Reframing Retention

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Student Advocacy Center Overview

- Assist students in navigating the university’s structure
- Facilitate understanding of the university’s policies and procedures
- Assist students in resolving problems/issues that they encounter at the university
  - Problems that, if not addressed, impact students’ academic success
- Work to identify patterns of problems and systemic issues that negatively impact students
Academic Issues

• Grade grievances/policy questions
• General advising as it relates to personal circumstances and short term limitations
• Academic misconduct consultation
• Instructor complaints
• Preparation of retroactive petitions
• Assist students with reinstatement
Payment

• Triaging financial aid and statement of account concerns:
  • Researching issues
  • Pursuing resolution
• Assisting students with:
  • Appeals
  • Financial holds
  • Loan exceptions
Health

• Assist students who are hospitalized
  • Physical/mental health issues
• Engage in long term advising and assistance to students
  • Help build educational experience around medical limitations
• Communicate with instructors
  • Extensions on assignments, other arrangements
Enrollment

• Admissions questions/concerns
• Preparing materials
  • Residency application
  • Late payment waiver
• Transfer student concerns
Personal Crisis

• Working with victims of:
  • Fire
  • Sexual violence
  • General Crime

• Death of a family member/friend
  • Establish extensive university support network
  • Assist student in moving forward
Assessment History

• Usage statistics
  – Number of students served, number of issues addressed

• Satisfaction surveys
  – Low response rate
  – Respondents tend to be on one end of the spectrum in their experience
How Did We Get Here?

• Knew anecdotally from surveys and case resolutions that many students would simply not have been able to continue in school without our assistance

• Our mission is to promote student success, and retention is key measure of this

• Worked with the Center for the Study of Student Life (CSSL) to incorporate retention into our learning outcomes

• Received guidance and support from CSSL in moving forward with a way to measure retention
• 9 Themes That Affect Retention:
  • Student’s background
  • Money and finance
  • Grades and academic performance
  • Social factors
  • Bureaucratic factors
  • The external environment
  • Psychological and attitudinal factors
  • Institutional fit and commitment
  • Intentions

(Bean, 2005, p.216)
• Often, students bring multifaceted issues. We take an individualized student-centered approach
  – This one-on-one approach has been shown to improve retention (Sieveking & Perfetto, 2001, p. 341)
• Ex: We often have students come in who present a common issue such as failing a course only to find that they have gone through a traumatic event that affected their ability to achieve academic success.
Student Advocacy Center and Retention

• The students with whom we work are, arguably, at risk because they require our services to remove a barrier to their success
• We engage in individualized, 1 on 1 interactions with them in the resolution of their problem
• Use a pilot study to obtain snapshots and observe patterns that will inform future assessment and practice
• Observe trends relative to institutional retention
Creative Assessment

• There is difficulty in studying these types of issues
  – No ability to create a control group creates the challenge: To whom do we compare?
• We can however get a sense of our impact on retention, and this pilot study is the beginning
Desired Outcome

• As a result of interaction with SAC staff, there will be a positive impact on student retention
SAC Retention Study

• Determine the one and two year retention rates of students who utilized SAC services
Method

### Assessment Data Query: Select Query

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Sort</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Show</th>
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<tr>
<td>SID</td>
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<td>Class-Level</td>
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<td>Main</td>
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<td>Main</td>
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<tr>
<td>Payment-Issues</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>Main</td>
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</table>

**Table:**
- **Date-Opened:** Main
- **SID:** Main
- **Class-Level:** Main
- **Academic:** Main
- **Health-Issues:** Main
- **Payment-Issues:** Main
Method

• Gathering of SAC Data
  – In ACCESS Database – Created a query
• Conditions
  – Chose Freshman and Sophomore students only who utilized SAC in its history
    » Rank of student collected when they make contact with our office via Student Information System
  – Identified three concerns that potentially have the most impact on a student’s success:
    » Academic, Payment and Health
Output was transferred to EXCEL displaying 7 different datasets for each possible scenario of Academic, Payment and Health. These spreadsheets were then sent over to the CSSL for further analysis including identifying the student’s first quarter of enrollment at the Ohio State. This represents their cohort and is essential for appropriate comparison of retention – This analysis took the 5,177 records down to our final sample size; 678.
• Removed duplicates
  – An individual student may come in more than once a year with similar issues
  – Using SIS system, CSSL then found each student’s earliest term of enrollment
    • Also added in the categories sex and ethnicity
    • Removed students who were deceased
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
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<td></td>
<td>SEX</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1068</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1068</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1088</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>N</td>
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</table>
Sample

• Freshman or sophomore rank
• First quarter of enrollment was either Autumn 2009 or Autumn 2010 as a new freshman, i.e. no transfer students
• Received SAC intervention in either 2009-2010 or 2010-2011 academic year
SPSS Analysis

• Able to analyze SAC’s data looking initially at retention and then adding other variables such as:
  – Gender
  – Ethnicity (White vs. Non-White)
## Results

- **Cohort**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AU 2009</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU 2010</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>678</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
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</table>
# Overall Retention Rate

## 1 year Retention Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retained</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Retained</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 2 year Retention Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retained</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Retained</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Retention by Gender

- **1 year Retention Rate**
- **2 year Retention Rate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Retained</strong></td>
<td>333</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percent</strong></td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not Retained</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percent</strong></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>350</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>678</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Retained</strong></td>
<td>309</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percent</strong></td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not Retained</strong></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percent</strong></td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>350</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>678</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Retention by Ethnicity

- **1 year Retention Rate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Non-White</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retained</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>96.0%</td>
<td>96.0%</td>
<td>96.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Retained</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>678</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **2 year Retention Rate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Non-White</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retained</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>87.6%</td>
<td>87.0%</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Retained</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>678</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

• Influencing practice
  – Zero in on our strengths and weaknesses to influence the services we provide

• Look into 2\textsuperscript{nd} year retention rates to find the trends in issues students face to better serve this population
  – With what we have observed in the drop in retention rate, there is an indication here that we could be doing something differently
  – We are in line with the university’s retention rate, but because our mission is to reduce academic barriers, we want to better understand this drop
Discussion continued…

• This enables us to get insight on trends and patterns

• As we move forward we can develop a higher degree of sophistication for future research
  – If we break out health issues from financial and academic
    • Retention rate may be lower for these students due to their circumstances
  – Ongoing relationship with students
    • Students who work with us on a continuous basis may have a higher rate of retention
Tips for small offices

- Get to know your Office of Institutional Research
- Begin keeping baseline data that is in accordance with your institutional protocol
- Hire an undergraduate/graduate student who has even a basic understanding of statistics/SPSS
References


