Faculty Research & Publications   College of Business and Information Systems

6-2018

SUPPORTING RETENTION BY BUILDING PROGRAM COMMUNITIES USING LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (LMS)

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Online students risk feeling isolated and disconnected.   *Weak social cohesiveness increases the risk of drop-outs.[1]*
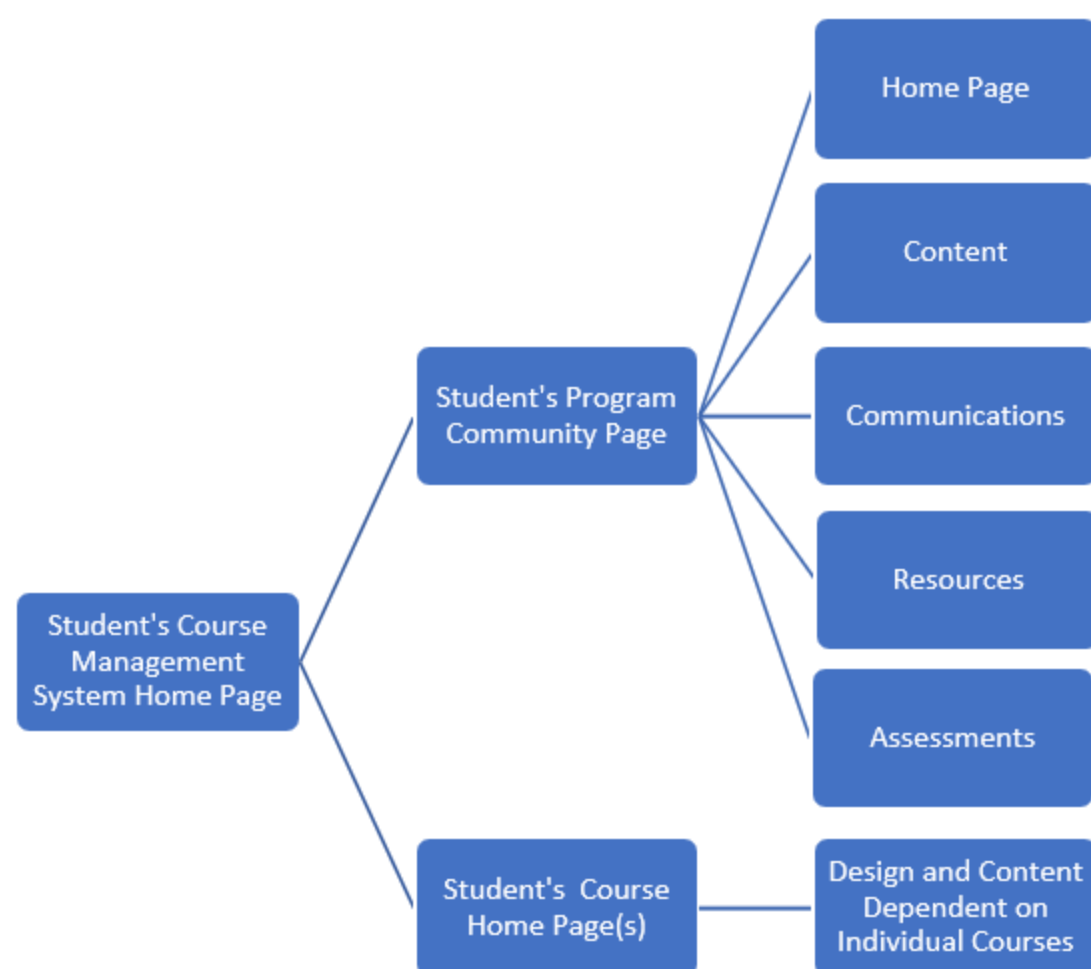
An online strategy that builds student connectedness in the college community
Better service - Increased retention

SUPPORTING RETENTION	COMMUNITIES SUPPORT RETENTION	BENEFITS OF CONNECTEDNESS
A SUPPORTIVE AN ONLINE COMMUNITY	**INDIVIDUALS BOUND TOGETHER FOR A REASON[1]**	**BELONGING - THE ESSENCE OF A COMMUNITY.[2]**
- Expectations (expect students to succeed), - Advice (clear and consistent information about institutional requirements), - Supports (strong network), - Involvement (involved as valued members of institution), - How learning is fostered (useful and productive learning with and from others).[3]	- Shared goals - Membership - Trust - Community boundaries - Connectedness - Common expectations - Collaboration	- Social capital: mutual understanding, shared values and behaviors[1] - Support and socioemotional well-being[1] - Enhanced sense of self-worth and efficacy[2] - Alumni experience to stay connected[2] - Current educational organization - Future learning: local, national or international organizations

STRATEGY

ENHANCED A SENSE OF COMMUNITY - CAMARADERIE AND CONNECTEDNESS.[1]	BROAD COMMUNICAION AND COLLABORATION
- Information sharing - Idea exchanges - Mentoring - Asynchronous and synchronous communications - Synchronous - fosters social interaction - Asynchronous - fosters deeper dialogue and continuous discourse without time and geographical limitations	- All degree-seeking students - Online and campus - Faculty - Administration - Staff
USE COMMON TECHNOLOGY4	**RELEVANT CONTENT.**
- Familiar - Easy access - Students, faculty and staff - Existing course management system (CSM)	- Separate (CMS) site at Program level - Members removed upon - Graduation - Leaving the university - Changing majors outside interest of program sites

DESIGN – FRAMEWORK

CMS section	Suggested content
Home page	Include information explaining that this site - is *not* a class - is a resource site for the program community - provides information such as reminders, news, calendar of events - offers a "getting started" section - introduces program faculty and staff
Content section	- Include useful information and documents. Examples include - examples of course syllabi - student program outcomes - academic policies - proctoring guidelines - required forms and applications - links to related professional associations - links to advising resources, student development resources, and tutoring resources
Communications section	- Include options for asynchronous and synchronous interaction between students (and faculty as appropriate) - live interactive webinars can be scheduled, and these can be recorded and archived on the site as well. - live chat feature for informal peer-tutoring and other social interactions. - discussion threads for member introductions and more in-depth conversations. - survey option to collect input from community members.
Resources section	- Include features commonly used by members - class list for a roster of the community members - glossary for a collective understanding of terminology used in the program.
Assessments section	- Use as an administrative feature - drop box for submission of program paperwork - requested documents for program-related processes.

Reference Information: 1. "Does Sense of Community Matter? An Examination of Participants' Perceptions of Building Learning Communities in Online Courses" by Xiaojing Liu, Richard J. Magjuka, Curtis J. Bonk, and Seung-hee Lee in *Quarterly Review of Distance Education* 8.1 (2007): 9-24, 87-88 2. "Facilitating the Development of a Learning Community in an Online Graduate Program" by Joyce Lee, JoAnn Carter-Wells, Barbara Glaeser, Karen Ivers, and Christ Street in *Quarterly Review of Distance Education* 7.1 (2006): 13-33 3. "Proactive Intervention Strategies for Improving Online Student Retention in a Malaysian Distance Education Institution" by Lai Cheng Tung in *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching* Volume 8 Number 4, (2012): 312-323. 4. "Promoting Community for Online Learners in Special Education" by Elizabeth West, Phyllis Jones, and Sara Semon in *Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education* Volume 28 Number 3 (2012): 108-116. Graphic downloaded from https://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2488347,00.asp on 5/15/18. Used without permission.