Playbook for Student Success

Pursuing a Student-Centered Approach to Increasing Completion
Academic Affairs Forum

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Why Don’t Students Complete?

Root Cause of Attrition Remains Frustratingly Elusive

In my interviews with students, I have found that the biggest reasons for a delay in graduation are that students switch majors, fail out of courses, cannot get required courses, do not qualify for their intended majors; they have to work to pay for their living expenses, do not think there are any jobs for them after graduation, pursue double majors, do not receive adequate advising, have medical problems and personal issues.

Faculty Member,
Large Public Research University

External Forces

Stakes are Higher than Ever

Economic and Political Pressures to Retain and Graduate Students

High Economic Cost of Attrition
Estimated 13% of total E&R spending at publics (9% at privates) associated with attrition; average cost of $12,800 in “lost” credits to attrition add to cost of a degree

Enrollment Headwinds
Rate of undergraduate enrollment growth slowing dramatically across the next decade; over 20% of institutions reported enrollment shortfalls of 10% or more in 2012

State Performance-based Funding
Rapid adoption of performance-based funding formulas for state allocation; 33 states (and counting), up from just 4 in 2010

Highly Visible Federal Ratings
Proposed rating system to be released this summer; federal completion metrics positioned as way for families to compare “value” of institutions

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Approaching the Limit of Initial Investments

Continued Progress on Completion May Require a Different Approach

**Impact of Early Retention Initiatives**

- Require undergraduate students to file a degree plan by the end of FY
- Integrate career and academic advising
- Deploy an early alert system to flag academic risk
- Complete a “bottleneck course” audit to redesign academic schedule
- Pilot upper division degree completion program
- Enhance professional development for advisors; better use of data

Are we approaching the limit to how many students can be retained?

12%

Average growth in public student services spending per student FTE AY 2000-2010

Six Year Wait for Fullest Return

**Early Returns on First Year Retention Efforts**

Graduation Improvement Among New Cohorts Remains to Be Seen

**First-Year Retention Rates, Middle 50 Percent**

Three-Year Average by Carnegie Segment, 2010-12 & Change Since 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Selective</th>
<th>Private Research</th>
<th>Public Research</th>
<th>Private Master's</th>
<th>Public Master's</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selective</td>
<td>Private Research</td>
<td>Public Research</td>
<td>Private Master's</td>
<td>Public Master's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>Private Research and Masters</td>
<td>Public Research</td>
<td>Private Master's</td>
<td>Public Master's</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2009 Median in Handwriting: 62, 61
2012 Median: 71, 74

Source: Delta Cost Project, ‘Measuring (and Managing) the Invisible Costs of Postsecondary Abortion’ (2012)

Source: IPEDS (2014)
Losing Ground After Year One
Sophomore and Upper Division Attrition Increasing

Attrition Across the Student Lifecycle

Public University Graduating Classes, 2000 to 2010

Twenty-One State Flagship Universities

Beyond Retention to Graduation
Increasing Completion While Sustaining Improvements in the First Year

Student Outcomes By Year
California State System – 2003 Cohort through 2012

How do we continue to increase FY retention?
Why do students leave after the first year?
How do we reduce time to degree?
What We Now Know About Student Success

Investment in Data, Analytics, and Research Accelerating Progress

Gaining Insight into Student Patterns of Behavior

A+

What grades in prerequisites are correlated to success in the major?

When do most students who graduate declare their last major?

Which populations on campus are leaving during the sophomore year?

80%

Of CIOs and VPs of Student Success expect increased investment in analytics in the next two years


Entering a New Phase in Student Success

Yesterday’s Approach

Target resource intensive support services and staff to highest risk students

Focus efforts and programs on first year students to boost retention

Monitor academic progress to identify students at risk of probation

Today’s Approach

Recognize “murky” middle students as attrition risks with opportunity for improvement

Address sophomore and upper division attrition and emphasize persistence to graduation

Apply a holistic risk model with academic and non-academic factors to identify students at risk of withdrawal
Notes:
5 Insights for Re-Framing the Institutional Conversation

1. Disproportionate share of resources allocated to the academically underprepared despite the fact that most students leave in good academic standing.

2. Greatest opportunity to increase graduation rate is targeting support to students from 2.0 to 3.0 – a "murky middle" often overlooked.

3. Most institutions over rely on GPA which masks critical differences in credit momentum and progression (Not All 2.7s are Equal).

4. High flyers have a smoother path through the first two years; risk is at entry to the upper division when confronting barriers to major choice.

5. Student major-changing follows surprising but predictable patterns; unrealized opportunity for better capacity planning and advisor allocation.

5 Imperatives for Building the Student-Centered Enterprise

6. Build a risk model incorporating academic and non-academic factors; continuously update with new behavioral data, and re-examine at critical milestones when re-categorization is most likely to occur.

7. Prioritize frequency and focus of advising based on predicted risk profile.

8. Assign advisor caseloads based on major-switching patterns to allow for personalization and continuity throughout student academic careers.

9. Craft registration and withdrawal policies to reward long-term commitment and disincent unprincipled deviation from plan.

10. Automate transactional processes to promote self-service and reserve staff for higher value activities.
The Student Success Playbook
Ten Insights and Imperatives for the Next Phase in Increasing Completion

Providing Focus for Strategic Planning

5 Insights for Re-Framing the Institutional Conversation

What do we need to change?
- Data disciplines
- Staffing models
- Academic policies
- Technology

5 Imperatives for Building the Student-Centered Enterprise

Expediting Task Force Execution

Not Every Problem Caught by an Early Alert
Academic Indicators Can Miss Certain At-Risk Populations

Common Flags
- Poor attendance
- Lack of participation
- Missing assignments
- Low midterm grade
- Poor study habits
- Low cumulative grade

New Additions
- Lack of writing proficiency
- Lack of academic readiness
- Disruptive behavior
- Complaints from peers
- Attending wrong section
- Unresponsive to attempts to contact
- Sudden change in mood
- Illness or poor hygiene
- Repeated requests for extensions

Often Overlooked
- Non-academic reason for poor grade or attendance
- Top academic performers thinking about transfer
- Academically okay but concerned about fitting in
Most Students Leave in Good Standing

Loss of Promising Undergraduates Bespeaks More than Academic Risk

Academic Standing and Timing of Attrition of Non-Transfers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Left Early in Good Standing</th>
<th>Left Early in Poor Standing</th>
<th>Left Late in Good Standing</th>
<th>Left Late in Poor Standing</th>
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<tr>
<td>1988-89</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-90</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
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</tbody>
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Exacerbated by Today’s Financial Reality

Expected Family Contribution Burden Shouldered by Students

Students Funding Larger Share...

Percentage of Public Higher Ed Revenues from Net Tuition, 1988-2013

...as Parents Pay Less than They Used To

Average Percentage Share of Tuition Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Income and Savings</td>
<td>-10%</td>
<td>-10%</td>
<td>-10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Borrowing</td>
<td>+4%</td>
<td>+4%</td>
<td>+4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Income and Savings</td>
<td>+2%</td>
<td>+2%</td>
<td>+2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Borrowing</td>
<td>-1%</td>
<td>-1%</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cost is More Than Just Tuition

61% The non-tuition share of total in-state cost of attendance includes textbooks, supplies, room and board.

Source: Sallie Mae, “How America Pays for College 2013.”
A More Holistic Definition of Risk

The Old Thinking
Use available admissions data to identify most academically underprepared students prior to matriculation

The New Thinking
Develop holistic model to predict likelihood of withdrawal based upon historical analysis of academic and attrition risk

Insight #2: Opportunity for Improvement Greatest Among “Murky Middle”

Greatest Realizable Gains from 2.0 – 3.0

Least Likely to Seek Support or Receive Proactive Intervention

Graduation Rate by First Year GPA

Sample of 66 EAB Student Success Collaborative Institutions

1st Decile
Lower odds, despite extensive support

2nd to 5th Deciles
Small academic improvements correlate with meaningful graduation gains

“Murky Middle”
24% difference in graduation rate

Top Half
Often the most likely to seek support despite already high graduation rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Year GPA</th>
<th>1st Decile</th>
<th>2nd to 5th Deciles</th>
<th>Top Half</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 2.0</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>65%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>69%</td>
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<td>2.4</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>75%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.0</td>
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</table>

Source: EAB Student Success Collaborative analysis.
When a 2.7 is Not a 2.7

Same GPA Can Mask Meaningful Differences in Credit Velocity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student A</th>
<th>Student B</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cumulative GPA:</strong> 2.7</td>
<td><strong>Cumulative GPA:</strong> 2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade Pattern</strong></td>
<td>A’s in distribution requirements; DFWs in major prerequisites</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Credit Completion</strong></td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risk Level</strong></td>
<td>At Elevated Risk; Schedule Appointment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beyond GPA

Credit Earning Behavior Compelling Measure of Progress

Credit Accumulation as Leading Indicator

- **Six-Year Graduation Rates by Credit Earning Behavior, CSU**
  - Earned 20+ SCH Year 1: 67.3%
  - Earned < 20 SCH Year 1: 21.0%

- **Six-Year Graduation Rates by Credit Completion Ratio, CSU**
  - Completed 80% of credits attempted: 69.7%
  - Earned < 80% of credits attempted: 29.1%

Student Risk Changes Over Time

The Old Thinking
Assigned risk level remains static after initial assessment at matriculation

The New Thinking
Student risk is dynamic and changes over time based upon behaviors

Making the Leap to the Upper Division

Progress Plateauing at 60 SCH
Strong Starters Departing in the 5th Term

Average Earned Credits at Attrition
Sample of 66 Student Success Collaborative Institutions

Attrition among high academic performers most common at entry point to upper division

First Year GPA
Major Hazards Approaching the 5th Term
Risk of Attrition Linked to the Challenges of Choice

Unable to Choose
Still Undeclared
I've changed my major multiple times and still don't know what I like.

Institutional Barrier to First Choice
Denied Admission into Upper Division Major
I wasn't admitted to the Film Studies program. What now?

Unwilling to Choose
Additional Major or Minor Late in Career
If I double major I can double my job prospects.

Academic Performance

Insight #5: Predictable Patterns to Major Switching Behavior

Four Types of Majors on Campus
Tracking Student Flow In and Out of Programs

Donor Majors
Students flow out of these majors more often than they flow in
Example: Computer Science

Static Majors
Students who initially declare this major rarely switch; few students flow in
Example: Nursing

Acceptor Majors
Students flow into this major but few students flow out
Example: Social Work

Pivot Majors
Equal flow of students in and out of the major
Example: English
Visualizing Student Flows Between Majors

**Student Major-Switching Analysis**
Groupings of Majors from the EAB Student Success Collaborative

N=2,693 majors at 50 institutions
Circle size indicates relative enrollment size

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Multiple Applications Across Campus

- **Accountability**
  - Metrics by Major
  - Retention and graduation targets; weighting importance of DFW rates, service course availability

- **Course Capacity Planning**
  - Forecast demand for lower and upper division courses and sections by term and year

- **Coordinating Prerequisites**
  - Maximize credit transfer and minimize time to degree implications of major switching

- **Guiding Advising Caseloads**
  - Optimize advising assignments to student best fit major pathways
5 Insights for the Next Phase in Student Success

Murky Middle

Greatest opportunity to increase graduation rate is targeting support to students from 2.0 to 3.0 – a “murky middle” often overlooked

High Flyers

High flyers have a smoother path through the first two years; risk is at entry to the upper division when confronting barriers to major choice

High Risk

Most institutions over rely on GPA which masks critical differences in credit velocity (Not All 2.7s are Equal)

Student major-changing follows surprising but predictable patterns; unrealized opportunity for better capacity planning and advisor allocation

Disproportionate share of resources allocated to the academically underprepared despite the fact that most students leave in good academic standing

Notes:
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Ten Insights and Imperatives for the Next Phase in Increasing Completion

Providing Focus for Strategic Planning

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What do we need to change?
- Data disciplines
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Expediting Task Force Execution

Notes:
The Student Success Playbook

Five Insights for the Next Phase in Increasing Completion

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A More Holistic Definition of Risk

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Use available admissions data to identify most academically underprepared students prior to matriculation

The New Thinking
Develop holistic model to predict likelihood of withdrawal based upon historical analysis of academic and attrition risk

Imperative #6: Best-in-Class Risk Assessment

Holistic Assessment of FY Attrition Risk

Step 1: Identify Historical Patterns of Student Attrition

Isolating Characteristics Associated with Higher Risk of Withdrawal

Withdrew in Good Standing
- Commuter status
- Students who are not from East of the Connecticut River (international, out of state, West of River)
- Federal Loans
- FAFSA choice

Predictive in Both Models
- High School GPA
- High School District
- Athlete
- African American
- Admissions Rating

Academic Risk Factors
- Males
- STEM Majors

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Assessing Risk of Incoming Class

Step 2: Create an Initial Risk Profile Based on Pre-Enrollment Data

Targeted Advising Cohort Structure

- **Cohort 1 Intensive**
  - High Risk of Academic Probation
  - Low Withdrawal Risk

- **Cohort 2 Tutoring**
  - High Risk of Academic Probation

- **Cohort 4 Monitor**
  - Low Risk of Academic Probation

- **Cohort 3 Engaged**

**Active Ingredients**

- Students assigned to cohorts based on attrition risk and forecasted academic performance. Initial placement can be adjusted based on student behavior.

- Interventions are targeted to students differently based upon their assignment. Professional advising staff prioritize interaction frequency based on a student’s assigned risk cohort.

- Caseload model facilitates tracking of student performance to advisors.

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Student Risk Changes Over Time

**The Old Thinking**

- Assigned risk level remains static after initial assessment at matriculation

**The New Thinking**

- Student risk is dynamic and changes over time based upon behaviors.
Welcome to ABC University!
Fall Freshmen To Do List

Week One
- Pay Registration Fees
- Pick up ID Card
- Purchase Books
- Schedule Meeting with Academic Advisor
- Verify Meal Plan
- Attend Mandatory Library Orientation
- Complete Online Alcohol Prevention Program
- Purchase Parking Permit

Week One Leading Indicators
To Do List Serves as Proxy for Grit, Readiness

1. Collection of ID Card
   Failure to pick up ID card during the first week of class may signify a lack of connection to the institution, inattention to detail, or disengagement.

2. Scheduled Meeting with Academic Advisor
   Proactive scheduling of an advising appointment is indicative of a student’s commitment to their academic success and planning.

3. Attendance at Library Orientation
   Failure to attend a mandatory on-campus event is an early sign that a student may not be taking his or her academic commitments seriously. Schedule these sessions through Banner to allow to simplify tracking and quickly identify “no shows”.

Other Commonly Used Proxies for Grit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Commitment</th>
<th>Campus Engagement</th>
<th>Health and Well-Being</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-enrollment campus visit</td>
<td>Club and activity attendance</td>
<td>Dining hall card swipes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting the campus website</td>
<td>Athletic event attendance</td>
<td>Visits to campus gym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment of housing deposit</td>
<td>On campus leadership role</td>
<td>Participation in intramurals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Continuous Monitoring of Student Behavior

Harnessing the Power of Technology to Intervene Just-in-time

**Rio Salado College**
LMS, Digital Courses
Student log-ins, completion of online assignments, discussion board posts, lecture capture interactions, downloading online course materials

**UNT**
Swipe Card Data
Tracking check-ins at advising, tutoring and writing centers, career services, financial aid, lectures, symposia, dining hall, parking garages, gym

**University of Kentucky**
Mobile Micro-Surveys
Apps and student portal micro-surveys prompt behaviors such as purchasing textbooks, registering for classes, or assessing stress

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Right Student, Right Intervention, Right Time

**The Old Thinking**
“One size fits all” approach to advising first year students

**The New Thinking**
Predicted risk dictates individual student intervention frequency and type
Scaling Personalized Intervention

Step 4: Provide FY Advisors Intervention Strategy For Each Cohort

- **High Academic Probation Risk**
  - Cohort 1: Intensive
    - n=211
    - Academic and attrition risk; receive targeted tutoring, intrusive advising, and engagement services
  - Cohort 2: Tutoring
    - n=171
    - Academic risk; receive intensive tutoring
  - Cohort 4: Monitor
    - n=320
    - High likelihood of persistence; monitor engagement and first term performance

- **Low Withdrawal Risk**
  - Cohort 2a: n=45
  - Cohort 3: Engaged
    - n=232
    - High flyer population; increase campus engagement but realize likelihood of transfer

- **Low Academic Probation Risk**
  - Intervention focused on academic support, supplemental instruction, remediation.
  - Intervention focused on engagement in the department, co-curricular and extra-curricular learning.

### Retention Increases Across Cohorts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>% Change</th>
<th>2011 % Retained</th>
<th>2012 % Retained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 1: Intensive</td>
<td>.5%</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
<td>67.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 2: Tutoring</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>74.9%</td>
<td>77.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 3: Engaged</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 4: Monitor</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>83.7%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>75.5%</td>
<td>77.1%</td>
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Source: EAB interviews
Promoting Continuity in Academic Advising

The Old Thinking
Advisors assigned based upon institutional structures and departments; often requiring reassignments for major switching

The New Thinking
Student movement through the institution dictates advisor caseloads; optimizing consistency despite major switching

Notes:
Personalization Despite Major Switching

UTSA Redeploys Academic Advising to Match Student Flow

Life and Health Sciences Cluster
- Marketing
- Communication
- Mathematics
- Psychology
- Management
- Interdisciplinary Studies

Primary Majors
- Chemistry
- Biochemistry
- Public Health
- Biology
- Kinesiology
- Health

Secondary Majors
- Donor Majors: Students exit these programs and few enter
- Acceptor: Students enter these majors from other programs
- Pivot: Students equally enter and exit these majors
- Static: Very few students enter or exit

Active Ingredients
- Students assigned to an advisor based on first major declared
- Advisor cross-trained in 10-14 programs of study based on student major switching patterns
- Goal is that >80% of students can maintain relationship with 1 advisor despite switching majors
- Advisors organized in clusters reporting to a central director who reports to the provost
- Special cluster for undeclared students to assist with exploration and placement

82%
Percent of students will remain with one advisor

12
Average number of majors an advisor is responsible for

Mapping Student Pathways to Degree

How do students flow in and out of majors at the institution?

Map Historical Paths to Degree
- Analysis of first and last major for 5 years of student records reveals significant student migration across the institution

65%
Of students graduate in 1 of 10 majors

75%
Of students switch majors at least once

Categorize Majors by Student Flow Patterns
- Four types of majors identified based on student flow patterns:
  - Donor Majors: Students exit these programs and few enter
  - Acceptor: Students enter these majors from other programs
  - Pivot: Students equally enter and exit these majors
  - Static: Very few students enter or exit

Assign Advisors to Major Clusters
- Advisors trained in set of thematically-related majors and a sub-set of common destination majors
- Goal: 80% of students remain with the same advisor despite major switching

Next Steps
- Examine requirements for majors in clusters to promote coordinated prerequisites
Migrating from Departments to Clusters

**UTSA Implementation Timeline**

- Advising Restructuring Plan announced
- Advisors submit top 3 cluster preferences
- Confirmed placement of advisors in new structure
- Opened new advising office to students

**Summer 2013**

- Executive Director of Advising appointed
- Task forces oversee implementation
- Deployed training sessions for all advisors

**Implementation Advice**

- Invite advising staff to participate on taskforces to provide input on future state operations and garner buy-in
- Allow advisors to state cluster preferences, but communicate placement will ultimately be dictated by student enrollments
- Confer management responsibilities to advising supervisor with central oversight

**Sample Advising Clusters**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Sciences</th>
<th>Engineering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of Students with one advisor: 86%</td>
<td>% of Students with one advisor: 73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Majors</strong></td>
<td><strong>Primary Majors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>Biomedical Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Civil Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Computer Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Affairs</td>
<td>Electrical Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Source: EAB interviews and analysis
The Student Success Playbook

Five Imperatives for the Next Phase in Increasing Completion

5 Imperatives for Building the Student-Centered Enterprise

6 Build a risk model incorporating academic and non-academic factors; continuously update with new behavioral data, and re-examine at critical milestones when re-categorization most likely to occur

7 Prioritize frequency and focus of advising based on predicted risk profile

8 Assign advisor caseloads based on major-switching patterns to allow for continuity throughout student academic careers

9 Craft registration and withdrawal policies to reward long-term commitment and disincent unprincipled deviation from plan

10 Automate transactional processes to promote self-service and reserve staff for higher value activities

Meeting Students Halfway

Navigating Between Extremes in Student Success

The Student-Centered University

The Self-Directed Student

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