ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS
Leaving a lasting mark on higher education

Webcast Materials and CD Recording:
Proactive Advising to Retain First-Year and Transfer Students

www.academicimpressions.com
Proactive Advising to Retain First-Year and Transfer Students

PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

After participating in this webcast series, you will be able to utilize the proactive advising model at your institution to help retain first-year and transfer students.
Proactive Advising to Retain First-Year and Transfer Students

PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

Implementing Proactive Advising on Your Campus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What population can the institution assist?</th>
<th>What if the institution does not assist?</th>
<th>Testing</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Proactive Advising Model</td>
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PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

HISTORY, THEORY, AND BENEFITS OF THE MODEL

ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS 4
Some statistics

- 53% of students entering our colleges and universities are academic underprepared
  - Lacking basic skills in at least one of 3 basic areas
    - Reading
    - Writing
    - Math
    - Tritelli, 2003

Effective Advising...

- Requires a holistic approach involving a broad understanding of the institution and student needs
  - Abelman & Molina, 2006
What has advising traditionally looked like?

Advising history

- Advising began in the colonial period when faculty acted in place of parents
- Late 1820s Kenyon College introduces first formal system of advising
  - Fillippino, Barnett & Roach, 1999
Traditional Models of Advising

- **Prescriptive**
  - Authoritarian relationship
    - Advisor makes diagnosis
    - Student follower prescription
  - Good for explaining policies, planning courses
  - Lacks student involvement
Proactive Advising to Retain First-Year and Transfer Students

PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

Developmental

- Shared responsibility between student and advisor
  - Promotes initiative and growth in student
  - Time and training-intensive

Integrated

- Best of both models
  - Policies are clearly communicated to students
  - Student involvement when practical
What is proactive advising?

- Once known as Intrusive Advising
- Began with the work of Robert Glennen in 1975
  - Sought to blend advising and counseling
  - Provide students with information before they request it and build a relationship with student at the same time

What is proactive advising?

- Glennen/UNLV
  - Used a volunteer group of faculty to pilot project
  - Given training on both advising and counseling
  - Pre-admission counseling, matriculation & scheduling
  - Studied student files for potential signs of distress
    - Academic & family history, etc.
Proactive Advising to Retain First-Year and Transfer Students

Proactive Advising...  
- Deliberate intervention to enhance student motivation  
- Use strategies to show interest and involvement with students  
- Intensive advising designed to  
  - Increase the probability of academic success  
- Educate students on all options  
- Approach students before “situations” develop

Glennen’s model
PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

Proactive advising

- A deliberate, structured student intervention at the first indication of academic difficulty in order to motivate a student to seek help
- Utilizes the good qualities of prescriptive advising (experience, awareness of student needs and structured programs) and of developmental advising (relationship to a student’s total needs)  
  
  Earl 1987

Academic Impressions 17

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Proactive Advising

- Having a more personal than professional approach, incorporating intervention strategies that allow the advisor to become an active part of the student’s life...helping the student to stay motivated.
- Personal relationship encourages students to be more responsible for their own academic performance
  
  Cruise, 2002

Academic Impressions 18
Benefits of Proactive Advising

- Facilitate informed, responsible decision making
- Increase student motivation toward activities in his or her academic or social community
- Ensure the probability of student academic success

Research suggests that contact with a significant person within an institution of higher education is a crucial factor in a student's decision to remain in college

(Heisserer & Parette, 2002)
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Be that person!

PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

- “Intrusive Advising is about getting to the heart of what is causing difficulty for a student and recommending the appropriate intervention” Earl (1987)
- “With intrusive advising, the institution takes the initiative in working with students and not waiting for them to come forward when they experience difficulties” Glennen (1975)
Proactive Advising to Retain First-Year and Transfer Students

Proactive advising...
- Students are more inclined to keep up with their work if they know an advisor will contact them
- Students receive necessary connection to university retention services
- Students are referred to needed support services
  - Reinforces the message that someone cares
Why?

• "academic advising is the only structured activity on the campus in which all students have the opportunity for ongoing, one to one interaction with a concerned representative of the institution"
  — Habley (1994)

Why?

• Sound academic advising program can assist in retention
• Results from expanded services and team in providing those services to students
  — Glennen, Farren & Vowell, 1996
Proactive Advising to Retain First-Year and Transfer Students

PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

Questions?

PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

PROACTIVE ADVISING AND RETENTION

ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS 27

ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS 28
PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

Where to begin?

- Begin proactively advising in the admissions process
  - Garing (1993) suggests that the first 3 weeks of a student's academic program are the first critical time in which advisors need to make contact with students
  - Garing (1993) also notes that the next critical time for outreach in the new student life cycle is during the middle of the term, with the third critical time being during preregistration

PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

- Sound academic advising program can assist the university in improving its retention rate by involving faculty advisors, professional counselors, student affairs professionals, administrators, admissions recruiters, residence hall personnel, financial aid workers, librarians, clerical workers and security officers. While reduction of student attrition is not the only goal of an advising program, increased retention does result from the expanded services and teamwork in services provided to students (p. 38). Glennen, Farren, Vowell & Black, 1996
Research has shown that the more actively engaged students are in all aspects of college life, the more likely they are to learn and stay in school.

(DiMaria, 2006)

Retention insights and Proactive Advising Strategies
## Proactive Advising to Retain First-Year and Transfer Students

### PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retention Insight</th>
<th>Proactive Advising Strategy</th>
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<tr>
<td>Students need to feel integrated into the program and school</td>
<td>Find connection points with students that are not exclusively academic, connect them with support and social outlets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pedagogy and instructor training affect retention</td>
<td>Develop relationship with faculty and share academic insights on their students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family obligations affect retention</td>
<td>Develop a relationship with students through which they share relevant information, refer students to counseling services if needed. Help students manage school and family obligations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support affects retention</td>
<td>Provide support from pre enrollment through graduation, connect with relevant support services</td>
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### PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

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<td>Interaction between students and the institution affects retention</td>
<td>Student interaction with the school begins long before the first class meeting. Be the link to support services and positive student interactions from pre enrollment to graduation</td>
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<td>Student satisfaction with the institutional environment affects retention</td>
<td>Be vigilant and responsive to student's needs; anticipate needs through relationship-based, proactive advising</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student variables affect retention</td>
<td>Use student relationship to help them develop positive habits and strategies to overcome academic, social and family challenges that may be impeding their academic performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best practices that affect retention</td>
<td>Encourage students to engage in their education, help them to find ways to be a proactive part of their learning experience.</td>
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PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

Organization

Student

Faculty

Student:

- Encourage students to
  - Meet frequently with advisors
  - Prepare for the advising session
- Encourage students to
  - Share relevant information with advisor
  - See the advisor in a timely manner
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Faculty:

• Provide support for students
  — Do not compromise academic integrity
• Provide opportunities to work in small groups
• Use an interactive teaching style
  — Involve all learning styles

Organization:

• Provide support systems for students
  — Financial aid
  — Avenues to interact with faculty
  — Adequate library services and resources
• Provide support systems for students
  — Access to campus “home base”
    • Computers, tutors, snacks, etc.
  — Adequate orientation
PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

- Recommend instructors whose style is well suited to the student’s preferred learning style/comfort areas
  - Check syllabi, gather recommendations
- Ensure that advisors are trained on “all relevant areas (including academic or non academic) that have an impact on students’ well being and success”

PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

Questions?

- Scenario: adult learners juggling too many responsibilities
  - Work
  - Family
  - school
Proactive Advising & At Risk Students

- Approximately 40% of all students who enroll at 4 year institutions fail to earn a degree, and nearly 57% of this group leaves before the start of the second term

Molina & Abelman, 2000
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Potential barriers for students

- Student characteristics: self-esteem, motivation, energy, person crises
- Faculty and staff: teacher disinterest, class size, lack of recognition in class
- The curriculum: language problems, lack of basic skills, inability to keep up with the work or pass tests
- Family: lack of money for college, lack of value for education, lack of communication, lack of monitoring of truancy, need for student to be a caretaker at home

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Places for advisor intervention:

- Introducing students to the rules, regulations and services of the institution and providing a clear explanation of the academic management tasks expected of the students. Examples of advisor intervention in this area includes: course withdrawal policies, registration deadlines, course load policies, financial aid filing deadlines etc.
Places for advisor intervention:

- Monitoring the progress of students to determine how well they are using the information provided. For example, are students registering for classes? Are the classes appropriate? How are the student's grades? Do any classes need to be repeated?

Places for advisor intervention:

- Intervening appropriately on the basis of the information the advisors collect. For example, does the student seem to have trouble writing? Is he or she doing very well in some of the courses in the program, but not others? Is the major the correct fit for the student? How can the student find needed support and services for the areas identified by the advisor?
PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

What makes Proactive Advising especially helpful?

- Focus on discovering nonacademic factors that may be preventing students from reaching their full academic potential
  - Financial stress
  - Family interactions
  - Social interactions

PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

- Focus on helping the student develop an internal locus of control
  - Helps them discover the relationship between their actions and academic success
  - Examples:
    - Destructive relationship with family member
    - Feeling left out of campus social circles
    - 'culture shock' of being away from home for the first time

ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS 47

ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS 48

Academic Impressions
Proactive Advising to Retain First-Year and Transfer Students

PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

The plan...

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1. Interactions with students; disclose information on academic probation

2. Construct a learning contract with student

3. Provide referrals to support services

4. Monitor grades

5. Establish goals, plans, and develop strategies to address non-academic factors that affect performance

Student Success
Questions?

- Scenario:
  - Students refusing to take developmental courses
  - Frequent major changers
  - Overwhelmed: out of school for many years

- Early Intervention is the Key
Proactive Advising to Retain First-Year and Transfer Students

BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIP

Proactive Advising and Critical Outreach Points
Develop a communications plan

1. Design the overall strategy first:
   a. What are the goals?
      i. Example: conduct one significant student outreach activity each week
          1. Webinars, SKYPE sessions, phone calls, group advising sessions
   b. How often will students receive proactive communication?
      i. Weekly, monthly?
   c. Which students?
      i. Divide students by major, class (freshmen), at risk, major change and
         create specific messaging geared to these students
   d. Message topics?
      • Important dates (registration, petition to graduate)
      • New classes
      • Networking opportunities, lectures, programs
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2. Integrate a special communications plan for new/entering students
   - Include pre term start welcome messaging from advisor
   - Send support materials, webinar recordings
   - Include a series of communications specifically targeted toward these students that keep them informed and engaged before they begin their first classes
   - Include messaging on change management, finding balance with school and work and similar support that is not just academically targeted

CREATE THE COMMUNICATIONS CALENDAR:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
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</table>

Send reminder of office closure Monday
Questions?

Where to begin?
- Schedule intentional contact with the student
  - Regular, planned intervals
  - Ad hoc outreach to students
  - Be where the students are:
    - Cafeteria
    - Online spaces
    - Look for places to connect with students
Proactive Advising to Retain First-Year and Transfer Students

PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

- Initial student call/meeting
  - Get to know students and their goals/aspirations
  - Use this information to build your relationship with the student
  - Keep this information and use it and your relationship with the student as a support when the student experiences difficulties

Contacting students

- Face to face opportunities
  - Where students gather
- Email, phone, IM, social media...
- Open houses, virtual open houses and gatherings via webinar
The only variable that has a direct affect on student persistence is the quality of a relationship with a significant member of the college community

(Heisserer & Parette, 2002)

Staying connected with students

- Share their interests
  - Sporting events
  - Academic organizations
- Check in with students via phone or in person regularly
- Keep detailed notes on student concerns...
The advisor is the link between the student and the school

Anticipating Student Challenges
Proactive Advising to Retain First-Year and Transfer Students

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- Homesickness
- Academic probation
- Social issues

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- Tinto suggests that a higher degree of integration into the social and academic environments contributes to a greater degree of institutional and goal commitment
- Lower dropout and higher completion rates
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Advising and Academic Probation
• Advisors and students: equal partners in the student's development
• Early identification of at risk student is vital
  – First generation college students
  – Low entrance test scores, initial course grades
  – Low level of parental support

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Causes of poor academic performance
• Internal uncontrollables: health, learning disabilities
• Internal controllables: behavioral choices
• External stable factors: unhealthy family or social environments
• External unstable factors: transient-student changes courses and instructor

ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS 69

ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS 70
PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

Academic Probation
- Use a high involvement (proactive) model
  - Notification of poor academic performance
    - Require student to see advisor
    - Student feel relieved to be able to discuss with someone who understands and cares
  - Resource sharing and availability
  - Structured agreements with student
    - Affect student cognitive and motivational states positively

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Academic Probation
- Personal interactions with students to uncover pertinent information
- Construct a learning contract
- Provide referrals to support systems
- Monitor grades and attendance
- Establish goals and plans to reach them
- Develop strategies to address non academic issues
More intrusion=better academic results

Skills for Proactive Advising

- Communication skills
  - Maintain eye contact
  - Allow students to fully explain their situations
  - Be sensitive to body language
- Focus on the content and tone of student’s words
- Use feedback
- Paraphrase what the student has said
Skills for Proactive Advising

- Questioning skills:
  - Mix open-ended and closed-ended questions as necessary
- Referral Skills
  - Use questioning to determine best course of action
  - Actively refer students to experts in their areas of need

Strategies for Effective Advising

- Encourage
- Be proactive
- Help
PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

Encourage students to:

• Identify weak study skills, academic areas
  — Share with faculty
• Complete assignments early
  — Use a calendar or planner
• Study with peers
• Sit in front of the class
• Communicate frequently with faculty
  — Share concerns
  — Participate in class
• Visit campus learning center

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Help students to:

• Develop autonomy
  — Responsibility for academic performance
• Establish an academic identity
• Grow an academic purpose
  — Long term goals
• Identify and build upon their strengths to use in the classroom
• Maintain academic integrity
• Manage their emotions
PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

Be Proactive

• Make sure students know who you are
  — Post office location and hours
  — Methods of contact
  — Meet new students in the admissions process
    • Participate in orientation
• Interact with students on campus
  — Hallways, cafeteria, smoking areas, etc.
• Visit classrooms, encourage students to see you

ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS 78

PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

Be Proactive

• Send customized emails, letters
  — Congratulatory notes on grades
  — Suggestions for future courses
  — School information
• Find ways to involve students with each other
  — Group by major at orientation
  — Encourage students to share workplace locations and/or occupations

ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS 80
PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

Be Proactive

- Become a source of non-academic information
  - Refer students to
    - Career counseling
    - Support services
    - Community services/events

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Point</th>
<th>Why?</th>
<th>How?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Start Early</td>
<td>Start students on a strong path</td>
<td>Begin in pre-admissions, term start</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop relationships with students: think about a counseling relationship</td>
<td>Academics are not only reason that students are not successful in school</td>
<td>Reach out, contact, connect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the relationship to help students past obstacles, setbacks</td>
<td>Students need a caring connection at the school; someone to help them identify challenges and self-advocate</td>
<td>Really know students: help them see things in themselves that they may not currently see. Capitalize on student strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be the student connection to the institution</td>
<td>Students needs a strong point of connection: someone who cares</td>
<td>Be that person</td>
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ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS 01

ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS 02
Could fixing academic advising fix higher education?

- Not completely, but advising may be a good place to start. While advising, itself, cannot change the curriculum and co-curriculum, it can create a vital connection between students and their education-helping them to become more reflective and strategic about the choice they are making and the learning they are involved in

Hunter & White, 2004
PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

How would a proactive advisor handle these?
- Helping students feel part of programs and the institution
- Student family obligations
- Interaction between student and institution
- Student satisfaction with institutional environment

PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

NEXT STEPS
## PROACTIVE ADVISING TO RETAIN FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

### Implementing Proactive Advising on Your Campus

<table>
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<tr>
<th>The Proactive Advising Model</th>
<th>Which population at our institution will this help?</th>
<th>Which 1-2 techniques do I want to try?</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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### References

References

Pre-Webcast Resource

1. **Implementing Proactive Advising on Your Campus Worksheet** (on next page) This resource will help you record and prioritize ideas to begin implementing new or additional proactive advising strategies on your campus.
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