Transforming Advising Practices as a Result of Deploying, Adopting and Refining Early Risk-Targeting Interventions

From Throwing Stones to Creating Ripples Ramapo's Approach to Student Success

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Ramapo College of New Jersey

- Founded in 1969
- Approximately 6000 students
  - ~5800 undergraduate students
  - ~ 200 graduate students
- 51% of students live on campus
- Designated by the State as “New Jersey’s Public Liberal Arts College”
- Fall 2016 First-Year Class:
  - 944 students
  - Average SAT of 1136
  - 37% of class met institutionally approved diversity metrics
- Hybrid Academic Advisement Model
  - Center for Student Success advises first-year and undeclared students
  - Faculty advise upper-class declared students
Educational Opportunity Fund Program (EOF), Office of Specialized Services and Athletics sent faculty members multiple surveys at different times of the semester asking for student updates
- Faculty reported not as much “loop closing” if feedback was submitted
- Chance that if a student was both EOF and Athletics affiliated, faculty would end up receiving two different surveys at two varying times for the same student
- Surveys took significant amount of time either because of manual student/course entry or continuous copy/paste
- These populations accounted for less than 30% of the incoming class annually
  - What about the other 70%
- New Strategic plan called for increased first-year retention rates and increased four and six year graduation rates.
  - How do we build on the old model to achieve this goal?

Increase student success by getting students with early signs of academic problems the help they need earlier in the semester.

Improve the old early alert system to make it easier for faculty to communicate with the constituencies that provide help mid-semester and create a one-stop-shop that will take less time each semester.
Connect Implementation Goals Year 1

**Goal 1:** Reduce the number of units sending academic progress reports to faculty
- **Measure:** Number of forms sent to faculty
- **Target:** Reduce number of forms from 3 to 1
- **Finding:** Met

**Goal 2:** Increase percentage of academic progress reports submitted by faculty
- **Measure:** Number of surveys received by units
- **Target:** Establish baseline of surveys received in 2013-2014; compare baseline to numbers received by units in 2012-2013
- **Finding:** 77% of faculty submitted academic progress reports during the 2013-2014 Academic Year and over 56% of courses had surveys completed. (No unit had previously achieved a 50% survey completion rate)

**Goal 3:** Provide earlier outreach to academically at risk students as identified by academic progress reports, grades and other early alerts
- **Measure:** Number of contacts with at-risk first-year students on a monthly basis
- **Target:** Establish baseline of contacts made in 2013-2014; compare baseline to numbers made by units in 2012-2013 (approximately 20%)
- **Finding:** Percent of Academic Warning first-year students who met with their advisor twice on or before 4/2/14 course registration date was 30.9%. (In 2012-2013, CAAFYE met with less than 20% of first-year students on academic warning two times in the spring semester)
Adjust Initial Goals Based on Feedback

- Faculty
  - Requested the ability to comment on more students via progress surveys
  - Requested there be less choices on the survey to minimize sideways scrolling

- Students
  - Appreciated finding some of their resources in one place, but hoped for more

- Offices
  - Began questioning what is Connect?
  - How do we get involved?


1. Expand student’s Success Network
2. Increase percentage of academic progress reports submitted by faculty
3. Provide earlier outreach to academically at risk students as identified by academic progress reports, grades and other early alerts
4. Expand and streamline progress surveys to serve more students with more targeted feedback.
**Connect Goals**

**Goal:** Expand the student’s success network.

- **Year 1 Offices:**
  1. Center for Student Success
  2. EOF
  3. OSS
  4. Athletics
  5. Adult Degree Completion Program
  
  Cumulative: 5 offices

- **Year 2 Additional Offices:**
  1. Cahill Career Development Center
  2. Financial Aid
  3. Residence Life
  4. Roukema Center for International Education
  
  Cumulative: 9 offices

- **Year 3 Additional Offices:**
  1. Student Affairs
  2. Dean of Students
  3. Teacher Education
  
  Cumulative: 12 offices

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**Additional Students. More Targeted Feedback.**

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Connect Student Feedback

**Question:** As a result of the messages from connect@ramapo.edu that indicated opportunities for improvement in your courses, please specify if you followed up with any of the following campus resources; check all that apply.

- 55% Professor/Course Instructor
- 22% Tutor (Center for Reading and Writing, Math or other)
- 28% Advisor (Athletics, CAAFYE, EOF, OSS, Scholarship)
- 16% Service (CAAFYE, Center for Reading and Writing)
- 21% I received messages and chose not to act on them.

**4 Year Findings**
Closing the Loop

This chart indicates how many flags were cleared by all Units for each student population in the Spring 2016 and Spring 2017 semester.

TECHNOLOGY UPTAKE MEASURE: USE OF STARFISH EARLY ALERT BY FACULTY

% of Students with Academic Progress Surveys Completed
STRUCTURAL CHANGE MEASURE: INCREASED COMPLETION OF ACADEMIC WARNING SUCCESS PLANS

STUDENT SUCCESS MEASURE: DECLINE IN PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ON ACADEMIC WARNING

Through the implementation of Connect, there has been a 2% decline in students on Academic Warning at the end of their first semester and 11% decline in students that continue onto Academic Probation after Warning

- Students on Academic Warning
  - 11% in Fall 2012 (prior to Connect)
  - 9% in Fall 2015

- Students that continue to Academic Probation after Warning
  - 54% in Fall 2012
  - 43% in Fall 2015
Connect Qualitative Feedback

1. EOF Advisor
   Working with Connect has made the advisement process more interactive between the students and myself. It really is a great central system that has even more capabilities than we are currently doing. I think the biggest relationship it has improved has been between student and faculty member. Students get flagged and once I have been able to get in touch with them, a lot of them have already spoken to their faculty member. It has given the students a better sense of ownership in terms of their progress.

2. OSS Advisor
   I believe I am better informed about how my students are doing in the classroom, Connect has often prompted me to reach out to a student that I might have otherwise overlooked. When students receive a Connect report from a professor they respond more proactively than an email just from me.

3. Student Success Advisor
   Connect identifies students who are struggling or are having academic difficulty, which is a benefit to the student and me. We are able to determine the support mechanisms needed.

4. Faculty Member
   As an adjunct last semester, Connect managed to scare some of my students into doing their missing assignments. It was effective too because the athletics department intervened in response to my referral and told a student he could not come to practice until I said his work was turned in.

Looking Forward

- **Expand use of Success Plans**: 1) Second-year of plans for all first-year students; 2) Expand plans for Career Development Pathways; 3) Use plans to support all students with less than a 2.0 GPA

- **Harness the data of our Predictive Model** to prioritize student outreach?

- **Analyze impact of certain flags** on first year student retention and incorporate into Predictive Modeling

- **Add Degree Planning** software
Change work needs to be small enough to be manageable, but big enough to be meaningful.

5 Years
- Long-term goals
- Include extended planning horizon and longer term outcomes.
- Targets that if met, move College forward towards institutional goals.

3 Year
- Qualitative Data
- Trend Data to Inform/Support Initiative
- Targets that if met, support making it to five year targets.

1 year
- Small Wins
- Manageable and incremental targets that if met will encourage support to make it to 3 year plan.

Questions?

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