Promoting and Achieving Student Success: Strategies, Initiatives, and Outcomes

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One University with Multiple Campuses Distributed Throughout the RGV
Rio Grande Valley

- Predominantly Hispanic/Latino population
- Significant population growth
- High levels of poverty
- Median family income: $37,500
- Access to higher education is key to the success of our students, their families, and the social and economic prosperity of the Rio Grande Valley
Student Enrollment (8/25/15)

• **Student Headcount, Fall 2015**
  - Undergraduates – 25,120
    - New Undergraduates – 5,219
    - Continuing Undergraduates – 19,901
  - Graduates – 3,682
    - New Graduates – 835
    - Continuing Graduates -2,847

• **Total Enrollment - 28,802**
Student Characteristics

- 89% Hispanic/Latino
- 87% Undergraduate
- 65% Full-time
- 57% Female
- 78% on Pell Grants
- 61% first-generation
Our Priorities

• Student Success
• Educational Opportunities
• Medical Education
• Research on the Issues Impacting the RGV
Promoting Student Success: A Holistic Approach

• Developing integrated, university-wide, initiatives centered on student success

• Addressing critical needs of first-generation students

• Active engagement and ongoing participation of the University community

• Institutional resources
Examples of UTRGV Student Success Initiatives

**Supporting academic preparedness and “cultural transition” to the University**
- Jumpstart Summer Bridge Program
- UCentral
- UNIV 1301 Learning Framework freshman seminar
- Advising as teaching

**Supporting academic performance**
- Peer-to-Peer Instruction
- Early Warning System

**Supporting academic progress**
- Innovative tuition plan
- DegreeWorks: Online degree auditing
- Centralized advising with outreach facilitated by EAB Campus

**Supporting co-curricular success**
- Experiential learning transcript
- Academic maps
Supporting Academic Preparedness: Jumpstart Summer Bridge

- Required for all admitted freshmen - not yet college ready
- Five-week summer session
- Students enroll in 3-6 hours of coursework, including a combination of developmental English and math (pre-statistics or pre-algebra), and a freshman seminar course (UNIV 1301).
- Includes motivated and invested faculty, peer mentors for all students, and scholarship options. Understanding the “hidden curriculum”
- College Ready at the end of Summer 2015:
  - 87% English
  - 83% Math/Algebra pathway
  - 73% Math/Statistics pathway
Smoothing Bureaucratic Processes: UCentral

• Student Service Center *Ucentral*, launched in August 2015

• Provides a one-stop center to handle all Registrar, Financial Aid, and Admissions oriented issues. Bursar is co-located.

• Student-centered case management approach so students are not sent from one office to another when complex issues are interrelated

• Includes a queuing system that minimizes student waiting

• Building intuitive student processes and a more interactive and powerful online portal
Supporting Academic Performance: Peer-to-Peer Instruction

• Supplemental Instruction
  • Fall 2015: 39 courses (110 sections) with 11,591 students
  • Historically, SI students earn a .6 to .9 higher final letter grade
  • Example:
    o CHEM II students who attended SI sessions significantly outperformed those who did not (49% vs 33% passing rate);
    o Students attending 5-14 sessions performed a letter grade above those attending 1-4 sessions
  • Concerns: Students who need the most help often do not participate
Supporting Academic Performance: Peer-to-Peer Instruction

• Link2Success
  • Peer instruction embedded in courses with mandatory attendance requirements
    ○ Historical tests at UTB show an increase in pass rates for all students in the treated courses (not just students who voluntarily attended) of up to 20%
    ○ Developing interventions for Fall 2016 based on this model for CHEM I and II and College Algebra
Supporting Academic Progress: Advising and EAB Campus

- Analyzed 10 years of data from UTPA and UTB students, identifying success markers and major change patterns
- Now working to identify students who have missed success markers and proactively reach out to them
- Also using EAB Campus (Launched Feb. 2016) to create and run advising campaigns reaching out to student populations of concern in a targeted fashion. Example: Sophomore students
  - Historical retention from 2nd to 3rd year drops from 77% to 66.4%
  - Targeted campaign to 2,800 2nd year students to help them explore engaged learning outside the classroom and academic program connections to career ambitions
  - In the first 24 hours of campaign, 279 students responded
Supporting Co-Curricular Success: Experiential Learning Transcript

- Supported by a Department of Education Developing Hispanic Institutions grant ($3.1 million)
- To build institutional capacity to support experiential learning activities including faculty development and student support structures
- Focused on service learning, undergraduate research, academic internships, and development of an experiences transcript as the final piece (in progress)
- Early internal data shows gains of 5% in one-year retention for students involved in service learning and up to 10% for students involved in undergraduate research
- Experiences transcript will help
  - Guide students to learning experiences that will be useful to them throughout their lives
  - Incentivize both faculty and students to participate in those activities and report them institutionally
Supporting Academic Progress: Innovative Tuition Plan

• Tuition and fees were restructured by a task force of UTRGV staff and prospective students focusing on:
  • Transparency – Eliminated many fees
  • Predictability – Guaranteed for four years
  • Incentivization – Capped at 12 hours. Enrollment at 15 hours gives student one free class every semester to encourage progress to graduation
  • Affordability – One of the lowest in the country, emphasizing need-based aid
Supporting Co-Curricular Success: Academic Maps

• Academic maps are in development that combine curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities to help students plot a successful trajectory through their undergraduate experiences.

• May be particularly useful for first-generation students as they move through the transition into university and as they transition from university to career.

• Kudos to Georgia State University.
STEP Grant

$1.66M NSF grant will help boost graduation rates in engineering & science
Biomedical Program

- Competency-Based like program
- Accelerated, Fast-Paced Mini-Courses
- Embedded tutoring was identified as most appropriate academic support model
- Quantitative & qualitative data revealed students were not taking advantage of additional tutoring support
- It was decided that, in the 2nd semester, embedded tutors would be placed in lectures, coaching sessions, team-based learning time, and in the labs
- Data on impact will be collected, which will generate a report with recommendations to determine what other (if any) modifications should be made to this customized academic support model

Strategic Planning with a Focus on Student Success

• Student success as a core institutional priority
• Develop systematic and holistic initiatives focusing on student success
• Establish benchmarks that will guide us and allow us to determine progress and success of initiatives, especially focusing on:
  o Retention rates
  o Graduation rates
  o Credits per semester
  o Years to graduation
  o Credits completed at time of graduation
  o Participation in experiential learning initiatives (e.g., undergraduate research, service learning, internships, study abroad, etc.)
  o GPA
Strategic Planning: Starting the Conversation with Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Where We Are</th>
<th>Where We Want to Be **</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Year Retention*</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Year Retention*</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Year Retention*</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Year Graduation Rate</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<td>6 Year Graduation Rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>UG SCH per Semester</td>
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<tr>
<td>Years to Graduate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credits to Completion</td>
<td>142</td>
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* Data provided for the latest cohort available
** TBD in Consultation with SPC and UTRGV President
Muchas Gracias