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Supporting student success:
A vision for evidence-based reform

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- Community colleges are engaged in a range of efforts to support student success outside of the classroom.

- Evidence shows that, however well-intentioned, most of these efforts do not meaningfully move the needle on student success.

- Supporting students so that they can persist *and graduate* requires fundamentally re-envisioning and restructuring supports in the community college.

Current Structure of Services

- Self-contained advising and counseling

- Academic and occupational fragmentation

- Atheoretical

- Assume student homogeneity and initiative

- Program-based reforms

Outcomes: Traditional Advising

- Traditional academic advising can lead to short-term retention gains…
  - Hunter & White, 2004; Light, 2001; Metzner, 1989

- …But also student confusion and frustration.
  - Karp, O'Gara, & Hughes, 2008; Grubb, 2006

Outcomes: Programs and Interventions

- ## Short-term interventions generally lead to short-term impacts.

  - Learning community participants see bumps in grades, credit-earning, and persistence while enrolled—*but not after* .
    - Weissman et. al, 2012; Weissman et. al, 2011; Visher & Teres, 2011Scrivener et. al, 2008.
  - Some mentoring participants have decreased rates of course withdrawal and increased take-up of other services, but the effects do not last.
    - Visher, Butcher, & Cerna, 2010; Scrivener & Weiss, 2009
  - Student success course participants have higher rates of retention and short-term persistence, but few studies find effects lasting to graduation.
    - Cho & Karp, 2012; Weiss et. al, 2012; Zeidenberg, Jenkins, & Calcagno, 2007; Strumpf & Hunt, 1993

Outcomes: Programs and Interventions

- Intensive and intrusive interventions have greater impact on student outcomes than light-touch interventions.
  - Bettinger & Baker, 2011; Linderman & Kolenovic, 2011; Angrist, Lang, & Oreopolous, 2009; Seidman, 1991

- Technology can help. Sometimes.
  - Jaggars, 2011; Herndon, 2011

- Career development and job placement outcomes are spotty and institutionally variable.
  - Redline & Rosenbaum, 2010

The assumptions underpinning most student success interventions are rooted in old paradigms, institution-focused systems, and misunderstandings of student needs.

Identifying these assumptions—and turning them upside-down—can move us towards more effective and student-focused supports.

Old paradigms	• Silos are beneficial • Choice is good • Front-loading services prevents future failure
Institution-focused systems	• Structures based in operational priorities • Information-dump rather than teaching
Misunderstanding of student needs	• Students just need to know that help is available • Students need help during the first semester • All students are the same

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What Might an Ideal Student Support Structure Look Like?

- <u>S</u>ustained: Lasting throughout a student's college career

- <u>I</u>ntrusive: Mandatory and structured so that students must participate at regular intervals

- <u>I</u>ntegrated: Multiple forms of support are offered, and silos are broken down

- <u>P</u>ersonalized: Students receive the type of support they need, from an individual who knows them well

Elements of a New Support Structure

1. Technology integrated into advising and course registration
2. Triage for new students
3. Designated "point person" for every student
4. A pedagogy of advising embedded in the disciplines
5. Regularly-scheduled "check-ins" at key momentum points

Initial Intake

- Technology assistance
- Determination of goals and needs
- Individualized advisor meeting
- Triage

Undecided specialist

- Focus on identification of career goals and academic planning
- Point person until clear path is identified
- Frequent check-in
- Orientation to college

Discipline-based advisor

- Key point person for duration of enrollment
- Liaison with academic faculty and requirements
- Frequent but diminishing check-ins
- Early warning system
- Refer out as necessary

Stop implementing programs, and start reforming structures

- Combine academic and career advising
- Create generalists dedicated to a specific program area(s)
- Identify momentum points in need of attention
- Restructure advising to focus on prolonged teaching interactions

Do not be afraid of "mandatory"

- Require student success courses for all new students, and mandate that academic and career planning activities be included in the courses

- Mandate check-ins with an advisor throughout a student's career; use registration blocks to encourage compliance

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Abandon the "Inoculation Model"

- Provide resources beyond the first year
- Develop a system of triage
- Leverage technology
- Provide consistent point-people for student support and guidance

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