



**Within Our Sights: Toward National Leadership in Higher Education | October 18, 2013**  
**Morning Panel Presentation**  
**Tracking and Supporting At-Risk Freshmen**

**Presenter Contact Information**

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**Campus Project**

**At-Risk Student Retention Project**

The intent of the project is to identify incoming first year students, that were not identified with other university programs or services, with a propensity to be academically at risk. Various indicators from the College Student Inventory [CSI], administered to all new students, Accuplacer placement testing results, and verbal SAT are reviewed. Students are prioritized according to a rubric identifying the number and degree of negative or low indicators. Students are assigned to a specifically trained "academic Success" faculty advisor in the department for their major. A mentor/intrusive advising [we call focused advising] model is used to work with the students.

**Vision Project Outcome Areas**

- ✓ College Completion
- ✓ Closing Achievement Gaps

**Research and Data**

**Project Duration:** *Started fall 2011 - Ongoing*

- Approximately 200 first year students per year, typically 1st generation, not connected with other services or programs on campus
- Use of data points from College student inventory, incoming SAT, and Accuplacer results to determine those eligible.
- Cohort from first year, with intrusive advising by trained "academic success" advisors yielded a 93% first year to second year progression rate
- Data beyond sophomore year not yet available



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**Campus Project**

**Summer Scholars: Bridging Developmental Education and Student Success**

At MassBay, we host a summer program for new students to participate in a Summer Scholars program, in which students enroll in both developmental math and developmental English, free of charge. In addition, students participate in a twice a week freshman seminar where they learn the necessary tools to succeed in college.

**Vision Project Outcome Areas**

- ✓ **College Participation**
- ✓ **College Completion**
- ✓ **Student Learning**
- ✓ **Closing Achievement Gaps**

**Research and Data**

**Project Duration:** *Yearly, beginning 2008*

- MassBay created the Summer Scholars Program(SSP) in the Summer of 2008 and since its inception, has had 118 participants
- Over the last six years, the average retention rate from summer to fall is 84.7%.
- Over the last six years, the average retention rate from summer to the following spring is 65.3% (this does not include the summer 2013 participants, and thus the number could increase).



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**Campus Project**

**Student Success Center - College Success Seminar Collaboration**

Our model, adapted from one at Bunker Hill Community College, uses Retention Ambassadors, who are also faculty, stipended for this role out of our Student Success Center (SSC), and partners them with College Success Seminar (CSS) sections. The Student Success Center was built in large part due to receipt of a Title V – Hispanic Serving Institutions grant in 2011. It is staffed by a Coordinator, a Retention Specialist, a part-time Job Coach and a part-time Social Services referral counselor. To date, College Success Seminar is required for students assessing into two or more developmental-level courses, although the future plan is to move into academic program-based CSS for all new students. Currently, four Retention Ambassadors are assigned a number of CSS sections each. They help faculty administer the Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory and meet with students to go over results. They do classroom presentations about college resources available to them, and also make appointments one-on-one with students. CSS also utilizes StrengthsQuest with students, and is encouraged to flag struggling students in Early Alert. CSS guides students to self-awareness, exploration of career paths, and confidence in navigating the college experience while bolstering core academic skills of critical thought, study skills, communication, goal setting and problem solving. Suggested assignments based on the Noel-Levitz survey and StrengthsQuest help students to identify where they think they may struggle, and how to leverage their strengths to overcome their challenges. This collaboration began in Fall 2012 and overcame some bumps in the road in terms of technology and scheduling class presentations, but finished with strong “Lessons Learned” and “Best Practices” trainings. With an improved system, Spring 2013 went smoothly and retention numbers jumped into the high nineties percentage range. NECC is providing a strengths-based platform for at-risk Freshmen to engage, succeed and become familiar with college resources.

**Vision Project Outcome Areas**

- ✓ **College Participation**
- ✓ **Student Learning**
- ✓ **Closing Achievement Gaps**

## Research and Data

**Project Duration:** *Fall 2012 - present*

- College Success Seminar: Fall 2012 = 599 students in 28 non-contract sections; Spring 2013 = 232 students in 12 non-contract sections
- Early Alert cohort (all students in 2 or more Dev. Ed. courses: Fall 2012 = 962 students; Spring 2013 = 747 students
- Unduplicated # Students Flagged in Early Alert: Fall 2012 = 81 (66% of which were Latino); Spring 2013 = 306 (57% of which were Latino)
- Retention Rates (fall to spring, spring to fall) of students (inclusive of CSS) served by the Student Success Center: Fall 2012 = 78.2%; Spring 2013 = 97.4%
- The SSC opened in Fall 2011 while CSS was being piloted. We tracked in Early Alert only students with a class in Lawrence who assessed into more than 2 Dev.Ed. courses as they were not included in CSS that year. Fall 2011 = 98 students, 17 flagged, 82% Retained; Spring 2012 = 65 students, 12 flagged, 100% retained.
- The collaboration between SSC and CSS swelled the number of students tracked to 962 in Fall 2012, 747 in Spring 2013 with the same SSC staff (plus Retention Ambassadors) serving both Haverhill and Lawrence campuses. We are now looking for a more efficient way to handle Early Alert flagging via a system such as Starfish Early Alert



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**Campus Project**

**Emerging Scholars Program**

In this program, approximately 300 of our most at-risk freshmen (as determined by a regression model that controlled for a number of factors including high school GPA, demographic traits and socioeconomic status) were offered the support of Academic Success coaches who provided intensive coaching on skills such as goal setting, time management, and study skills. Three success coaches attempted to contact a total of 305 students, using multiple means. Each student received general emails as well as letters home to the parents and informational brochures to the students. For those students who did not reply to the Emerging Scholars Brochure that was sent home in July, we attempted to contact them by phone at least once. Outreach via the MAP-Works system (our early alert system) was also conducted, using personalized emails.

**Vision Project Outcome Areas**

- ✓ **College Completion**
- ✓ **Student Learning**
- ✓ **Closing Achievement Gaps**

**Research and Data**

**Project Duration:** *August 2011 - present*

- Number of students contacted: 284, Number responding to contact 101, number participating 44
- Retention rate of students not responding to contact: 69%, rate for program participants: 89%
- Number of retention initiatives or programs on campus being evaluated for impact: 5 (at least)
- Freshman retention rate, fall 2011 cohort: 73.8%. Fall 2012 cohort (as of Oct 1): 78.1%
- Median cumulative GPA after 1 year, fall 2011 who returned: 2.99. Fall 2012: 3.09.
- Median hours earned after 1 year, fall 2011 who returned: 30. Fall 2012: 31



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#### Presenter Contact Information

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#### Campus Project

##### Succeed In 4

The focus on retention at Worcester State University began in 2011 with our Succeed In 4 campaign (SI4), which included a Faculty Fellow who spearheaded retention efforts on campus and established the groundwork for WSU's Director of Retention position. The Faculty Fellow, Dr. Patricia Marshall, worked closely with academic support services, faculty, and directly with students to bridge gaps in advising, to establish a second line of contact for students to receive assistance, and to identify transitional points for students on our campus. Vision Grant funds were used to hire WSU's Director of Retention, Angela Quitadamo, in the spring of 2012, to establish drop-in and transitional advising services in our Academic Success Center, and to implement a cutting-edge electronic early alert system. The components of our comprehensive, campus-wide early alert program include the Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory (CSI), Starfish Early Alert and Connect software, and a predictive retention model (Noel-Levitz RMS Plus). Retention efforts at WSU have also included a close look at processes related to registration, student advising, and potential institutional obstacles to student success. By simultaneously leveraging relationships, technology, and data, we have not only been able to raise our six-year graduation rate, but also to create a campus-wide awareness of the importance of timely interventions at pivotal points in our students' careers.

#### Vision Project Outcome Areas

- ✓ College Participation
- ✓ College Completion
- ✓ Closing Achievement Gaps

#### Research and Data

##### Project Duration: 2011 - Ongoing

- WSU has seen an increase in our six-year graduation rate from 45.1% (2004) to 51% (2006)
- WSU has seen undergraduate enrollment of Hispanic or Latino students rise from 6.5% in 2010 to 7.2% in 2012
- WSU had an unexpected revenue increase comparable to 80 new students in the 2012-13 Academic Year.
- In the fall preceding Starfish implementation 5.6% of WSU students were not in good academic standing. By the spring of 2013, that number decreased to 4.6%.
- At the close of WSU's first academic year with Starfish Alert for first-year students (771 students), 3,669 tracking items were raised.
- WSU partnered with Noel-Levitz to build a predictive retention model based on two years of institutional data. This model has revealed the top five risk factors associated with failure to persist at WSU beyond the first-year of study.