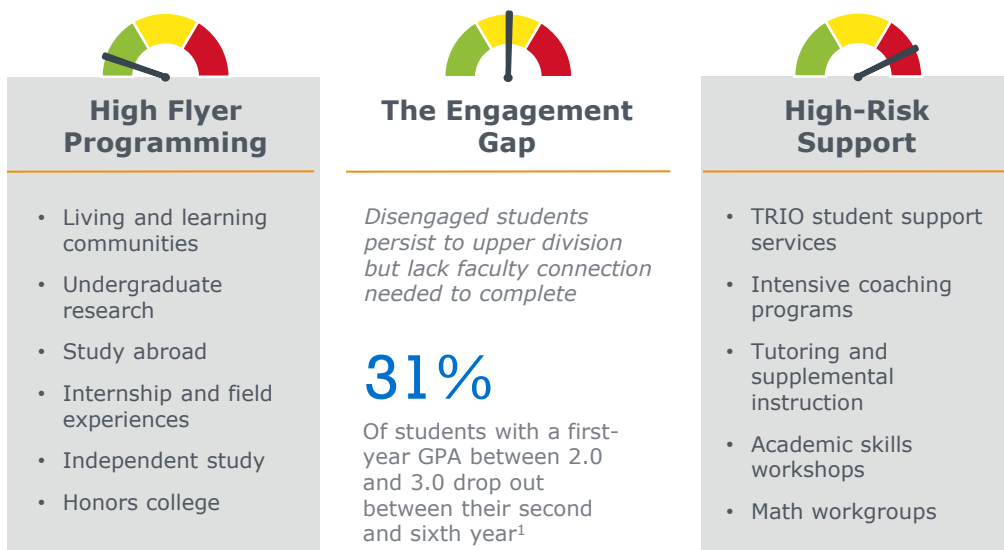
Faculty leaders at the University of Colorado, Boulder (CU Boulder) set out to tackle this issue, hoping to help unengaged students build greater confidence and academic direction in the first year.

Support Services and Enrichment Activities Focused Primarily on Most and Least at Risk

“Involvement, or what is increasingly being referred to as engagement, matters and it matters most during the critical first year of college. What is less clear is... how to make it happen in different settings and for differing students in ways that enhance retention and graduation.”

Vincent Tinto

Research and Practice of Student Retention: What Next?



“We have a ton of programming aimed at both the top 10 percent and the bottom 10 percent of our incoming class. Unfortunately, we hadn’t done as much for all the students in the middle.”

Paul Chinowsky, Associate Vice Provost for Student Success
University of Colorado - Boulder

¹) EAB analysis of 740,000 students at 73 public and private universities in the US (2014 “Murky Middle Project,” Student Success Collaborative).

Expanding Faculty Advising Programs

The CU Boulder Faculty Assembly strategically re-targeted its faculty-student mentoring program with over 100 participating faculty members to reach students in the “engagement gap.”

About 50% of first-year students at the institution live in a living-learning community called a Residential Academic Program (RAP), which are designed to convene students around a common academic theme with faculty guidance. Assembly leaders decided to focus mentoring activities on the other 50 percent of first-year students, proactively reaching out during the summer and asking the residential advisors in their dormitories to refer students to the mentoring program during their first few weeks.

The program then matches students with faculty mentors based on a detailed sign-up form that includes students’ interests, major plans, and risk indicators (such as intent to work full-time or off-campus).

Faculty mentors hold weekly “fireside chats” around common academic and non-academic obstacles that students tend to face during their first year. They are armed with a week-by-week topic syllabus and guidance on when to refer difficult questions to specialists.

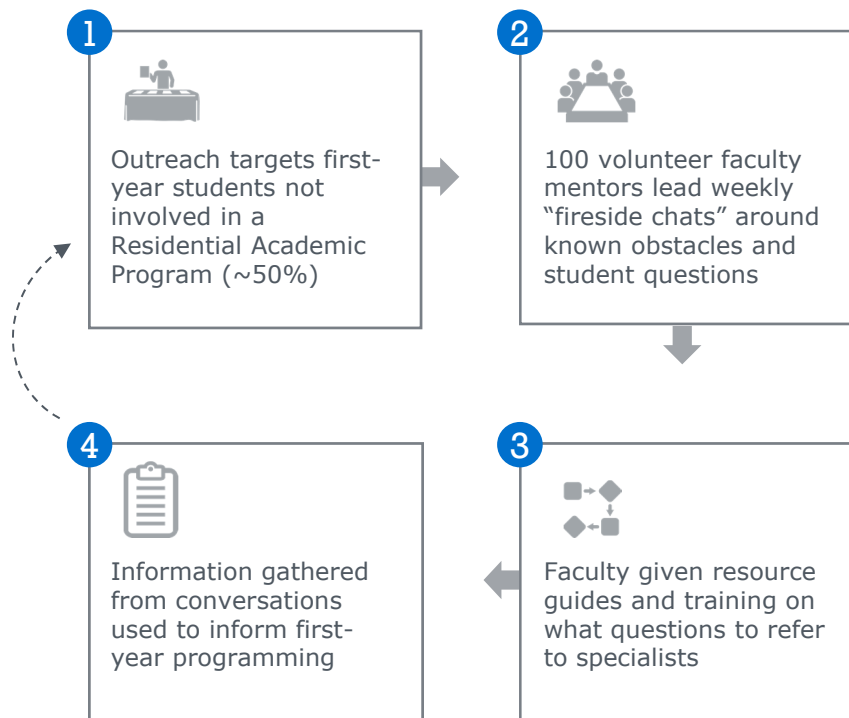
Deploying Mentoring Efforts to Proactively Address Long-Term Risk



The Faculty-Student Mentor Program

University of Colorado Boulder

- Program created by Faculty Assembly to address upper-division success
- Students encouraged to sign up at orientation and throughout summer
- Students are matched to mentors based on interests and major choice
- Online sign-up form gathers critical information to assess risk (anticipated credit load, employment plans, concerns)



Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Student Sign Up-Form

Template – University of Colorado, Boulder



General Information

1. Student Name: _____
2. Email Address: _____
3. Phone Number: _____
4. Residency Status:
 - ☐ In-State
 - ☐ Out-of-State

Student Interests

5. Personal Interests (check all that apply):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Band/Orchestra/Choir | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biking | <input type="checkbox"/> Politics and Government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dancing | <input type="checkbox"/> Faith and Religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercising | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking | <input type="checkbox"/> Theatre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intramural Sports | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Movies | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing |

6. Academic Interests (check all that apply):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts (e.g., art history, music dance) | <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics, Computing, and Engineering (e.g., computer science, IT, data analytics) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biology and Health Sciences (e.g., biology, nursing, psychology) | <input type="checkbox"/> Media and Journalism (e.g., communications, public relations, advertising) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business (e.g., consulting, finance, marketing) | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Sciences (e.g., chemistry, geology, physics) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Sciences (e.g., economics, history, political science) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sciences (e.g., sustainability, ecology) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humanities (e.g., philosophy, English, foreign languages) | |

7. Prospective Major or Minor: _____

8. Do you prefer to be matched by:

- ☐ Your personal interests
- ☐ Your major and academic interests
- ☐ Either one

Student Sign Up-Form (continued)

Logistical Information

9. Do you plan on working during your first semester?

☐ Yes

☐ No

10. If yes, do you plan on working:

☐ On campus

☐ Off campus

☐ I am not sure yet

11. List the days and times of the week you will be available for mentoring sessions.

Student Concerns and Motivations

12. What do you hope to learn from your mentor? _____

13. What concerns do you have about your first semester? _____

14. Is this your first choice institution?

☐ Yes

☐ No

15. If not, are you planning to transfer?

☐ Yes

☐ No

16. If yes, what institution are you planning to transfer to? _____

17. Additional information you would like to share about yourself. _____

18. How did you hear about the faculty student mentoring program?

☐ Orientation

☐ Social Media

☐ Website

☐ Email

☐ Family Member or Friend

☐ Other

Sample Faculty Mentoring Syllabus

Week	Topic
Week 1	Transitioning to College Faculty mentors meet with students in residential halls to acquaint students to their new surroundings. Mentors offer advice on how to deal with homesickness, how to overcome social anxiety, and the differences between high school and college. This session can also be used to strategically identify early attrition risk by surveying students about their intent to transfer and level of disengagement at the institution.
Week 2	Success in Lecture Courses By the second mentoring session, students have attended a few of their courses and are aware of the differences between high school and college-level coursework and academic expectations. Topics broached in this session may include how to participate in class, tips on note-taking, and how to prepare for recitation sessions that are a part of larger lecture courses.
Week 3	Time Management Time management is a concept that almost every college freshman struggles with as new students are awarded much more free time throughout the day and more autonomy in their course selection, studying practices, and exam preparation. Mentors can offer advice on how much time students should devote to each class per week and how to budget one's time effectively between academic and social engagements.
Week 4	Campus Organizations and Clubs By the fourth week of classes, students have probably attended a number of orientation sessions and campus events that introduce the various types of clubs and organizations students can participate in. In this session, mentors may ask representatives from student groups to present to the group based on the specific interests and hobbies of their mentees. In addition, mentors can recommend participation in certain types of co-curricular activities that facilitate a student's longer term academic and career goals.
Week 5	Study Skills for Midterms and Finals In week five, midterm examinations are approaching and students will most likely have questions on how to effectively prepare for those exams. This is an opportunity for faculty members to offer broad advice on how students can organize their study materials, model their study habits to their particular learning style, and approach different types of midterm examinations. Since students and mentors are typically matched based on academic interests, faculty mentors can share their in-depth knowledge of how particular disciplines test subject areas.
Week 6	What to Discuss in Faculty Office Hours Freshmen students can be easily intimidated by the professors instructing their large lecture courses, where students might fade into the background. However, it is imperative that students become comfortable speaking with faculty early on because later academic success depends increasingly on interactions with faculty in the student's disciplinary area. Mentors can equip students with sets of questions to ask in office hour sessions so that students come prepared to engage with their professors.
Week 7	Mid-Semester Outing It is important to give students the opportunity to release some steam midway through the semester by organizing a fun group activity. This might be something simple like gathering for coffee at a local café or something more involved like going to a campus performance or sporting event. Having a relaxed session halfway through the semester reminds students that the mentorship program is designed to be a fun way to engage with faculty members rather than a freshmen requirement.
Week 8	Managing Stress By week 8, students are about halfway through the semester and start to feel the burden of balancing more intense academic curriculum with social obligations. This session should introduce relaxation strategies to help students release their stress in positive ways. In addition, mentors should orient students to the various student support services at their disposal (e.g., mental health, counseling).

Sample Faculty Mentoring Syllabus (cont.)

Week	Topic
Week 9	Choosing a Major <p>Since early major selection gets students on track to timely graduation and positively impacts student retention and graduation rates, mentors should use this session to explore student academic interests and help students find a right-fit major. While many students still might be unsure about their choice, bringing major selection to their attention early will help keep major top of mind as they advance into their spring semester.</p>
Week 10	Course Selection <p>By week 10, students are nearing the registration period for the upcoming semester. After a full semester of new courses, personal exploration, and academic and career planning, students should be ready to select a more cohesive set of courses that relate to their longer-term academic goals. Faculty knowledge of their discipline as well as their relationships with their colleagues can inform student decisions on interesting courses to take and strong professors in certain disciplinary areas.</p>
Week 11	Career Planning <p>As a follow-up to the major choice and course selection sessions, faculty mentors can use the career planning session to map student interests to potential career tracks and job opportunities. Mentors may ask career services representatives to present to their mentees on the services they offer. This is also a good opportunity to have students take assessments like the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Strengthsfinder 2.0, or Strong Interest Inventory to help them match their interests, skills, and personalities to their educational and career goals.</p>
Week 12	Paper Writing <p>The style, length, and depth of analysis involved in college-level paper writing differs greatly from the type of writing students are used to from high school. In this session, mentors can offer students advice on how to brainstorm, outline, and structure college-level papers. In addition, students should be offered a writing tips worksheet with quick fixes for reforming their writing style (e.g., present over passive voice, avoidance of "to be" verbs).</p>
Week 13	Introduction to Co-Curricular Activities <p>Involvement in co-curricular activities like undergraduate research, living and learning communities, capstone projects, on-campus employment, study abroad, and service-based learning is strongly correlated with student retention and timely graduation. Since students leave the comfort and insulation of extensive first-year programming like the faculty mentoring program after their freshman year, this is a good opportunity to introduce the variety of available co-curricular activities for upperclassmen. Since faculty participation is an integral part of many co-curricular programs, faculty mentors are well-positioned to speak to the value added for participation in the programs.</p>
Week 14	Studying for Finals <p>While faculty mentors led a session on studying for midterms in week 5, students would benefit from a refresher session on strategies to prepare for final examinations. Often, final exams are much longer and require many more components (e.g., writing sections, fill-in-the blank) than midterm exams. This session should offer recommendations for finals-specific needs (e.g., creating study plans during reading days, organizing essays in blue books, budgeting time during extended exam sessions).</p>
Week 15	End of Semester Outing <p>Faculty mentors should end the semester with a fun outing with all of their mentees. This may be a dinner at the mentor's home, a campus performance or concert, an athletic event, or a holiday party. The final session should celebrate the strides that the mentees have made in acclimating to college life, exploring their academic and career interests, and getting involved in campus life and culture.</p>

Predicting Preventable Transfer Losses

A significant share of attrition among colleges and universities occurs among students in good academic standing; many of these students are simply transferring to other institutions, rather than dropping or stopping out.

While it is in no institution's best interest to prevent all transfer losses, few have made serious efforts to identify and attempt to retain students considering transfer due to a lack of engagement.

By surveying new students to gauge their interest in and commitment to the institution, connecting students at risk to transfer with faculty mentors in their area of interest, collecting data from students who leave to enroll elsewhere, and actively monitoring transcript requests, institutions can create a cohesive intervention strategy that helps to mitigate unnecessary attrition.

Students who view their first term or even first two years at an institution as a mere stepping stone to a different university are not likely to engage in the small seminar courses and extra-curricular activities that foster a sense of belonging. Faculty are well-positioned to convince these students to stay, by showing them programs, courses, and opportunities that match students' long-term ambitions.

From Stepping Stone to Disciplinary Destination

37%

Of all first-time students transfer or enroll at a different institution at least once within 6 years

33%

Attrition that occurs after the 2nd year in good academic standing

40%

Of leavers have estimated GPAs above 3.25



Proactive Identification of Engagement Risk

Orientation survey, involvement analysis, or advisor referral prompts mentoring outreach

1 Matriculation



2 Students Matched with Faculty Mentors

Meeting with faculty in desired program to discuss opportunities for co-curricular involvement



3 Transfer

Exit Survey

Diagnose motivation to inform attrition analysis



Reactive Engagement Monitoring

Transcript requests analyzed to identify potential transfer risks—students connected with faculty mentor

Graduation

Source: Delta Cost Project "Measuring the Costs of Attrition"; National Clearinghouse Transfer and Mobility Report; EAB interviews and analysis.

Conclusion: Faculty at the Center of Student Success

By any definition of student success—from blunt retention metrics to life-long fulfillment—research has demonstrated a strong link between faculty activity and student outcomes.

Umbach and Wawrzynski, in “Faculty Do Matter: The Role of College Faculty in Student Learning and Engagement,” suggest that faculty-student interaction is frequently among the best predictors of both learning outcomes and term-to-term persistence.

Research emerging from Gallup and Purdue University’s collaboration on long-term student outcomes underlines that message, showing that close faculty-student relationships result in significantly greater levels of happiness and engagement later in students’ careers.

The unfortunate dilemma, the authors note, is that too few college graduates report having those relationships. Their power may be beyond question, but colleges and universities are only at the beginning in trying to ensure that every student feels engaged, supported, and connected throughout their career.

Research on Retention and Long-Term Well-Being Confirms Critical Role



Contributing to Persistence

“In accordance with Chickering and Gamson, several researchers documented the strong association of both formal and informal faculty-student contact to enhanced student learning. **These interactions influenced the degree to which students became engaged with faculty and were frequently the best predictors of student persistence** (Braxton, Sullivan, & Johnson, 1997; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Pascarella & Terenzini; Stage & Hossler, 2000).”

Paul Umbach and Matthew Wawrzynski

“Faculty Do Matter: The Role of College Faculty in Student Learning and Engagement”



Contributing to Well-Being

“[I]f graduates had a professor who cared about them as a person, made them excited about learning, and encouraged them to pursue their dreams, their odds of being engaged at work nearly doubled, as did their odds of thriving in their well-being ... **Feeling supported and having deep learning experiences means everything when it comes to long-term outcomes for college graduates ... Yet few college graduates achieve the winning combination.** Only 14% of graduates strongly agree that they were supported by professors who cared, made them excited about learning and encouraged their dreams.”

Great Jobs, Great Lives

The 2014 Gallup-Purdue Index Report

Source: Paul D. Umbach and Matthew R. Wawrzynski, “Faculty Do Matter: The Role of College Faculty in Student Learning and Engagement,” *Research in Higher Education* (2005); “The 2014 Gallup-Purdue Index Report,” Lumina Foundation (2014); EAB interviews and analysis.

Advisors to Our Work

With Sincere Appreciation to Those Who Shared Their Insights and Expertise

Kim Allen-Stuck
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Success and Educational Support
Saint Joseph's University

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