Institutional Challenges

1 COLLECTING AND USING DATA

Many institutions have expressed an interest in predictive modeling and analytics to help inform their discussion on retention and student success. With this discussion comes challenge of knowing about existing sources of information and identifying areas where information is needed. Additionally, data quality has come under more intensive scrutiny as we seek to use this information systematically.

Existing data: How are you thinking about your existing sources of information? Are they integrated or easy to access? Do you have a 'data directory' to help organize information about the data (definitions etc…)?

New data: How are you collecting new information? In what areas? Passively or actively?

Data quality: How are you addressing concerns around data quality at your institution? Is this an issue for you? If not, how have you avoided this problem?

2 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE – MIXED METHODS APPROACHES

Some would describe liberal arts colleges as 'words places'. The campus environment, community, and research question itself may not always lend itself to quantitative methods of analysis; this can certainly be true for all types of institutions.

Are you considering both qualitative and quantitative approaches to research on the topic of student success? Why or why not? If you are, how are you integrating these types of analysis? What has the reaction been to your work from the campus community? How are you generating buy in as it relates to research in this area?

3 PROACTIVE VERSUS REACTIVE INTERVENTIONS/PROGRAMMING

Many institutions have strong programming for students who are identified as likely to leave prior to graduation and indeed, many of these students are helped immensely by such programming and outreach. In addition, crisis intervention or 'putting out fires' is something that will remain an integral part of student retention and success work.

For students who are **not** identified as at risk of attrition, how are you thinking about proactively engaging students to avoid at risk classification (where possible)? What barriers do you see to a proactive approach? How can we integrate proactive work in an area where reactive work dominates human resources?

Are students failing to thrive because of lack of engagement or are they opting out of opportunities due to an existing sub-optimal experience? How does this relate to very early identification of at risk students?