Project Title: Academic Advising Interventions to Ensure a Timely Graduation
Institution/System Name: California State University, Long Beach (CSULB)
Innovation Category: Student Success: Retention/Completion
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Project Description: CSULB employs several interventionist advising programs to ensure that students are on track for a timely graduation. All first-year students are required to meet with advisors three times their first year. Destination Graduation advisors work with individual cohorts beginning in the 6th semester to ensure that students are making degree progress. The Timely Graduation Policy requires seniors to file for graduation between 90-120 units. Seniors are referred to advising units to ensure that graduation plans are attainable. Students who do not comply are required to see an advisor in order to register.

Objectives:
- Introduce first-year students to the importance of academic advising
- Identify juniors who are not making progress-to-degree
- Proactively reach out to students who are in need assistance
- Ensure that rising seniors have realistic graduation plans
- Ensure that seniors stay on track for their intended graduation

Quantifiable/Qualifiable Outcomes:
There has already been:
- An increased number of rising seniors filing for graduation
- A decreased number of “super” seniors (excessive number of earned units)

Eventually we hope to measure:
- Decreased time-to-degree-completion
- Increased 6-year graduation rates

Challenges/Problems Encountered: Advising was largely reactive, and switching to a proactive model has been a challenge for some units and departments. The institutional culture at CSULB inadvertently encouraged students to accrue many units and remain here for many years. Ensuring that students pursue a timely graduation required some culture change among students, faculty, and advisors.

Evaluation Approach: Destination Graduation goals were identified by the Vice Provost as part of university efforts to improve student retention and graduation. Baseline data from fall 2009 on seniors with large numbers of earned units was used to determine goals for the Timely Graduation project. Our advising programs have multiple levels of evaluation. The Senior Director of Advising monitors the outreach and success of Destination Graduation. The AVP for Enrollment Services tracks graduation applications and registration holds for “super” seniors. The university-level quantifiable outcomes are tracked by the Vice-Provost’s office.

Potential for Replication: These advising programs are easily replicable. They require dedicated professional advising staff, strong collaborations between Enrollment Services and Academic Affairs, and a student database system capable of providing easily accessible data on student degree progress. The number of staff required can be significantly reduced by the use of data for strategic advising.
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