

Student Success in College: Creating Conditions that Matter



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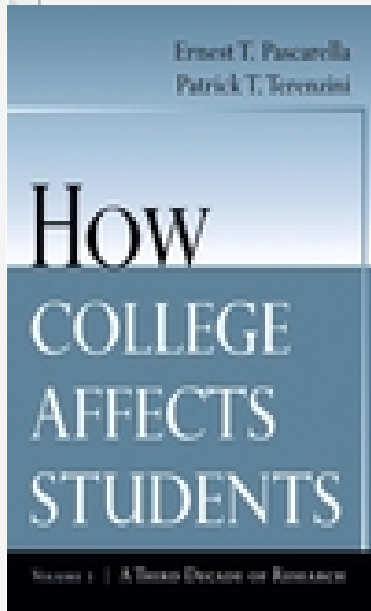
Overview

- ❖ Introduction to Project DEEP
 - Context
 - Methods
- ❖ Conditions for Student Success
- ❖ Discussion: Implications for the SST

Three Short Stories



What *Really* Matters in College: Student Engagement



*The greatest impact appears to stem from students' **total level** of campus engagement, particularly when academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular involvements are **mutually reinforcing**...*

Pascarella & Terenzini, *How College Affects Students*, 2005, p. 647

Lessons from Research on College Impact

So, engagement has 2 components:

- ❖ What students do -- time and energy devoted to educationally purposeful activities [no matter who they are . . .]
- ❖ What institutions do -- using effective educational practices to induce students to do the right things

Lessons from Research on College Impact

Effective Educational Practices for Fostering Engagement:

- ❖ Academic Challenge
- ❖ Active and Collaborative Learning
- ❖ Student-Faculty Interaction
- ❖ Enriching Educational Experiences
- ❖ Supportive Campus Environments

Project DEEP

To discover, document, and describe what high performing institutions do to achieve their notable level of effectiveness.



DEEP Guiding Questions:

- ❖ What do ‘high-performing’ colleges and universities do to promote student success?
- ❖ What campus features -- policies, programs, and practices – are related to higher-than-predicted graduation rates and student engagement?

DEEP Selection Criteria

Controlling for student and institutional characteristics (i.e., selectivity, diversity, institutional type), DEEP schools have:

- Higher-than-predicted graduation rates
- Higher-than-predicted NSSE scores

Region and institutional type, special mission



Project DEEP Schools

Doctoral Extensive

University of Kansas
University of Michigan

Doctoral Intensive

George Mason University
Miami University (Ohio)
University of Texas El Paso

Master's Granting

Fayetteville State
University
Gonzaga University
Longwood University

Liberal Arts

California State, Monterey Bay
Macalester College
Sweet Briar College
The Evergreen State College
Sewanee: University of the South
Ursinus College
Wabash College
Wheaton College (MA)
Wofford College

Baccalaureate General

Alverno College
University of Maine at Farmington
Winston-Salem State University

Research Approach

Qualitative Research Methods:

- 24 researchers: faculty, administrators, grad students
- 2 multiple-day site visits to each institution by teams of 3-6 researchers.
- Data collection: observations, document analysis, interviews
 - ✓ 2,700+ people, 60 classes, 30 events
- Data analysis: within and across sites

**What We
Learned from
Project DEEP**

**Jossey-Bass
2005**

**STUDENT
SUCCESS
in
COLLEGE**

CREATING CONDITIONS THAT MATTER

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AAHE
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for HIGHER EDUCATION™

Points to Ponder

- ? Which of these practices does UI offer? What proportion of UI undergraduate students engages in and benefits from them? Is that enough?
- ? What are the outcomes of these practices for UI students? How do you know?
- ? Which of these practices are transferable and adaptable to UI? Which are not, and why?

Six Shared Conditions

- 1. “Living” Mission and “Lived” Educational Philosophy**
- 2. Unshakeable Focus on Student Learning**
- 3. Clearly Marked Pathways to Student Success**
- 4. Improvement-Oriented Ethos**
- 5. Environments Adapted for Educational Enrichment**
- 6. Shared Responsibility for Educational Quality**

Lessons from Project DEEP

- 1. Living Mission and “Lived” Educational Philosophy**
 - A clear mission, widely understood and endorsed.
 - A web of complementary policies and practices tailored to the school’s mission and students’ needs and abilities.
 - Institutional values really do guide important policy and operation decisions, from admissions to orientation to graduation requirements.

“Living” Mission

Recall the 3 short stories:

- Fayetteville State University
- University of Michigan
- California State University, Monterey Bay

One theme: We know our educational mission, we know our students, and we have brought our resources to bear in a coherent fashion to foster success for those students.

Lessons from Project DEEP

2. Unshakeable Focus on Student Learning

- Students are our business
- Teaching for learning
- High expectations and high standards
 - “Work with the students we have”

Focus on Student Learning

“Sea change” at KU to emphasize undergraduate instruction: “We’re all in this together”

- Awards and rewards for good teaching
- Faculty in each academic unit serve as “Faculty Ambassadors” to the Center for Teaching Excellence; CTE ‘fall teaching summit.’
- Course enrollments kept low in many undergraduate courses; 80% have 30 or fewer students; 93% 50 or fewer students.

Lessons from Project DEEP

3. Clearly Marked Pathways to Student Success

- Acculturation
- Alignment

Clear Pathways

Miami's First Year Experience (FYE) Committee designed a way to bring more coherence to the first-year by linking: (1) Miami Plan Foundation courses; (2) first-year seminars; (3) community living options that emphasize leadership and service; and (4) cultural, intellectual, and arts events.

Clear Pathways

Among the explicit goals for MU students are: “Invest considerable time in your own and your peers’ academic learning. [Ask yourself] ‘Why did I come to college? Am I devoting enough time to my studies?’ Identify your educational goals and make purposeful choices about your major, courses and extracurricular experiences to advance those goals.”

Clear Pathways

- ❖ Among the explicit goals for MU faculty are: “Set high expectations for learning in your courses. Partner with others on campus to deepen students’ learning.”
- ❖ Goals for student affairs staff include “Assist students in focusing on their educational objectives and devoting time to their studies.”

Clear Pathways

All DEEP institutions have some form of “early warning system” consistent with student and institutional characteristics, and composed of multiple and integrated safety nets involving faculty and staff.

Lessons from Project DEEP

4. Improvement-oriented ethos

- “Positive restlessness”
- Investments in student success
- Decision-making informed by data
- “We know who we are and to what we aspire.”

Improvement-Oriented Ethos

- ✓ Miami
- ✓ Michigan
- ✓ Macalester
- ✓ Kansas

What can you tell us about how to improve?

Lessons from Project DEEP

5. Environments Adapted for Educational Advantage

- DEEP schools make wherever they are “a good place for a college!”
- Connect to the local community in mutually beneficial, educationally purposeful ways.
- “Human scale” structures and facilities
- Psychological size fosters engagement with peers, faculty and staff.

Environments for Educational Advantage

Ursinus College's Common Intellectual Experience (CIE) is a two-semester course for all first-year students. First-year students are housed with their CIE peers and some CIE classes meet in the dorms. Common readings and the "Uncommon Hour" give students a shared intellectual experience outside the classroom -- and in the residence hall -- that complements class activities. Advising is done by "teams"

Environments for Educational Advantage

University of Michigan has sought to reduce its psychological size through extensive development of living-learning centers, the residential college, and academic-related residential programs. Most touch a relatively small number of students but, collectively, they serve thousands of UM undergraduates.

Lessons from Project DEEP

6. Shared responsibility for educational quality

- Supportive educators are everywhere
- Student and academic affairs collaboration
- Student ownership
- A caring, supportive community

Shared Responsibility

- ❖ Wheaton: Each First-Year Seminar includes a faculty member, a student affairs staff member, a librarian and 2 student preceptors.
- ❖ George Mason: Comprehensive program of advising integrating advising center staff, faculty, career center, orientation, librarians, and others.

Shared Responsibility

All University of Kansas committees must have 20% student representation, including search and screen committees. A student is the the 'Vice-Chair' of every committee and serves as chair in the absence of the faculty chairperson.

Shared Responsibility

At Alverno, student affairs staff members described themselves as “partners in learning in developing a community of learners” and have identified desired cocurricular outcomes that complement the College’s Eight Ability outcomes. A staff member noted, “We see ourselves as an extension of the classroom.”

Creating Conditions that Matter

First and Foremost, Focus Everyone's Attention On Student Success

- ✓ Know your institution and know your students
- ✓ Make student success everyone's business
 - Mission matters
 - So does institutional leadership

Creating Conditions that Matter

Specify The Path To Student Success

- ✓ Draw an accurate map; 'distribute' it widely and follow it consistently
- ✓ Implement a comprehensive network of early warning systems and safety nets
- ✓ If something works, consider requiring it

Creating Conditions that Matter

Use Data to Inform Decisions

- ✓ Conduct ongoing outcomes assessment and use the results.
- ✓ Do more of what you know works for student success; do less of what you know doesn't [or can't demonstrate does
- ✓ Review and revise time commitments and priorities

Creating Conditions that Matter

Put Money Where It Will Make A Difference In Student Engagement

- ✓ Align the reward system with the institutional mission, values, and priorities
- ✓ Invest in student learning and activities that contribute to student success
- ✓ Invest in faculty and staff members who are doing the right things

Creating Conditions that Matter

Create Spaces For Learning

- ✓ Make every student residence a learning community
- ✓ Build and renovate spaces to reflect commitment to student engagement
- ✓ Recognize and exploit the educational advantages of your setting

Institute

**NSSE
Institute
for Effective
Educational
Practice**

Promoting
Student Success
and Institutional
Improvement

- Workshops
- Campus Audits
- Consultations
- Research and Evaluation

The NSSE
Institute is the



Questions & Discussion



DEEP Reflections

- ? What do you find most interesting or surprising about the DEEP results?
- ? What conditions foster student success at UI? How do you know?
- ? What are we not doing that we should? What could we stop doing without negative consequences?
- ? What are the implications of the DEEP results for the Student Success Team?

In *Student Success in College: Creating Conditions That Matter*, George Kuh and others cite research showing that the best predictors of student success are academic preparation and motivation. While these characteristics are common among many college students, a high percentage of students on campuses across the nation do not enter college with strong academic preparation or high levels of motivation. Students, their families, and policy-makers expect that the state's public colleges and universities will do everything possible to help students complete their degree, and college completion should be the institution's top priority. While there is no single formula