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The Utilization of Peer Mentorship and its Positive Impact on Student Retention

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Background

In an industry where "Aircraft maker Boeing (BA) forecast that 558,000 new commercial airline pilots will be needed over the next 20 years, in a report released Monday. That works out to about 28,000 pilots each year," being a pilot is in very high demand (Harrison). The demand in the industry has caused a large lack of flight instructors available at Embry-Riddle, leaving a climbing portion of students that had numerous repeated flight activities and struggled in their academic ground schools. This left students trapped in a slump in their training with rising financial debt.

Abstract

In recognition of increasing rates of repeated ground schools and flight lessons, in combination with decreasing retention rates in the flight programs at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, the Department of Aeronautical Science in the College of Aviation took initiative to create a program that identified struggling students before they reached excessive failure or financial distress. The students identified in the Student Success Initiative (SSI) after being assessed would be required to attend an mediation session with their academic and flight training staff in order to create a specialized training program for these students.

- Student Success Initiative (SSI)
- Identifies "at risk" students
- Implemented training plan tailored to student
- One-on-one instruction

Methods

Initially the SSI in its first inception had a few initial issues:

- Coordination between flight and academics
- Student lack of response
- Staffing

The College of Aviation then implemented Peer Counselors:

- Students with AGI/IGI or working to attain
- Solve staffing problem
- One-on-one tutoring or Airway Science Tutor Lab
- True Course Simulations™2016

Conclusions

The Peer Counseling program has taken off to be one of the most used resources available for the College of Aviation, as seen by the graphs provided. The program has provided a solace for struggling students to ask for help and has given real life experience to those students looking to become flight instructors.

References

Harrison, V. (2015, July 21). The world needs more pilots: 28,000 new jobs a year. Retrieved October 26, 2016, from <http://money.cnn.com/2015/07/21/news/companies/boeing-pilots-demand/index.html>

