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Owning Student Success: The Cross-Divisional Student Success Team

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Overview

- Struggling with Student Success
- Public demanding “more”
- Institutional hurdles
- Crossing the Divisional “borders”
- Actions
- Results—actual and anticipated

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William Paterson

- Public regional university in New Jersey
 - Suburban/urban regional campus
 - 10,583 students
 - Minimally selective
 - 76% commuter (Undergraduate)
 - Over 30% first generation (newly admitted student survey 2014)
 - Hispanic Serving Institution (fall 2016 = 28.9%)
 - Almost all students work 20 or more (much more) hours per week
 - High numbers of lower SES students
 - Non-majority student demographics

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Struggling with Student Success

- Academic Preparation
 - Remediation
 - Gateway/DFW courses
 - Misalignment between student desires and student reality

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Struggling with Student Success

- Student Engagement and Student Life
 - Balancing school and life
 - Balancing academics and co- and extra-curricular
 - Commuter versus Resident
 - First generation students

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Struggling with Student Success

- University “culture” and perceptions:
 - Our students can’t finish on time
 - Education should not be bound by four years
 - Our students aren’t academically prepared
 - All we need are better students
 - Student Success is not my job

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Struggling with Student Success

- Finances:
 - High tuition/high aid—if you know how to get it
 - Family/work life struggles
 - Last dollar
 - Financial Literacy/savvy
 - Aversion to debt/inability to qualify for loans

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What our public demands

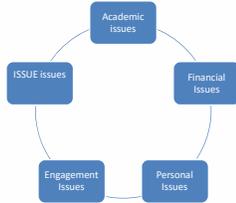
- Students who start, finish:
 - Retention
 - Timely graduation
 - Managed costs
 - Low/no debt

Institutional Hurdles

- A University is a bureaucracy:
 - Silos
 - Rules, Regulations, Policies and Procedures
 - One size fits all model
 - A foreign language—the lingo of higher education
 - Not my job/don't have the answer
 - You have to go to another office
 - Traditional work environment (9-5)

Crossing the border

- Basic premise:
 - Student success and student support cannot be compartmentalized:



So what did we do?

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Cross-Divisional Student Success Team

- The **Student Success Team** is a cross-divisional group which examines, recommends and executes initiatives designed to improve student success at William Paterson University.
- Leadership from Provost/Academic Affairs, VP for Student Development and VP for Enrollment Management
- Day to day management from Associate Provost for Academic Development, Associate VP Student Development/Dean of Students, and Director of Student Enrollment Services
- Focus: Eliminate hurdles and stop the run-around

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Student Success Defined

Student Success is far more than simply retaining and graduating students. Student success must first be evaluated academically:

“making sure that our students are learning what we say they are learning, have the skills and abilities we say they should have, are successfully progressing through their education, and are successfully graduating in a timely fashion.”

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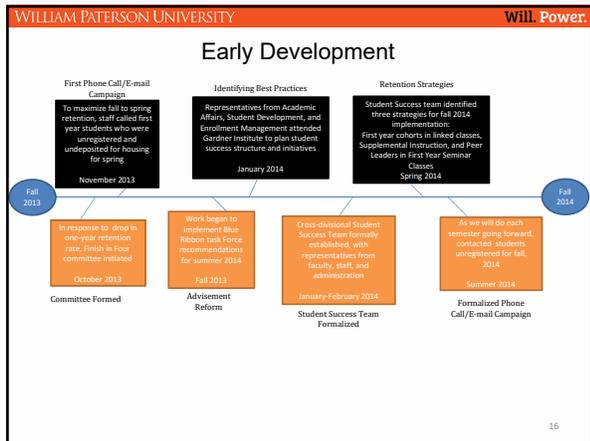
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Student Success Team

The **Goal** is:

To engage the entire campus community in ongoing discussion and action to identify and eliminate barriers to student success.

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Retention Strategy Implementation: Phase 1

- Linked Courses
- Peer Leaders
- Supplemental Instruction

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Retention Strategy Implementation: Phase 2

- Communication Plan
- Student Success Scholarships
- Course Withdrawal Pop-up Box
- Student Success Forums
- Mini Grants

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Barriers and Initiatives - 1

- Recruitment/Admission to Commencement
 - Beginnings:
 - Move from 128 to 120 credits needed for degree
 - Redesign orientation
 - Summer remediation*
 - Redesign first-year seminar
 - Peer leaders in all sections of first-year seminar
 - Redesign first year convocation
 - Add Welcome Week activities
 - Monitor spring term registration
 - Track fall to spring retention

*significant new financial support

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Barriers and Initiatives - 2

- Recruitment/Admission to Commencement
 - Transitions:
 - Transfer Student Experience
 - Sophomore-Junior Experience
 - Civic Engagement Initiative
 - Supplemental Instruction
 - Student Success Scholarships*
 - Early Alert Enhancements
 - New degree audit system*
 - WD messaging

*significant new financial support

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Barriers and Initiatives - 3

- Recruitment/Admission to Commencement
 - Crossing the finish line:
 - 70/90 cohort management
 - Increase programming and support services:
 - Build awareness of and traffic to advising and academic support programs
 - Develop relational trust with students
 - Second half spring term added courses
 - Summer Session added courses

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Results

- First year retention rate for cohort 2015 is 75.1% (up from 74.6% a year ago)
- Four year graduation rate for cohort 2012 is 29.0% (up from 26.6% last year)
– 107% increase in four-year graduation rate**
- Fifth year graduation rate for cohort 2011 is 49.4% (up from 43.1% last year)
- Sixth year graduation rate for cohort 2010 is 49.5% (up from 48.7% last year)
– **FTTFY 2006 Cohort 4-year grad rate was 14%, FTTFY 2012 Cohort 4-year grad rate was 29%

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Results not yet Attained but Needed

- Continued increase in four-year graduation rate to match or exceed peers
- Sustainable retention rates to match peers
- Continued reduction in number of credits at graduation for all students
- Continued reduction in student debt at time of graduation
- Increase in overall student enrollment as a result of increased retention and focus on student success

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So what's next?

- Formalize and coordinate many ad hoc processes for student success
- Continue to improve advising
- Better analytics to track student performance and guide/assess improvement efforts
- Curriculum mapping
- Keep on addressing culture issues

