

The Education Advisory Board (EAB) Student Success Collaborative identified two groups of students who traditionally receive attention and support from their institution: high achieving students with GPA's above a 3.0, and students on academic probation with GPA's below a 2.0. (2015). High achieving students are on track to graduate, regularly attend academic advising and are involved on campus; while students on academic probation receive intrusive advising support to improve academically. EAB further investigated students that fall between these two groups: the "murky middle." Students in the murky middle with GPA's between a 2.0 and 3.0 are often overlooked by those in the academic advising community. EAB reports that of the attrition that occurs after the first year, over half of the students fall into the "murky middle." Higher education institutions were encouraged to promote a culture shift to provide intentional support to these students and thus the Knight Watch Program began in fall 2015 to support this population. The University of Central Florida (UCF) Office of First Year Advising and Exploration (FYAE), first-time-in-college (FTIC) students who earned between a 2.00 and 2.59 first semester GPA were placed in the Knight Watch Program and received specialized communication and academic advising. Over the years, peer mentorship and community service were included. 2016-2017 participants who completed three or four program components had a first to second year retention rate of 91.3% which was not only higher for identified students who did not participate but also higher than the university retention rate of 89.6%.