

# CONNECTED18

## University of Texas at San Antonio

Case Study



# University of Texas at San Antonio

A large, public university in San Antonio, TX



**Tammy  
Wyatt**

Associate VP,  
Student Academic  
Success



**Angelica  
Barrera**

Associate VP,  
Student Advising  
and Support

# Overview



- ▶ A large public university in San Antonio, part of the University of Texas system
- ▶ 26,011 undergraduate students
- ▶ 37% six-year graduation rate and 74% retention rate

## ▶ Background and Challenges

- The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) is a Hispanic-Serving Institution, where 45% of students identify as first-generation college students and 68% receive financial aid
- In 2016, UTSA partnered with EAB to better address student academic, social, and financial needs
- New mission focused on translating education access into success
- Several initiatives that focused on persistence, retention, and graduation rates have led to improvements in these areas; continued gains are a high priority at UTSA as well as statewide

## ▶ Solution

Piloted **Progress Reports** in selected Success Marker courses, identifying the best ways to increase faculty participation without overstressing faculty and advisor workloads

### Improvements across seven years:



12%

increase in first-year retention rate



12%

increase in four-year graduation rate



10%

increase in six-year graduation rate

# Hitting Statewide Goals

Texas incorporates **graduation rates** into public universities' performance-based funding model

*Challenges to UTSA's Efforts to Improve Graduation Rates:*

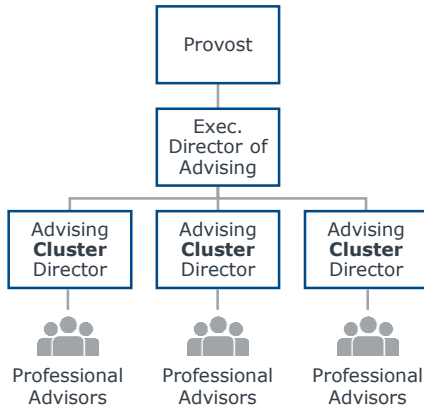
- 1 44% of students received Pell grants and 38% are transfers, which are **correlated with lower completion**
- 2 **Institutional barriers** to graduation could not be identified or predicted by existing means, including:
  - Course availability
  - Staff/faculty error
  - Transcript error or omission
  - Unmet financial need
  - Unique major/minor requirements
  - Missed deadlines
- 3 Small, seemingly **insignificant factors** profoundly impacted students' ability to graduate



# Centralized Advising with Academic Pathways

## The Evolution of UTSA's Academic Advising Structure

### 2014 Restructure



### Current Model



### Eight Academic Pathways:

- Architecture, Construction, and Planning
- Arts and Humanities
- Business
- Life and Health Science
- Interdisciplinary Education
- Social Sciences and Public Policy
- Engineering, Mathematics, and Natural & Physical Sciences
- Exploratory

### Since Launching Advising Restructure in 2014

**82%**

Percentage of students who remain with one advisor

**10%**

Percentage-point increase in first-year retention rate

**6%**

Percentage-point increase in six-year graduation rate

# Overview of CLASS

## Coordinated and Linked Approaches to Student Success (CLASS)

▶ Launched in 2016 to address student needs and improve retention and graduation rates



### CLASS Goals

Increase first-year **retention rate**:



Increase six-year **grad rate**:



# A New Way to Track and Support Students



## Academic Progress Reports Based on **Success Marker** Courses

*A strategic early alerts program piloted across three semesters, with two main objectives:*



Track the **academic progress** of students early in the semester



**Partner faculty with advisors** to identify and support at-risk students

### Problem:

We have lots of students, but we need to focus faculty and staff on student success efforts with the **highest possible value**

### Solution:

Pilot progress reports in **high-impact success marker courses**, effectively scaling limited faculty and staff time

1



Use EAB Campus to **identify success marker courses** in particular majors

2



Faculty submit **progress reports** only for students in their course with a targeted major

3



The student's assigned academic advisor **receives the alert**

4



The advisor **meets with the student** to discuss their academic progress

# Piloting Progress Reports

Pilot Phase	Success marker courses	% of students flagged at risk	% of flagged students who met with an advisor and passed the course	Faculty participation
Phase I <i>Spring 2017</i>	23	22%	87%	91%
Phase II <i>Fall 2017</i>	114	25%	85%	79%
Phase III <i>Spring 2018</i>	107	21%	85%	62%

## Pilot Trends:

✓ 20-25% of students enrolled in success marker courses were **identified as at risk**

✓ Students who **met with their advisor** after faculty flagged them were more likely to pass than those who didn't

✓ The earlier the faculty identified the student as at risk, **the better the students performed**

**Spring 2019** Goal timeline for full implementation to all identified success marker courses for all majors



# Lessons Learned from the Pilot



## Use a Scale-in Approach to Launch

Widespread change fatigue from previous unsuccessful system led to yearlong gap before EAB pilot

### BEST PRACTICES:

Ensure advisors can **handle extra work** before expanding to all success marker courses

Determine what percentage of students are **flagged as at risk**—at UTSA, it's 20-25%, no matter how many success marker courses are included



## Report Early, Remind Often

Launched progress reports in week four, and kept them open until midterms came in

### BEST PRACTICES:

Establish a **mechanism for reminding** only faculty who haven't submitted to avoid over-communication

Find a reminder process that **works at your institution**, such as an email to faculty from their direct supervisor



## Engage Faculty, but Don't Ask Too Much

Identified faculty are likely to participate in the first pilot phase

### BEST PRACTICES:

Don't try to involve all faculty immediately; instead, start with those **likely to be engaged**

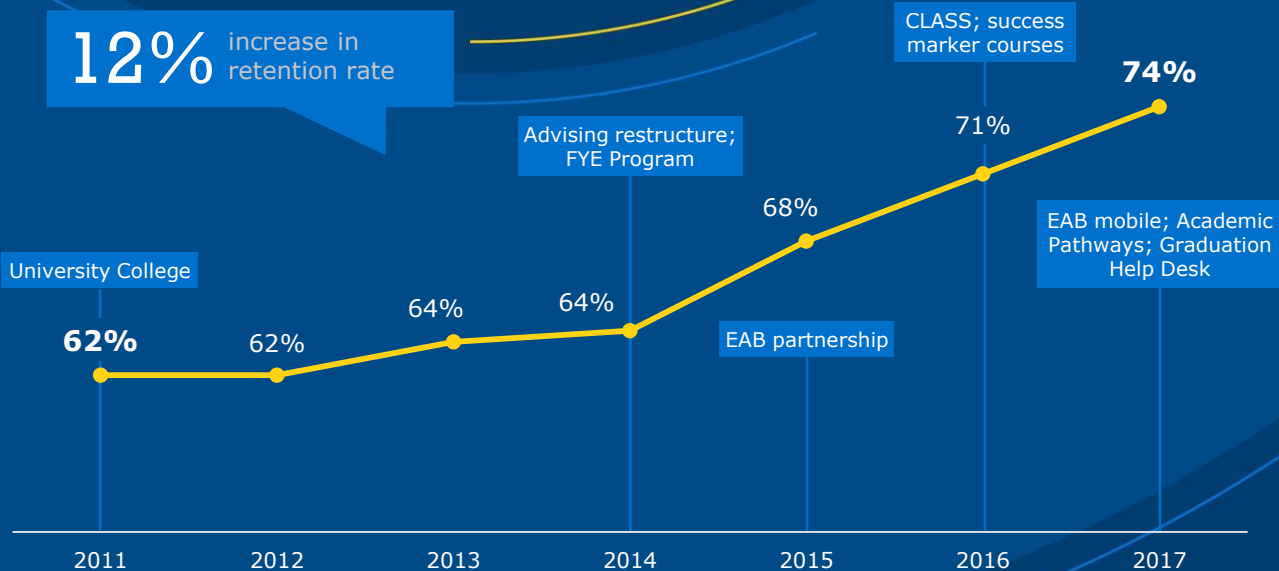
Strike a balance between involving faculty and **accounting for extra work** for those with larger classes

# Making an **Impact**



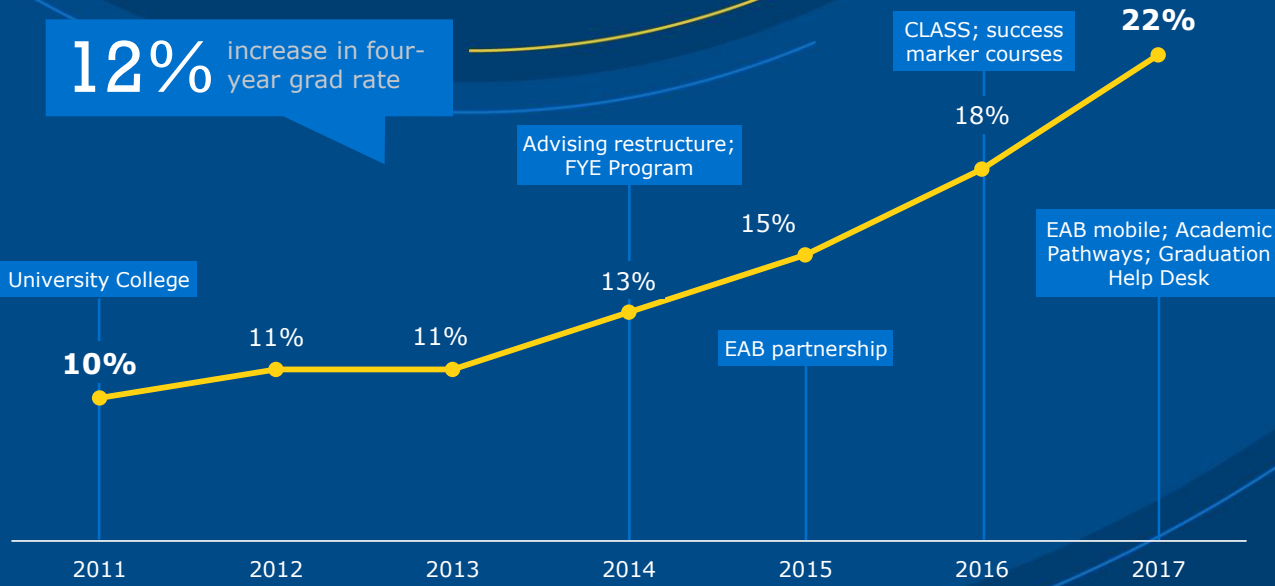
# Student Outcomes

## First-Year Retention Rate



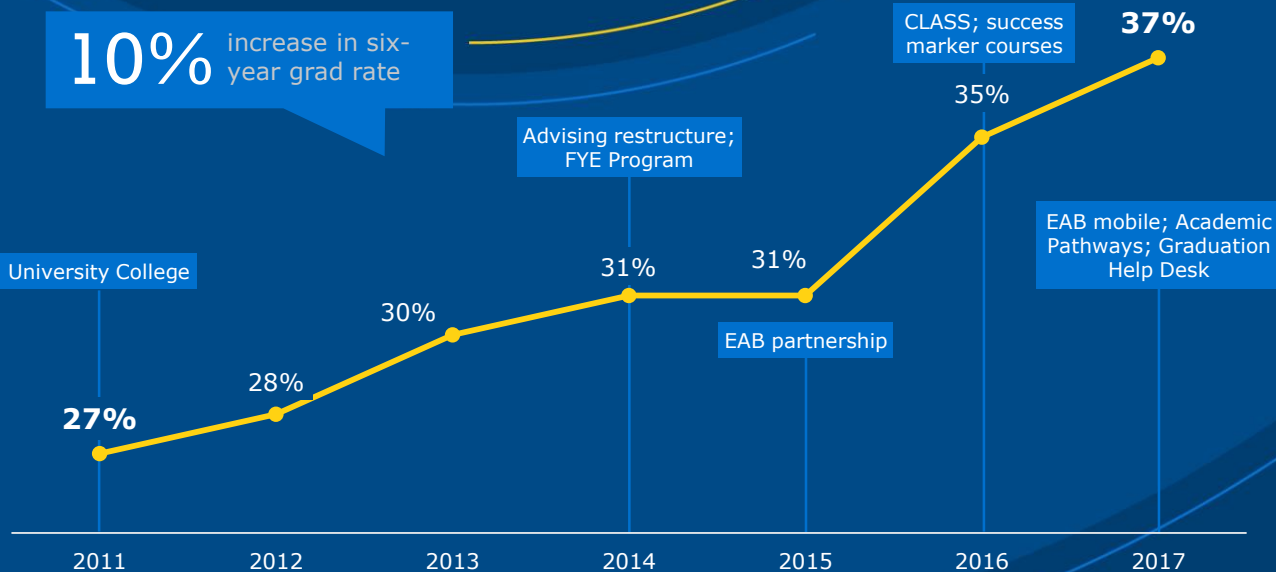
# Student Outcomes

## Four-Year Graduation Rate



# Student Outcomes

## Six-Year Graduation Rate





Washington DC | Richmond | Birmingham | Minneapolis

202-747-1000 | [eab.com](http://eab.com)