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Into the Weeds: Using Institutional Data to Support Program Improvement Across the University

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Into the Weeds: Using Institutional Data to Support Program Improvement Across the University

Abstract

This presentation was given at the 2016 Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities Conference in Washington, D.C.

Keywords

data, community engagement, assessment

Disciplines

Higher Education

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VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

Into the Weeds: Using Institutional Data to Support Program Improvement Across the University

Results from the pilot of a comprehensive institutional assessment model.

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Office of the Provost, Virginia Commonwealth University
Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities

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Washington, District of Columbia

Higher Education Under Attack

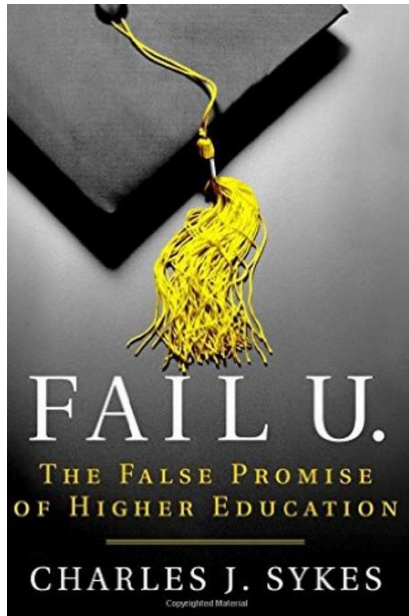
Harvard
Business
Review

EDUCATION

The Degree Is Doomed

by Michael Staton

JANUARY 08, 2014

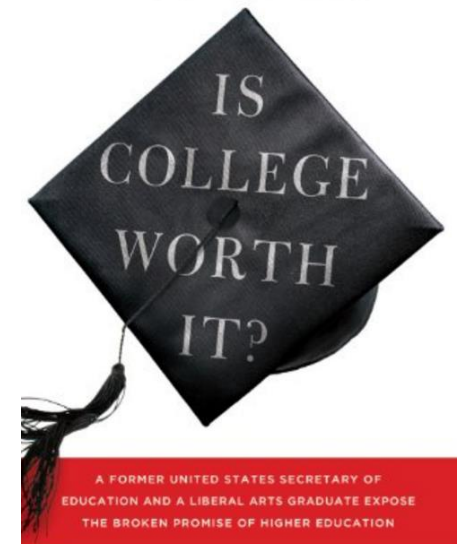


GALLUP Topics Client Services Online Products

EDUCATION APRIL 16, 2015 PRINT SHARE

Most Americans Say Higher Education Not Affordable

NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLING AUTHOR
WILLIAM J. BENNETT
WITH DAVID WILEZOL



VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

Responding to calls for change



Urban public research university. Diverse student body of 31,242, including approximately 30% first-generation & low income students. Located in Richmond, Virginia.

“Participation in high-impact educational practices (HIPs) has been consistently shown to correlate with higher levels of student engagement and increased graduation rates.”

(Kuh, 2008; Center for Postsecondary Research, 2014)

VCU HIPs -- service-learning, living-learning programs, internships, education abroad, first-year seminars, undergraduate research, and capstone courses.

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

Quest for Distinction Strategic Plan

Theme I

Become a leader among national research universities in providing all students with high-quality learning/living experiences focused on inquiry, discovery and innovation in a global environment.

Theme II

Attain distinction as a fully integrated urban, public research university through contributions in human health, research, scholarship and creative expression that advance knowledge and enhance the quality of life.

Theme III

Become a national model for community engagement and regional impact.

www.quest.vcu.edu



The VCU HIPs Assessment Team

Office of the Provost

- Office of Planning and Decision Support.
- Division of Community Engagement.
 - Service-Learning Office.
 - ASPIRE Living-Learning Program.
- Division of Student Affairs.
 - LEAD Living-Learning Program.



Ginter House
1925



Ginter House
2016

Category 1: Inclusive Excellence Objective



- Which of our students are participating in high impact educational practices and which are not?
- Is our institution achieving its goals regarding the participation of underrepresented and diverse students in high impact educational practices?



Category 2: Degree Completion Objective



- What is the relationship between participation in high impact educational practices to student persistence and degree completion?
- What do these relationship look like amongst various subgroups of students?



Category 3: Quality of Learning Objective



- What levels of learning and development do students participating in specific high impact educational practices demonstrate on critical learning objectives?
- How do these levels compare with those of students who do not participate in those high impact educational practices?



Pilot HIPs Assessment Programs: Service-Learning & ASPIRE Living-Learning Program

Service-Learning:

1. *Definition:* At VCU an academic class section is designated with a “service-learning” attribute in the Banner course maintenance system if it engages every enrolled student in (a) at least 20 hours of service that meets a community-identified need and (b) reflection that connects the service to the academic content of the class.
2. *Tracking:* Using the “service-learning” Banner course attribute, individual students are identified as service-learning if they have successfully completed at least one designated service-learning class.

ASPIRE Living-Learning Program:

1. *Definition:* ASPIRE is a 2-year, 4-semester undergraduate living-learning program that promotes community engagement through academic coursework and co-curricular experiences. Students enter as a cohort beginning each academic year in the fall semester, live in the same residence hall, enroll in 9 credit hours of coursework, and complete 100 hours of co-curricular service.
2. *Tracking:* Individual students receive a ‘tag’ in the Banner system if they are enrolled in ASPIRE’s foundational course, CMST 300, at Census 2 in the fall semester of the academic year. Census 2 (Oct 15) is the University’s official reporting date for enrollment and admissions data.

Pilot HIPs Assessment Programs: Available Institutional Data

Category 1: Inclusive Excellence Objective:

- ☛ *Banner student data* – gender, ethnicity, full-time/part-time, Pell v Non-Pell high school GPA, SAT scores

Category 2: Degree Completion Objective:

- ☛ *Banner student data* – enrollment and graduation data for matriculation cohorts.

Category 3: Quality of Learning Objective:

- ☛ *Indirect indicators of quality of learning*
 - National Survey of Student Engagement (NSEE)
 - Service-Learning Course Evaluation Form
 - The Outcomes Survey (GradFinder, coming soon)
- ☛ *Direct indicators of quality of learning*
 - Civic Minded Graduate Narrative Prompt (IUPUI, nd)



Pilot HIPs Assessment Programs: Service-Learning Program Data & Results

Category 1: Inclusive Excellence Objective (2012-2015):

- ☛ No SL v. nonSL differences for females, ethnicity, Pell, or HS GPA.
- ☛ Fewer males and part-time students take SL than expected.
- ☛ SL students had lower SATs than nonSL students.

Category 2: Degree Completion Objective:

- ☛ SL = 'took at least one SL class in first two years at VCU'.
- ☛ Fall 2011 matriculation cohort – 4-yr graduation rate for SL = 44% (nonSL=39%).
- ☛ Fall 2012 & 2013 matriculation cohorts – SL significantly more likely to be retained than nonSL .

Category 3: Quality of Learning Objective:

- ☛ NSSE 2014 Senior respondents – SL > nonSL on Reflective & Integrative Learning Engagement Indicator.
- ☛ SLIM 2014-15 respondents – High ratings on reflection & integrative learning questions (\bar{x} =5.65 on 7 pt. scale).
- ☛ NSSE 2014 Senior respondents – SL > nonSL on Student-Faculty Interaction Engagement Indicator.
- ☛ SLIM 2014-15 respondents – High ratings on faculty interaction question (\bar{x} =5.71 on 7 pt. scale).



Pilot HIPs Assessment Programs: ASPiRE Living-Learning Program Data & Results

Category 1: Inclusive Excellence Objective (2012-2015):

- ☛ ASPiRE students were compared to all full-time, nonASPiRE sophomores living in on-campus residence halls.
- ☛ ASPiRE African-American = 46% (nonASPiRE African American = 18%).
- ☛ ASPiRE Males = 16% (nonASPiRE Males = 43%).

Category 2: Degree Completion Objective:

- ☛ ASPiRE students compared to all sophomore and juniors living in on-campus housing and not enrolled in ASPiRE
- ☛ 4-, 5-, and 6-year graduation data not yet available.
- ☛ 2012, 2013 & 2014 retention rates for ASPiRE were equivalent or higher than for nonASPiRE students.

Category 3: Quality of Learning Objective:

- ☛ No NSSE Senior data yet available.
- ☛ Fall 2015 pre-test Civic-Minded Graduate (CMG) scores from ASPiRE students during their 1st semester in the program showed 'Apprentice' level functioning in 3 of 5 CMG categories (will retest same cohort in Spring 2017).



Pilot HIPs Assessment Programs: Data-Based Decision Making

Building the Institutional Infrastructure:

- ☛ Maintain a university-level committee to guide the annual data collection & direct the results dissemination process (i.e., who needs to know?).
- ☛ Develop and implement a strategy for including additional high-impact educational practices in the annual assessment process (e.g., LEAD Living-Learning Program).
- ☛ Explore strategies for aggregating multiple high-impact practices into a single series of regression analyses.

Service-Learning:

- ☛ Develop strategies for increasing male and part-time student participation.
- ☛ Conduct Service-Learning Office research into the nature of impactful reflection and faculty-student interaction, particularly for underrepresented student populations.

ASPiRE Living-Learning Program:

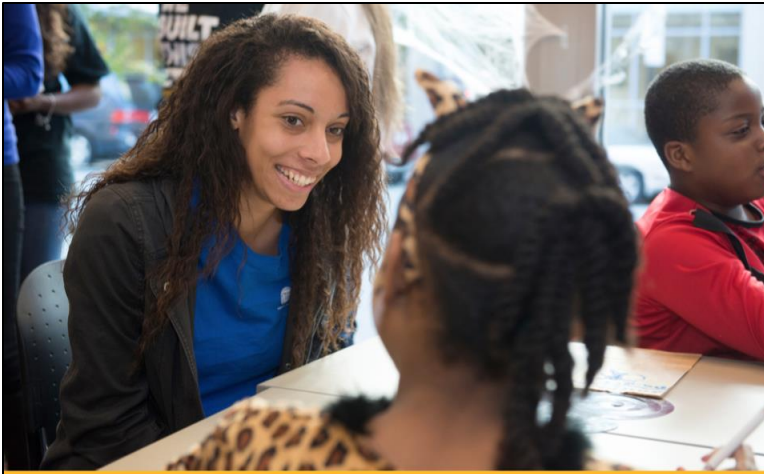
- ☛ Develop strategies for increasing male student participation.
- ☛ Conduct Civic Minded Graduate (CMG) post-testing on exiting ASPiRE students.

Pilot HIPs Assessment Programs: Recommendations for Other Institutions



1. Get to know your Director of Institutional Research.
2. In collaboration with your Office of Institutional Research, create clear definitions for key HIPs on your campus that can be tagged and tracked in your student/course data management system (e.g., Banner). Start with the low-hanging fruit.
3. Develop a centralized auditing system that works to insure that the courses carrying HIPs tags consistently meet the definitions developed for those HIPs.
4. Develop a HIPs Assessment Steering Committee and meet regularly to pilot the model. We met weekly for an entire academic year.
5. Remember to build infrastructure for sustainability, communications, and program improvement.

Our HIPs Assessment Report is Online



HIGH IMPACT PRACTICES (HIPs) ASSESSMENT MODEL

2015-2016 Pilot Mid-Year Report

Prepared by Lynn E. Pelco, Ph.D., January 2016



VCU HIPs Assessment Task Force Members

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<http://bit.ly/2cd4DSM>

