Data to Action: Freshman Retention Project

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Project: Data to Action: Freshman Retention Project

April, 2012

Originally designed to improve the persistence of freshman students and due to the success of the Fall Registration Project, PSU has expanded the original project into a year-long, Freshman Retention Project and incorporated financial awards to assist students in completing their academic plans.

Project Working Group
Mirela Blekic (University Studies), James Ofsink (Financial Aid), Sukhwant Jhaj (University Studies), Dan Fortmiller (Enrollment Management and Student Affairs), Rowanna Carpenter (University Studies), Paloma Harrison (College of Liberal Arts & Sciences), Martha Dyson (College of Liberal Arts & Sciences), Becki Ingersoll (Academic & Career Services), Becky Sanchez (School of Business), Robert Mercer (College of Liberal Arts & Sciences), Amanda Nguyen (Business Affairs), Louise McDonald (Business Affairs).

Project Descriptions
About 10% of freshmen students who are admitted in fall do not transition to winter term and about 15-20% of the students who complete their freshmen year do not return the following fall. In addition, students who have major concerns about financing their education and students who are not sure about their plans (as identified in FRINQ Prior Learning Survey) tend to leave at a higher rate. Similarly, students with HS GPA below 3.0 and conditionally admitted students tend to leave at a higher rate. Finally, about 80% of the students who indicate (in the FRINQ End-of-Year Survey) they are not planning to return the following fall, do not come back. These projects are designed to intervene with students at critical junctions in their educational experience at Portland State University and offer financial awards as needed once academic plans have been created.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Items</th>
<th>Key Barriers</th>
<th>Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ongoing</strong>: as students come in for advising, advisers pay attention to and address risk factors and areas of focus.</td>
<td>• Preponderance of students needing intervention.</td>
<td>To identify students who are at risk of not succeeding in their first year and not returning in their second year and to provide intervention helping students to stay at PSU and complete their education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outreach and intervention at critical points:</strong> Contact students who did not register using information provided in the retention database</td>
<td>• Financial resource availability.</td>
<td>These actions will ultimately lead to increased retention and student success.</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Fall to winter registration</td>
<td>• Institutional capacity.</td>
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<td>o Spring to fall registration</td>
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<td>• Communicate/intervene with students identified as leaving or at risk of leaving.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Include financial award as form of intervention:</td>
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<tr>
<td>o FRINQ Faculty and Freshman Retention Financial Awards</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Develop financial and academic plans with students who qualify for awards</td>
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<td>• Document intervention and any interaction in the retention database.</td>
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<td>• Check registration status periodically during the critical points of the year.</td>
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<td>• Communicate/intervene with students who have not registered (encourage registration/offer help).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Decision Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision Matrix</th>
<th>Executive Committee</th>
<th>Provost, VP Student Affairs</th>
<th>Leaders Action Council</th>
<th>Council of Academic Deans</th>
<th>Project Working Group</th>
<th>Implementing Department</th>
<th>Admissions and Records</th>
<th>Faculty Senate</th>
<th>ARC</th>
<th>Faculty Senate Committee</th>
<th>UCC</th>
<th>Public Meetings</th>
<th>Award Final Decision Comm</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key: (R) Recommend, (A) Agree, (P) Perform, (I) Input, (D) Decide.</td>
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<td>Promote registration for winter and fall classes</td>
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<td>Identify students at risk of not returning</td>
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<td>Contact students and provide intervention</td>
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<td>Provide awards to students in need of financial assistance</td>
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<td>R</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide continuous intervention throughout the academic year focusing on four identified areas</td>
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**Recommendations and Decisions**

Incorporate and expand Fall Registration Project, include financial award and rename the project into Freshmen Retention Project.

**Fall Registration Project:**
1. Provide necessary intervention to identified freshmen students who are at risk of not registering for fall term.
2. Coordinate efforts between advisers, the Financial Aid office and the Bursar’s office to facilitate registration of these “at risk” students.

**Freshman Retention Project**
1. Reach out to and intervene with freshman students during and immediately after the end of their first year at critical points and throughout their first year at PSU.
2. Focus on four areas of intervention including
   a. Conditionally admitted students,
   b. Students with HS GPA below 3.0,
   c. Students with financial concern,
   d. Students unsure about their plans

**FRINQ Faculty Financial Award**
1. Reduce the impact of financial concern and financial need on freshman student success and retention
2. Faculty members nominate prospective recipients for the FRINQ Faculty Financial Award
3. Students required to submit an academic and financial plan

**Freshmen Retention Project Financial Award**
1. Use a combination of centralized and decentralized decision making
2. Identify students to receive awards geared towards completing their academic goals
3. Advisers and Bursar’s office staff identify potential students
4. FRPFA committee makes final decisions on which students are selected
5. Educational component must be included (such as in FRINQ Faculty Financial Award)
6. Amounts to be divided between spring and the following fall in order to facilitate second year planning and persistence

**Funding Required**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$50,000-100,000</td>
<td>Reduce the impact of financial concern and financial need on freshman student success and retention</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please direct questions regarding Freshmen Retention Project to Dr. Mirela Blekic, mirelab@pdx.edu, 503-725-9892.
Timeframe and Metrics
Timeframe: Review performance after fourth week of winter and fall term.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric Name/Description</th>
<th>Formula / Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project reach</td>
<td># of students served</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of outreach and intervention on students</td>
<td># of students who are served and retained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of financial awards on students</td>
<td># of students who received award and are retained</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Images of Retention Database:

**Main Screen:**

[Image of Retention Database]

Please direct questions regarding Freshmen Retention Project to Dr. Mirela Blekic, mirelab@pdx.edu, 503-725-9892.
Student Information View:

999999999 x y z, a b c

Student Info | Prior Learning Survey | End Year Survey | Sample Script

Date Updated: [Blank]
Registration Term: 201104
Status: Contacted - awaiting reply
Needs Financial Followup: [Blank]

Residency: [Blank]
High School GPA: 3.3

Address: [Blank]
Phone: [Blank]
Email: abc@pdx.edu

Academic Status
Cumulative Inst. GPA: [Blank]
Cumulative GPTP GPA: [Blank]
Current Academic Standing Term: 201102
Academic Standing: Good Standing

Registration Impediments
Balance: 213.5
Registration Holds:

Comments:
Comment:
Comment Date: 1/23/2011 3:30:56 PM
User Name: [Blank]

History Comments
Comment Date: [Blank]
User Name: [Blank]
Comment: [Blank]
Survey Responses View:

999999999
xyz, abc

Student Info | Prior Learning Survey | End Year Survey | Sample Script

I have developed strong relationships with students at PSU:  
I have developed strong relationships with faculty members at PSU:  
I feel a sense of belonging at PSU:  
I have developed a strong relationship with a UASC or Major advisor:  

Do you have any concerns about your ability to pay for college next year?  

What are your plans for next fall (2011)?

If you are not planning to attend PSU in the fall, please list the reasons you are not returning:

- Finances
- Dissatisfied with the educational experience at PSU
- Personal Responsibilities
- Did not plan to graduate from PSU
- Academic Difficulty
- Job responsibilities
- Transfer to another institution
- Moving from Portland metro area

Comment:

Comment Date: 1/23/2012 4:30:56 PM
User Name: 

Please direct questions regarding Freshmen Retention Project to Dr. Mirela Blekic, mirelab@pdx.edu, 503-725-9892.