Addressing Student Success: Exploring Technology-Enabled Advising

Rick Sluder    Middle Tennessee Statue University

Agenda

- The MTSU experience
  - The context
  - The journey
  - Evolving the model
  - Lessons we are learning
The Journey at MTSU

The Context

- 22,050 students
- Average ACT 22.5
- 50% of students are Pell-eligible
- 50% are first generation
- 40% of new freshmen are minorities
- MTSU has a strong campus culture of support!!

The Journey at MTSU

The Genesis

- Drive to 55
- Performance based funding
- A commitment to support students
Operationalizing MTSU’s Quest for Student Success

- Identification of primary strategic initiatives
  1. Advising enhancements
  2. Course redesign
  3. Learner support
  4. Communication plans and performance metrics

Technology-enhancements are threaded through all of the above strategic initiatives

Getting Technology-Enhanced Advising Right

- The doubling of advising staff by hiring 47 additional advisors
- Leading in a decentralized model
  - 8 college advising centers
- The power of leadership alignment – from top to bottom
- Starting with an “all in” model
  - No opt-outs
- Focusing on utilization from the outset
Getting Technology-Enhanced Advising Right: Evolving the Model

- From the beginning: A focus on data
  - Using leading indicators, not lagging indicators
- Encouraging innovation and development
- Using a phased approach to implement new platform developments
  - And to implement new technology
- Using technology to change culture

Lessons we are learning

- The ever-present need to focus on the “why?”
  - “e.g., I/we don’t believe in the predictive model.”
- Returning to basics
  - Is first-semester freshman GPA a predictor?
  - Is performance in key courses a predictor?
- The strong evolution of talent in the advisor ranks
- Training and professional development evolution are key
- It’s not only advisors who should be using the platform(s)
The results … have been phenomenal

A great start, but only a beginning…