



Insight Improvement and Innovation for Impact : An Introduction.



At Texas Tech University, our challenge is more than increasing student retention; it is also enhancing student success along the many possible paths to graduation. Fragmented efforts create silos, communication problems, confusion in student referrals, duplication of efforts, and lost opportunities. So far, Texas Tech’s experiments have proven valuable, e.g., colleges reallocating scholarships to support student persistence, dedicated advisors engaging prospective transfer students, and award-winning programs serving our military veterans and families.

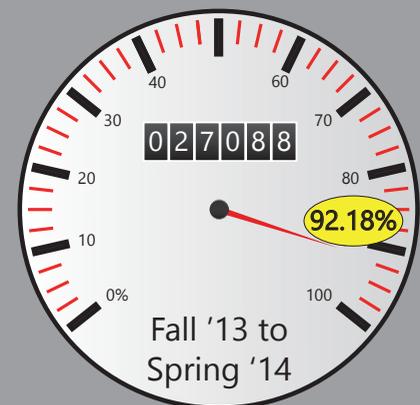
To build on these successes, The Office of the Provost appointed a small team to design and test new efforts like student data-mining, electronic collaboration, and advisor professional development. The University is seeing the impact of collaborative and research-supported initiatives, particularly in areas most needing improvements. In 2012

Texas Tech was named one of Education Trust’s “Top Gap Closers,” raising graduation rates for Hispanic and African-American students by more than 18 percentage points between 2004 and 2010. Texas Tech is now ready to extend these initial successes by rethinking retention efforts through the focused lenses of research and creativity.

This new initiative has three parts: Insight, Improvement, and Innovation for Impact. The mission will support success through insights provided by people and data, improvements in existing efforts, innovation and experimentation, targeting positive institutional impact. Beyond disseminating best practices, its first focus is to inform the retention goal-setting and program evaluation process by connecting and analyzing existing data from as many sources as possible. Success will require many short- and long-term partnerships.

According to the “College Board Study on Student Retention: How Colleges Organize Themselves to Increase Student Persistence,” Texas Tech’s funding of this initiative has already broken the mold; our leaders have recognized the weaknesses of unfunded and anecdotal or efforts that rely solely on influence to accomplish widespread change. Involving academic affairs and student affairs units, student organizations, study abroad, active learning such as undergraduate research and service learning offerings, Texas Tech will begin studying the impact of these engagement-oriented offerings in conjunction with their support-oriented cousins, instructional approaches, delivery models, curricular experiences, and student behaviors. Through transparency, inclusion, dialogue, and research, these new initiatives aim to generate sustainable campus-wide transformation emphasizing *every* educational experience with *every* student.

KPI: Student Retention as Continuing Enrollment



For each period specified, these dials depict the percentage of the initial term’s total undergraduate enrollment who graduated or persisted into the next long term.



Current Institutional Interventions

Supplemental Instruction

What is it?

Free weekly, review sessions for courses that students tend to struggle with most. Sessions are facilitated by SI Leaders- peers who have previously excelled in the course.

Why is it important?

Sessions incorporate what to learn with how to learn. Interactive learning strategies such as handouts, games, discussion, and activities are utilized. Sessions offer a structured study group.

What are the outcomes?

SI reduces rates of attrition and improves student grades. In Fall 2013, of the 3,549 offered SI, roughly half chose to participate. A substantial difference in the two groups is seen as 74% of SI participants earned a grade of A, B, or C, compared to only 53% of the non-participating students.

How can I do it? ...

To inquire about having SI a part of your course, please contact the SI Unit Coordinator, Corie Hernandez, corie.hernandez@ttu.edu.

Advising Academy

What is it?

Seven professional development sessions over one year. Participants complete a self-assessment authored by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education and develop improvement plans for individual, program, and university use.

Why is it important?

Advisors have the opportunity to provide a human connection and personalized guidance that make more manageable the challenges of a large university.

What are the outcomes?

Beyond the benefits of realistic self-appraisal and proactive improvement, the Academy facilitates collegial networking across institutional divisions, collaborative problem-solving, research-based advising, and the establishment of meaningful and assessable measures of student learning related to the advisor-student relationship.

How can I do it? ...

Discuss the opportunity with your supervisor and contact Joshua Barron, joshua.barron@ttu.edu.

Institutional Improvement Ideas & Opportunities

Persistence and success are bolstered when students articulate and aggressively pursue informed academic goals. Faculty and staff can be key in catalyzing and leveraging this purposeful motivation.

After-the-fact analysis of a group's performance may be helpful for the future, but today's students stand to benefit from more immediate guidance, encouragement, and use of available resources; this requires institutional awareness and proactivity. Could improvements be found through more meaningful early- and mid-term grades, better marketing of support to students-in-need, or greater faculty involvement in SI offerings? These ideas are only a beginning.

Because collaboration is essential for sustainable innovation, ideas are invited. Please dialogue by sending your eureka moments to iiii@ttu.edu.

Research Recap

In his second keynote at Texas Tech, George Kuh recently urged the Advancing Teaching & Learning Conference participants to focus on student persistence, not merely retention. Relational engagement that carries students through the challenges of academic rigor and personal mistakes can be found in many places, particularly ten high-impact practices.

George Kuh, Ph.D., is Adjunct Professor of Education Policy at the University of Illinois and Chancellor's Professor of Higher Education Emeritus at Indiana University (IU). Dr. Kuh founded IU's Center for Postsecondary Research and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and related instruments for law students, beginning college students, and faculty.

Persistence People

College Spotlight

Human Sciences

By supporting their advisors' participation in the advising academy, the College of Human Sciences is investing in its people, something that isn't new for the leaders in this college. Their academic disciplines focus on healthy and productive relationships, so it is no surprise that they are working to improve campus collaborations, individuals' skills and organizational efficiencies.

Associate Dean Mitzi Lauderdale is leading the charge in this area. For more information on the Human Sciences approach, contact mitzi.lauderdale@ttu.edu.

Faculty Spotlight

Michael Dini, Ph.D.



Dr. Dini is well-known for the academic rigor of his courses, but something that is less well-known is his commitment to student success in and beyond the classroom. As a partner

with Supplemental Instruction (SI), Dr. Dini has implemented each of the 4 key SI practices and taken his support to a whole new level. Dini has incorporated SI to be included in his syllabus. He gives specific details about the SI leaders, sessions, and importance of SI. By introducing the SI leaders early, he can better promote the importance of SI to student success in his course. Dr. Dini strives to assist students in realistic self-appraisal, clarified values, use of time, effective preparation techniques, and informed academic choices.

Staff Spotlight

Joshua Barron, MBA



Mr. Barron serves the campus community as the retention, effectiveness, and advising liaison. Joshua focuses his professional efforts on equipping, organizing, empowering,

and supporting efforts to serve students, particularly through program consulting, advisor professional development and training, retention intelligence, and technological innovation.

To engage Mr. Barron or learn more about the work of "Four-Eyes," contact joshua.barron@ttu.edu.