Completion Program-The College at Brockport
Table Contents

A. Institutional description
B. Development of program
C. Goals and objectives
D. Program description
E. Procedures in program evaluation
F. Results/outcome
G. Potential for adaptation by other institutions
H. References

Section A. Institutional description

Founded in 1835, The College at Brockport, located in western New York, is part of the State University of New York (SUNY) system which includes a total of 64 campuses. The College is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education as well as 13 discipline-specific national accreditations. Total enrollment as of fall 2016 is 8243 (7128 undergraduates; 1115 graduate students).

Section B. Development of Program

In November 2013, Dr. Eileen Daniel, who at that time was the Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, decided to review students who were close to graduation but had left the College prior to earning their degree. Dr. Daniel enlisted the support of several key people at the College and received an original database of 600 students who had earned 105 or more credits, were in good academic standing, and had left the College within the past 10 years without earning a degree. Dr. Daniel analyzed these students' records in order to determine what they needed to graduate and began the task of tracking down and contacting each student. By the end of January 2014, she was able to help 57 students graduate. To continue this effort, Dr. Daniel applied for a SUNY Grant to help fund a full-time position to continue this process. The SUNY Grant was awarded in the spring of 2015, and the position was filled in August of 2016. By that time, Dr. Daniel had been working on the completion project for three years and had graduated 169 students through the spring 2016 semester. Since hiring a fulltime person, the program has increased the number of students graduated to 254 and has increased the number of students seeking to come back and earn their degrees.

In 2016 SUNY Chancellor Dr. Nancy Zimpher spotlighted the College at Brockport's program on the state level and has started to roll out a completion program at all SUNY schools. Over the past two years the program has also been featured in several local papers.

Section C. Goals and Objectives

The overall goal of the program is to identify students who left the College prior to graduation and facilitate their return to earn their degree. The process entails running a report of all students who have at least 105 credits, did not register for the following semester, and did not graduate. Once identified, students are contacted through US mail, phone, cell phone, email, and social media. If interested in returning, every effort is made to facilitate their reentry the College.

The objective is to create a transition as seamless as possible in order for the students to return and take classes. In addition, there are continual check-ins with each student to ensure their needs are being met and to address any issues or concerns they may have as they progress in completing course work and earning their degrees

Section D. Program Description

The focus of the program is to have as many students as possible return to the College and complete their degrees. Based upon collaboration with the Registrar, the parameters identified for the target population are those students who completed 105 or more or more credits with a GPA of 2.0 or higher and walked away from College prior to completion of their degrees. Based upon these parameters, periodic reports are run from the College's student database management system identifying the eligible students. Once identified, the next step is to review each student's academic record to specifically determine what they need in order to complete their degree. The final, and sometimes most difficult, step is finding the last known address or contact information for the student. This final step often takes a great deal of time trying to locate the individual on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, or other people-finding software sites. Once the student is located, individual/personalized messages are created so that the student feels that someone has taken the time to send the message rather than a generic or canned email or message. Responses show that the more personally crafted the message, the better the response rate.

Section E. Procedures in Program Evaluation

The steps presented in the above section are followed to ensure that all students' records are analyzed and that each student receives an individualized message. The completion program is evaluated on several key markers beginning with the number of outreach attempts. For Example, in the summer session 2016 and fall 2016 semester a total of 472 personal/individualized messages were sent out to students in the target population. Of that number, 52 responded and 20 enrolled for winter intersession 2017 or spring semester 2017 courses in order to complete their degree. An evaluation is also made as to the impact the completion program has with respect to the College's four and six year graduation rates. In the summer of 2016, as a result of the outreach by the completion program, 11 students graduated, which had a direct impact on these graduation rates (seven students that graduated in the summer stayed on the four-year path to graduation, and four that graduated fell within the six-year graduation rate). We are looking at the overall impact of the completion program on the 4-year and 6-year graduation rates.

Section F. Results/Outcomes

In the three plus years the completion program has been in place, we have assisted 255 students in graduating; another 46 students are currently enrolled for the 2017 spring semester. Of these 46 students, 30 will graduate (if they successfully complete the courses in which they are currently enrolled) at the end of the spring, 2017 semester. The other 16 students will graduate after successfully completing course work in either the 2017 summer session or 2017 fall semester, dependent on when the course(s) they need to take are offered. We also have a new set of students ready to return and have another 10 students ready to return to take classes for the 2017 summer session. Our success rate to graduation is very high, as only six students have left after enrolling (either due to failing or due to walking away again). Those six students are out of the total 307 students helped by the program since its inception. Less than 2% walked away after returning through this program. The program attributes its success rate to the one-stop-shop approach to advising the students. Students returning through this program are with the same advisor from the first email, through the admissions process, registering for classes, and straight through to graduation.

Section G. Potential for Adaptability for Other Institutions

Due to the success and publicity of our program, other schools have adopted completion programs. Two universities in the Rochester, New York area opened completion offices in fall 2016. Colleges are seeing the tremendous success in reaching out to these motivated former students and high percentages graduate. SUNY Chancellor Dr. Nancy Zimpher's remarks to the New York State Assembly Standing Committee on Higher Education on November 30, 2016, outlined the success of our program. She stated, "This is one of the most compelling programs we have elevated thanks to your support of SUNY's Investment and Performance Fund and we must work to take this to scale across the SUNY system" (suny.edu). SUNY has implemented completion programs at all of the 4-year institutions and though their data are not known yet, SUNY has pledged support for this program and its transferability and applicability to other institutions.

References

Zimpher, N. (2016, November). http://www.suny.edu/about/leadership/chancellor-nancy-zimpher/speeches/2016-Costs-Testimony/?utm_content=&utm_medium=social&utm_term=&utm_source=twitter&utm_campaign=SUNY+Marketing

The Completion Program-The College at Brockport