Breaking Down Barriers to Persistence through Collaboration

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Goal: To share best practices for improving retention and graduation rates among low-income, underrepresented students

- OVERVIEW OF OUR ORGANIZATIONS
- BACKGROUND ON CAMPUS-BASED COLLEGE PROGRAMMING
- DISCUSSION OF BARRIERS TO STUDENT PERSISTENCE
- SOLUTIONS, IDEAS, RESOURCES
- QUESTIONS?
Augsburg College

- About 2000 traditional undergraduate students and 2000 adult undergraduate/graduate students
- Located in the heart of Cedar Riverside
- Since 2009 our first-year cohorts have been about 40% students of color
  25% college access program participants
- One of 13 colleges nationwide to pilot AVID at the postsecondary level
- Recipient of the 2010 Presidential Award for Community Service
Century College

- 14,968 Headcount FY12
- White Bear Lake, #2 for St. Paul Students
- 37% SOC, 1% International
- 50% Pell Eligible
- 60% First Generation (Fed Def), 22% Never Attend
- 28% New Entering Students, Avg Age 26
- 57% Part-Time, 77% AA Degree Seeking
- Achieving the Dream Institution
Making college admission and success possible for low-income students through an intensive curriculum of coaching and support.

- Nonprofit founded in 2000
- Serving 1,600 high school students and 3000+ college students
- 98% admitted to college, 25% ACT score increase
- Utilize AmeriCorps model to leverage energetic, idealistic recent college grads
Campus-Based College Programming

- Refocused mission on college graduation
- Getting into college isn’t enough
- High school program success lies in intensive coaching model
- Piloted similar place-based coaching model on several college campuses
Barriers to College Student Persistence

The three main categories:

Academic
Social
Financial

Overlap between these categories is possible and adds a layer of complexity.
Academic Barriers

- Academic performance/suspension
- Developmental / remedial coursework
- Choosing a major/taking the right classes
- IEPs/disabilities
- Academic Assessments
Social Barriers

- Work/life balance
- Feeling connected on campus
- Transportation
- Physical and mental health issues (Boynton Report)
Financial Barriers

- Not having enough money
- Stress that comes from real or perceived financial barriers
- Complicated financial aid process
- Not knowing how to resolve account holds
- Incomplete paperwork/not filing a FAFSA renewal
## Solutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Having experts and resources to address these barriers</th>
<th>BUT having resources isn’t enough</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Credit Recovery</td>
<td>• Students (especially low-income students) don’t access resources as much as they should</td>
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<td>• Test Prep</td>
<td>○ Lack of information</td>
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<td>• Counselors/Advisors</td>
<td>○ Perceived stigma</td>
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<td>• Financial Aid Counselors</td>
<td>○ Not sure what questions to ask/where to go</td>
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<td>• Tutoring Centers</td>
<td>○ Issues that overlap multiple resources</td>
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<td>• Childcare</td>
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How can we encourage students to use on campus resources?

Use an active outreach approach, which is relationship-driven, instead of relying on passive resources.

**Case Management / Whole Student Approach**

- Intrusive Counseling/Advising
- Checking in with students at critical points in their high school and college career
- Mentoring programs
- Familiar faces/branding on campus that students recognize
- Requiring the use of on-campus resources
Collaboration is key

To achieve a whole-student approach and deal with overlapping/complex barriers, institutions and organizations must collaborate to support students.

Partnerships are necessary between:
- High Schools and CBOs
- High Schools and Colleges
- Colleges and CBOs
- Various departments within colleges

- Barriers to collaboration – FERPA, staff capacity, etc. must be addressed.
Schools + CBOs

CBOs support High School objectives either during the school day or after school, helping students excel in their classes, graduate from high school, and achieve post-secondary options.

- College Access Programs
  - College Possible
  - TRIO Programs
- Mentoring & Enrichment
  - Big Brothers Big Sisters
  - Project SUCCESS
- Academic Support
  - Rockstar Supply Co.
  - Minnesota Reading Corps
  - Breakthrough Twin Cities
High Schools + Colleges

Partnerships create a pipeline to facilitate the transition from high school to college

- College Fairs
  - MnACC/MEF
  - MISP Fair
- High School Visits
- Campus visits
- Post-secondary Enrollment Options
Colleges + CBOs

CBOs support colleges in improving outcomes for students, focusing on persistence and graduation

- College Success Programs
  - College Possible
  - SSS-TRiO Programs

- Mentoring & Supportive Communities
  - SAAB
  - Brother 2 Brother

- Academic Support
  - AVID
Campus-Based College Coaching

- Partnership addresses K-12 > College divide
- Collaboration for College Readiness issues
  - Century – Open Access, Developmental Courses, Completion %, Cost
  - Augsburg – Aligns with mission statement change
- Allows more proactive and deliberate collaboration with campus staff and other on-campus initiatives for student success
- So far, promising results: higher than average registration, coach contact, quality of coach relationship, FAFSA renewal, retention/graduation rates up over 15%
Departments within Colleges

Departments and offices within a campus break down silos to provide wraparound services to students

- Learning Communities
- Freshman Seminar
  - New Student Seminar
  - AugSem
  - Conditional Admit
- Rethinking Resource Centers
  - Co-Location
  - Tracking - Swipe Card System
- Counseling, Faculty Partnerships – Quick Stop, 80 Project
- Summer Bridge programming
- Identity specific programming
  - Scholastic Connections
- Supplemental Instruction / TLC
- Hobsons Connect & Retain
- *Academic Skills Coaching – GPS LifePlan, Read Right*
Wrap Up

• Elements of these ideas can be replicated by any institution

• Collaboration between organizations and institutions that support students is key to improving college retention and graduation rates.
Questions?

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Thank You!