

Student Engagement & SEM: A Shared Vision for Institutional Effectiveness

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Topics

- **Overview of Student Engagement**
- **Key Research Findings**
- **Understanding Institutional Culture & Readiness**
- **Connecting Back to SEM**
- **Best Practices**
- **Resources**

Student Engagement: Setting the Stage

Institutional Reputation

- At first focused on **inputs**:
 - Student characteristics (prior academic performance mostly); the more selective, the better
 - Institutional resources (quality of faculty, campus infrastructure, books in the library)
- This formed the basis for rankings (e.g., US News & World Report, Maclean's)

Predicting College Success

- **It isn't what you think:**
 - *Test scores*
 - *High school grades*
 - *First term performance*

- **It is completion of Algebra II in high school**

- **But it is not used in the admission decision process at many institutions, including open-door community colleges**

But . . .

The nature and quality of first year students' experiences in the classroom, with faculty, and with peers are **better predictors** of desired educational outcomes associated with college attendance than precollege characteristics.

-Gerken & Volkwien, 2000

Student Engagement: Key Concepts

- Students' **sustained involvement in learning activities**
- Early studies focused on time-on-task behaviors, on students' willingness to participate in routine activities, such as attending classes, submitting required work and following teachers' directions in class
- But student engagement can also be inferred from more subtle cognitive, behavioral and affective indicators

Student Engagement: Key Concepts

- Evidence from decades of studies indicates that:
 - The level of challenge and students' time on task are positively related to persistence
 - The degree to which students are engaged in their studies impacts directly on the quality of their learning and their overall educational experience
 - The more opportunities a student has to build a connection to campus, the better their chances of success
 - The characteristics of student engagement can serve as **proxies for quality**

3 Key Student Success Processes

- **Active involvement:** Time & energy invested in learning experience inside and outside classroom (Astin, Tinto, Pace)
- **Social integration:** Interaction, collaboration & interpersonal relationships between students & peers, faculty, staff & administrators (Tinto)
- **Personal reflection:** Think deeply on learning experiences (Entwistle & Ramsden, Flavell, Svinicki, Vygotsky)

Student Engagement: Key Research Findings

Key Research Findings

- How an institution **deploys its resources** and **organizes** the curriculum, other learning opportunities and support services leads to positive experiences and desired outcomes such as persistence, satisfaction, learning and graduation (Kuh, 2001; Pascarella/Terenzini, 2005)
- Retention is achieved through the development of **supportive social and education communities** in which all students are integrated (Tinto, 1987)

Key Research Findings

- **Students learn more when they are **involved in both** the academic and social aspects of the collegiate experience. An involved student is one who devotes considerable energy to academics, spends much time on campus, participates actively in student organizations and activities, and interacts often with faculty (Astin, 1993).**

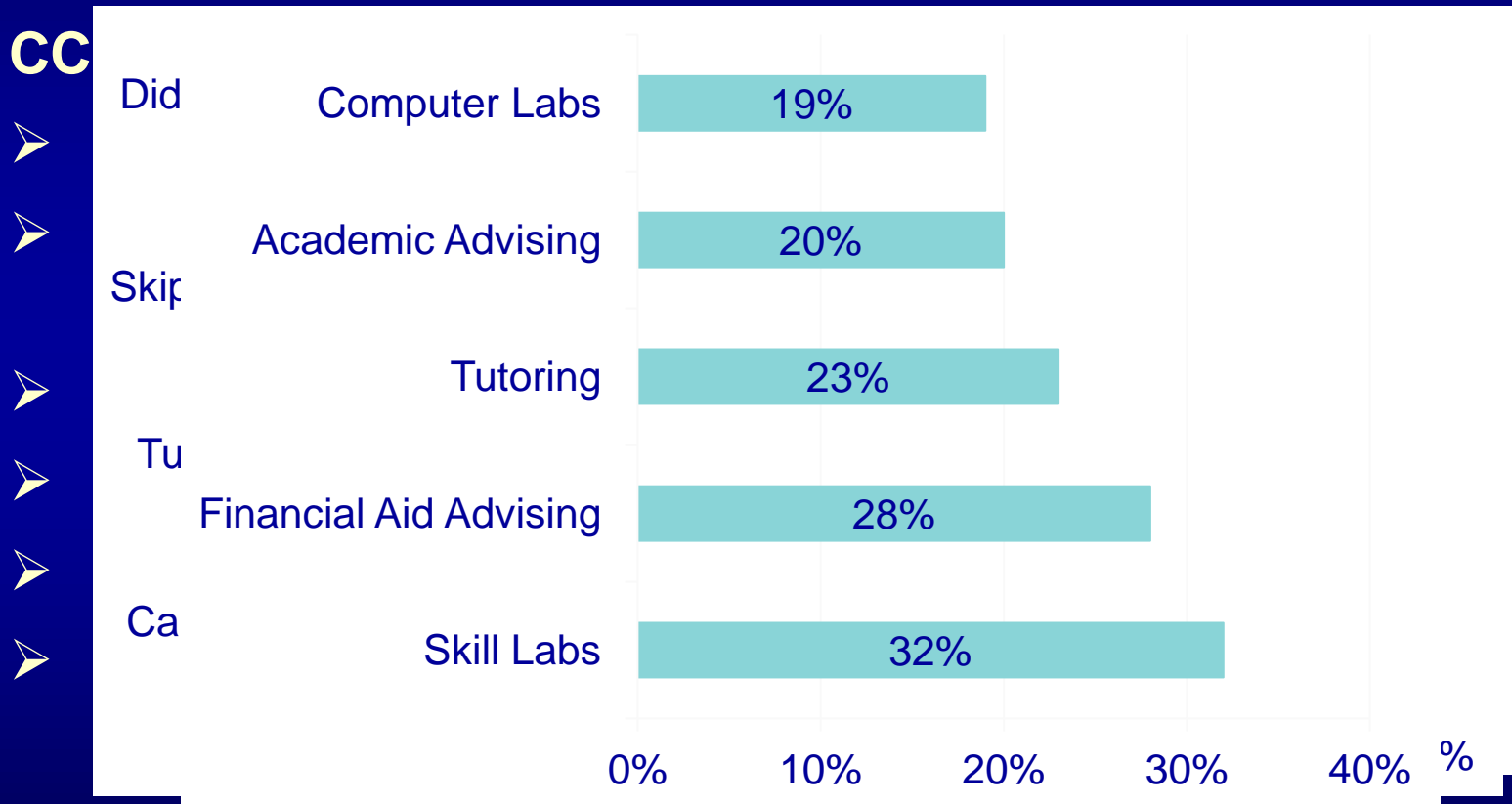
Key Research Findings

- Student engagement **varies more within** any given school or institutional type than between schools or institutional types (Pascarella/Terenzini, 2005)
 - Though smaller schools generally engage students more effectively, colleges and universities **of similar size can vary widely** (NSSE, 2005)
 - Student engagement is **unrelated to selectivity** (Kuh/Pascarella, 2004; NSSE, 2003)
 - Some non-residential schools & community colleges have exemplary student engagement practices

Key Research Findings

- Some students – such as first generation students, males, transfer students and those who live off-campus – are generally **less engaged** than others
- Some **single mission schools** confer engagement advantages to their students (Kinzie et al, 2007)

Key Research Findings



Key Research Findings

➤ **NSSE**

- **Academic Challenge**
- **Active & Collaborative Learning**
- **Student-Faculty Interaction**
- **Supportive Campus Environment**
- **Enriching Educational Experiences**

➤ **Similar “best practices” outlined by Gardiner et al., Astin, Chickering/Gamson, Tinto and countless others**

**Student Engagement:
Understanding Institutional
Culture & Readiness**

Critical Aspects of Student Engagement

- Include & **engage** faculty
- Move away from an “a la carte” approach to meeting student needs
- Be part of an **intentional** institution-wide strategy
- Assess – and scrutinize – effectiveness
- Scalable

Shared Vision

- **Involve** faculty, student affairs educators, institutional researchers, SEM practitioners . . . and anyone on campus who will listen!
- IR as the lead for making sense of data
- **Participate** where ever possible:
 - All campus, division-specific or faculty-only retreats
 - Keynote speakers
 - State- or province-wide consortiums and work teams
- **Honor** institutional culture

Learn More About Students

- Gain a **broad perspective** on the student population
- Monitor engagement of **specific groups** of students
 - Entire subpopulations of students may be retention risks (transfer students, athletes, Aboriginal students)
- Learn about **needs** of individual students
- **Who** is vulnerable to departure?
 - *Who is not making transition to PSE well?*

Use Multiple Data Sources

- **Confirm findings are consistent** across multiple surveys & assessment methods
- **Link results** from NSSE, CESSE, CUSC to other student data such as GPA, residential status, etc.
 - Helps determine if engagement varies across groups
 - Helps identify gaps—or potentially inter-institutional best practices-- in student support structures

Using NSSE (& Other) Data

- **NSSE, CSSE, CUSC, SENSE & others to plan & improve students' experiences**
- **Some examples include:**
 - **Collaborate & communicate results**
 - **Use multiple sources for triangulation**
 - **Use data to learn more about students**
 - **Use data for assessment**
 - **Enhance the first-year experience**
 - **Link results from engagement and satisfaction surveys to student data (e.g., GPA, residency, credits completed, program, student groups)**

Connecting It Back to SEM

- **What is the SEM practitioner's role in student engagement activities?**
- **Can NSSE, CSSE & other surveys be used to set SEM goals?**
- **Where & how should one begin?**

SEM & Student Engagement Goals

Students who are:

- Better connected**
- Increasingly involved on campus**
- Deeply invested in learning & growth**

...are more likely to persist & graduate.

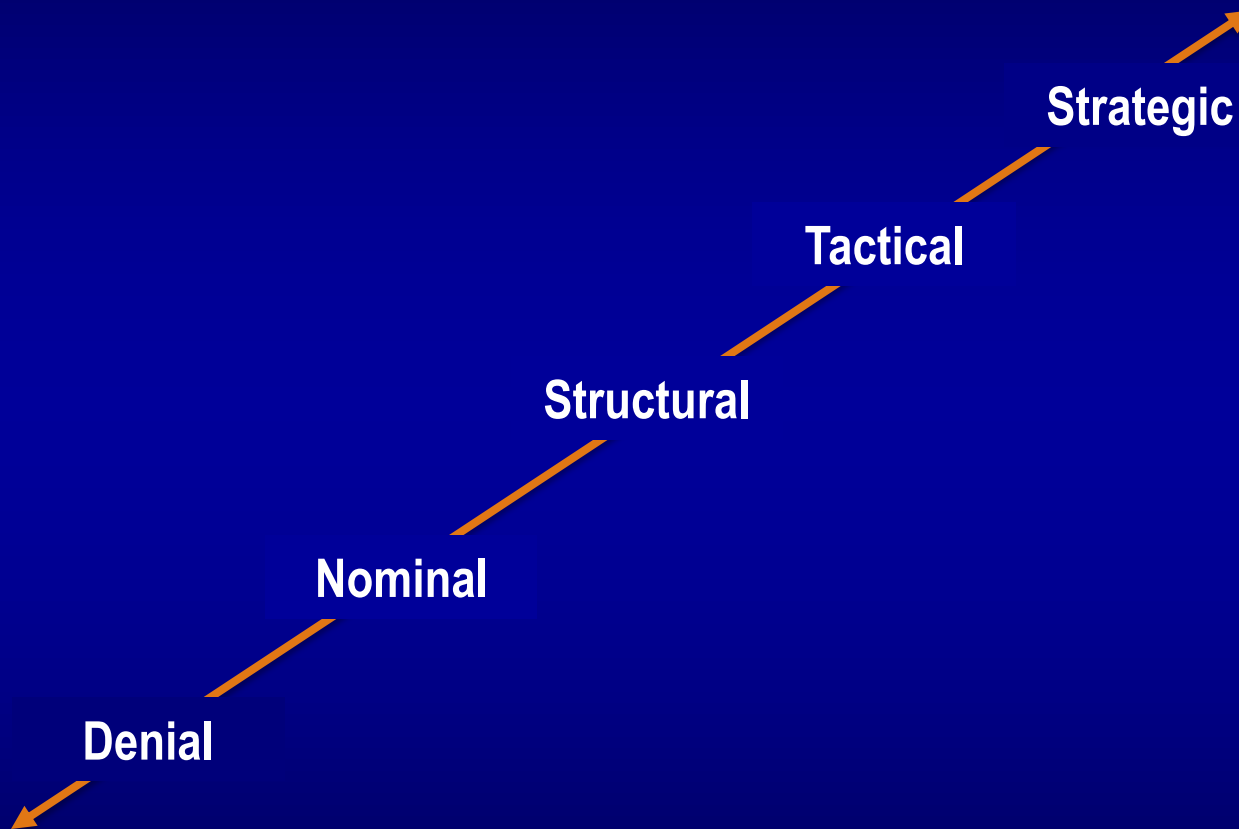
Important Note

The relationship between student engagement & student persistence **is not linear**

- Increased level of academic engagement, when not connected with high levels of social engagement, is negatively related to student persistence
- High level social engagement in social activities is positively connected to student persistence

- Hu, 2010

SEM Transition Model



**A Few Student
Engagement Stand-Outs**

University of Nevada – Las Vegas College of Urban Affairs: Learning Communities Project



Overview

➤ Purpose:

- Create connections with peers
- Increase course satisfaction
- Increase interaction with faculty and students
- Increase understanding of connection between disciplines
- Increase awareness of college resources
- Assistance in building a complete resume
- Improve ability to graduate within five years
- Increase satisfaction with collegiate experience

➤ <http://urbanaffairs.unlv.edu/advising/learning>

Program

- **Seven focus areas, depending on student interests:**
- **Shared advising and instructors**
- **Service-Learning requirement**
- **End of the semester celebration**

Everett Community College: Writing on the Rocks



Stay Close... Go Far.



Overview

➤ Purpose:

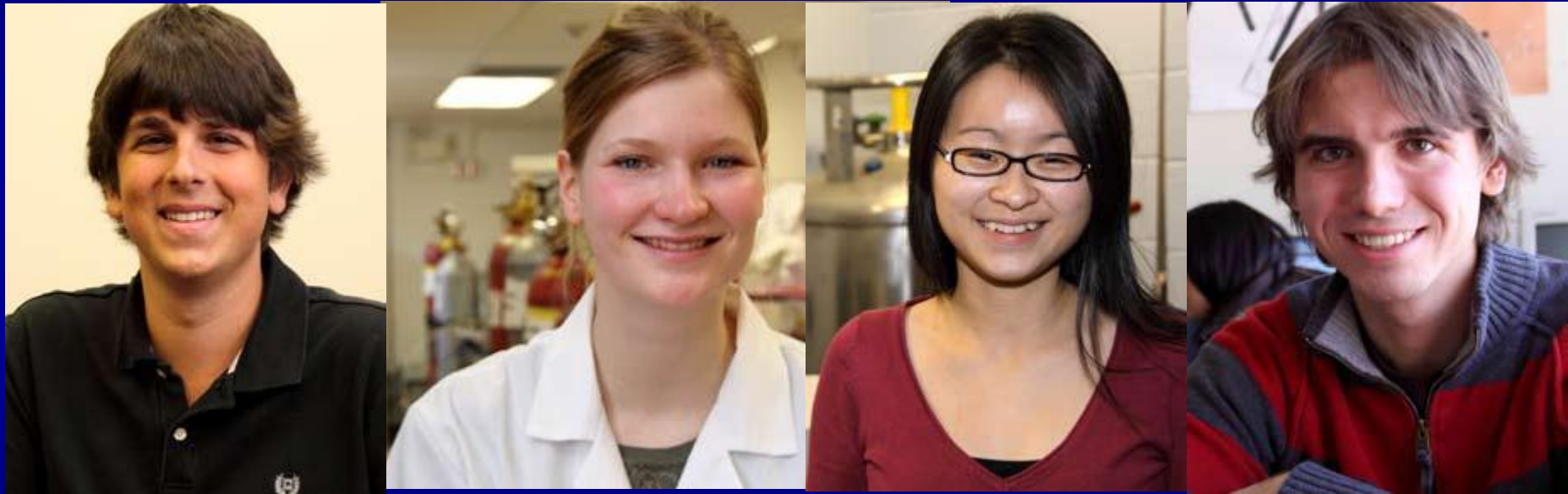
- Increase course satisfaction
- Increase student success in target courses
- Build student connection to one another and to the campus
- Increase interaction amongst faculty

Overview

➤ **Description:**

Join a fun and supportive community of learners to study Mother Earth from a variety of perspectives; perform hands-on lab experiments; observe the awesome power of Mt. St. Helens, personally, in the field; and connect those activities through writing projects. This course combines the study of the dynamic processes of the Earth (plate tectonics, earthquakes, volcanoes and geologic time) with the study of the dynamic process of writing effective essays. Enhance your knowledge of the Earth by exploring it through a variety of essay formats. And hone your writing skills by focusing on an in-depth study of our planet.

The University of Windsor's Outstanding Scholars Program



<http://www.uwindsor.ca/outstandingscholars/>

Overview

- **Purpose:**
 - *To increase high achieving student enrollment in selected low enrollment programs*
 - *To enhance quality of teaching assistants*

- **An annual base renewable scholarship**

- **A paid (200 hours per year) academic appointment in their home department**

- **Strong relationships with faculty members**

Overview

The Outstanding Scholars Award

HS GPA	4-Yr Scholarship	3-Yrs of Academic Appointments	Total
85-89.9	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$12,000
90-94.9	\$8,000	\$6,000	\$14,000
95+	\$10,000	\$6,000	\$16,000

...and most other awards can be held concurrently with an Outstanding Scholars award!

Overview

- **Renew Eligibility Requirements**
 - Achieve a minimum 11.0 (out of 13) GPA
 - Attend monthly meetings with the program coordinator during the first year
 - Complete a 2-day pre-academic appointment training program at the beginning of the 2nd year
 - Hold an academic appointment during years 2-4

Portland Community College: Accelerated Math



Learn more about PCC, our students, faculty, and staff through stories and profiles.



Overview

➤ Purpose

- Accelerate a students progress through developmental-level math courses
- Decrease student tuition costs
- Increase student sense of accomplishment

➤ Responding to state initiatives

Program

➤ **Math Skill Building Course**

- Five-day, 15-hour program with varying dates and times
- Non-credit
- Pre- and post-testing for placement
- Targeted towards students who tested into MTH 60 (Algebra I)
- Saves spaces in more advanced math classes for those completing this program
- Offered just prior to the term beginning

➤ **Initial cohort: 56% increased math placement levels**

Lethbridge College: First Nations, Métis and Inuit Transition Program



**Catch your dreams at
Lethbridge College.**

<http://www.lethbridgecollege.ca/admissions/what-describes-you-best/first-nations-metis-and-inuit-students>

Program

- **Provides 12 students with a \$12,000 scholarship to aid with finances**
- **Provides 3 steps to aid in transition**
 - Course on introduction to college life (August)
 - Additional course in 1st term on skills and attitudes needed for college success
 - Class on leadership skills (January)
- **Spiritual support from elders; help from mentors and advisors**

Comprehensive Plan for Faculty Development at Bethune-Cookman University

- **Faculty-driven faculty development program**
- **Emphasizes communities of practice**
- **The synergy created by drawing colleagues from the eight schools, institutional research and planning, the Faculty Development Center, and student affairs**

Central Oregon Community College: Math Course Redesign



Overview

➤ Purpose

- Increase student success in and progress through developmental math courses
- Increase student sense of accomplishment
- Decrease cost of instruction

➤ Responding to internal SEM goals and state initiatives

➤ <http://www.thencat.org/index.html>

Program

➤ **Math Skill B**

- Meet once
- Two hour
- Lab is open
- am – 3 pm
- Staffed by

➤ **Future Direc**

- Allow stud
- per term



-in lab

– 8 pm; Fridays, 8

d up to two courses

Program

➤ Results

- Failure rate decreases by up to 20%
- Retention rate increases by up to 30%
- Instructional costs reduced by 20 - 77%

Ontario: Foundations for Success Project

- **Offers case-managed support services & financial incentives to students at 3 Ontario colleges (Seneca, Mohawk & Confederation)**
 - Assesses students after admission but before begin, identifying those that would benefit from academic tutoring, peer mentorship & career counselling
 - Highest impact when matched with (small) financial bursary
 - Has led to 6.4% increase in student retention
 - Project specifically benefited low-income students, ESL students, students entering with low (under 65%) high school grades, & women

And Some Other Strategies...

- **Aboriginal/Native American student access/retention**
- **Academic civility**
- **Academic programs/courses – specialized**
- **Academic support – writing**
- **Access – special populations**
- **Bridging programs**
- **Building connections between curricular and extracurricular experiences**
- **Career development**

And Some Other Strategies...

- **Coaching (case managed access to student services, coaching first-year students on probation)**
- **Co-curricular record**
- **Community outreach**
- **Cross-departmental collaboration**
- **Cultural sensitivity**
- **Emotional Intelligence interventions**
- **Faculty development**
- **Financial aid**

And Some Other Strategies...

- Graduate student teaching development workshops
- Integration of enrolment management & student services
- Learning & information commons
- Peer mentor programs
- Planning (staff/faculty retreats and symposia)
- Recognition for staff & faculty
- Residence (academic, bridging and transition programs)

And Some Other Strategies...

- **Service learning**
- **Supplemental instruction**
- **Teaching (clickers, critical thinking, early feedback, hybrid courses, idea incubator, technology in large classes)**

Resources

Resources

- **National Survey on Student Engagement**
Website: <http://nsse.iub.edu/html/reports.cfm>

- **National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition** Web site: <http://www.sc.edu/fye/>

- **Community College Survey on Student Engagement:** <http://www.ccsse.org/index.cfm>

- **Canadian SEM Website**
<http://www.uwindsor.ca/sem/student-engagement>
 - Student Engagement Bibliography
 - Student Engagement Programs in Canada

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