“Advising Matters: Closing the Gap to Student Success”

Blane Harding
Director of Advising, Recruitment & Retention
College of Science
University of Nevada, Reno
Change can be good!!
Virginia Tech's 10th Annual Advising Conference

- This year's theme was selected to intentionally discuss and generate strategies to assist closing the gap of student success for all students.
- Based on current trends in higher education, student success and timely graduation are at the forefront of discussions.
- Colleges must rethink their approach to teaching, advising, and the support services it offers to the increasingly diverse students of today and determine where their services are lacking.
Virginia Tech has set forth ambitious goals as part of InclusiveVT - the institutional and individual commitment to Ut Prosim (that I may serve) in the spirit of community, diversity, and excellence. Project 2022 seeks to increase underrepresented minority student enrollment to 25% by 2022. In addition, Virginia Tech seeks to eliminate the graduation gap for underrepresented minority students.
Fall 2008-2017 Undergraduate Minority Enrollment

American Indian or Alaska Native
Asian
Black or African American
Hispanics of any race
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
Two or more races
“We have tried everything under the sun to improve student success,” says the longtime education reformer. “There are all kinds of magic bullets. Everybody is drinking the Kool-Aid to try this or that. But most of these initiatives are on the periphery of the student experience.”
Cultural Effectiveness

“To be culturally effective doesn’t mean you are an authority in the values and beliefs of every culture. What it means is that you hold a deep respect for cultural differences and are eager to learn, and willing to accept, that there are many ways of viewing the world”

Okokon O. Udo
"We need to stop prescribing THE path to student success. Instead, we need to learn about our students’ complex lives, varied unique challenges, and seek to understand their individual lived experiences. THAT is the path to student success!"
InclusiveVT’s Four Institutional Goals

- Institutionalizing structures to promote a sustainable transformation
- Increasing faculty, staff, and student diversity
- Ensuring a welcoming, affirming, safe, and accessible campus climate
- Advancing the research, teaching, and service mission through inclusive excellence
Sense Of Belonging

“Part of the campus community,” “member of the campus community,” and had a “sense of belonging to campus community.”

Scholars have found that students who have positive, race-related interactions and experiences feel a greater sense of belonging on campus.

Early social experiences in college are better determinants of initial levels of sense of belonging than are demographic or academic experiences.
In “Interactional Diversity and the Role of a Supportive Racial Climate” the University of Maryland’s Leah Kendra Cox found: “In unhealthy climates, students — both majority and minority — are less likely to thrive academically or socially.” She found that a supportive racial climate had more impact than any other factor on the strength of diversity on campus.
MULTICULTURALISM

- Pluralistic multiculturalism
- Particularistic multiculturalism
- Public domain v. Private domain
- Responsibility and Response Ability
- Colorblind v. Color Consciousness
### Social Justice Thinking

#### Transformative Education

- **Transformative education** (i.e., Education is part of the political-social process; education reflects social ideologies).

- **Equity** (i.e., Conviction to and belief in equitable treatment; takes into account individuals of diverse races, genders, social classes, languages and cultures; critical of inequality and marginalizations).

- **Equal educational opportunities for all** (i.e., Belief that all can achieve to full potential; provides access to challenging academic curriculum; inclusive).

- **Student-centered** (i.e., critical pedagogy, reflective practice, teachers as students/students as teachers; focuses content & process).

- **Critically examining Culture**, including my own and how they come to be. (i.e., Deep reflection regarding assumptions, values, beliefs, privilege and respect for others)

- **Broad outcomes and multiple assessments** (i.e., Follows growth from where they started; solutions oriented after identifying a problem; builds coalitions through valuing and integration).
Social Justice Education

Develop the leadership qualities that can address the structural problems that continue to stand in the way of achieving greater educational, political, and social equality.
Social Justice Education

Develop values and other personal qualities that will produce a new generation of citizens who are committed to creating a more just and equitable society and fully understand that character development and equity are not separate issues.
Social Justice Education

Effective leaders can fully extend their cultural, political, social, educational, and economically installed power, privilege, and influence with those they lead in ways that do not disadvantage anyone.
Don’t just tell a different version of the same story.
Change The Story!

EQUALITY  EQUITY  LIBERATION
## On and Off Campus Combined Race/Ethnicity Enrollment - All Virginia Tech

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## Continuation and Cumulative Graduation Percentages Female

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<th>% Continued to 3rd Year</th>
<th>% Continued to 4th Year</th>
<th>% Graduated in 4 Years</th>
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<th>% Continued to 6th Year</th>
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Cultural Relevance

- Cultural Familiarity: The extent to which students have opportunities to connect with faculty, staff, and peers who share and understand their cultural backgrounds and experiences.

- Culturally Relevant Knowledge: The degree to which students have opportunities to learn about their own cultural communities via culturally relevant curricular and co-curricular activities.

- Cultural Community Service: Opportunities for students to give back to and positively transform their home communities (e.g., via problem-based research or service-learning).

- Cross-Cultural Engagement: Programs and practices that facilitate educationally meaningful cross-cultural interactions that focus on solving real social and political problems.

- Cultural Validation: Campus cultures that validate the cultural backgrounds, knowledge, and identities of diverse students.
Cultural Responsiveness

- Collectivist Cultural Orientations: Campus cultures that emphasize a collectivist, rather than individualistic, cultural orientation that is characterized by teamwork and pursuit of mutual success.

- Humanized Educational Environments: Availability of opportunities to develop meaningful relationships and faculty/staff who care about and are committed to students success.

- Proactive Philosophies: Proactive philosophies that lead faculty, administrators, and staff to proactively bring important information, opportunities, and support services to students, rather than waiting for students to seek them out or hunt them down.

- Holistic Support: College students’ access to at least one faculty or staff member that they are confident will provide the information they need, offer the help they seek, or connect them with the information or support they require regardless of the issues they face.
Bring students to campus early.

Foster high levels of engagement and student involvement in campus activities and programs to personalize their experience.

Offer well-developed first-year programs in which student participation is mandatory or high.

Use early warning advising systems.

Use mentors.

Build community, promote engagement among low-income, first gen students.

Help prepare students for successful lives after college.

Involve family members.
G
Goal(s)

What does the student wish to achieve? Why is this their chosen goal?
Make sure you agree and understand the goal(s).
Clarity and understanding so that you both have the same picture and interpretation of success.
Buy in is best achieved when you can demonstrate your support and guidance.

R
Reality

What is good, what could be better in terms of the Goals you have set?
In terms of your Goals, what is within your control and influence and what is not?
What barriers or objections will you need to overcome?
What can help you to achieve your Goals?

O
Options/Opportunities

What Options and/or Opportunities currently exist to achieve your Goals?
What is possible and what is not? Look at every option and opportunity that is available to you - perhaps some that you have avoided or dismissed in the past.
Who can help you? Ask for help from those who have knowledge, influence or the ability to assist you.
What do you need to do differently?

W
Willingness

What commitment do you need to give to achieve the results you desire? What commitments do you need from others?
Decide and agree what you have to do and do it.
When working with others agree on your joint commitments - keep your promises.
Establish the commitment needed from your advisee and ask for this commitment.

T
Timescales

What timescales are needed to achieve your Goals?
Are you both agreed on the timescales?
Agree on the timescale you have to achieve your Goal(s) and consider if these should incorporate interim timescales or milestones that will enable you to check your progress. Plan accordingly.

H
How

What are the agreed measures of success i.e. the measures that will prove that your original Goals have been achieved?
Agree at the outset what your success criteria should be, how this will be measured and who will be doing the measuring. Tangible and intangible measures?
The more space we create for individuals to explore their identities the more identities will emerge from that space.
Ut Prosim