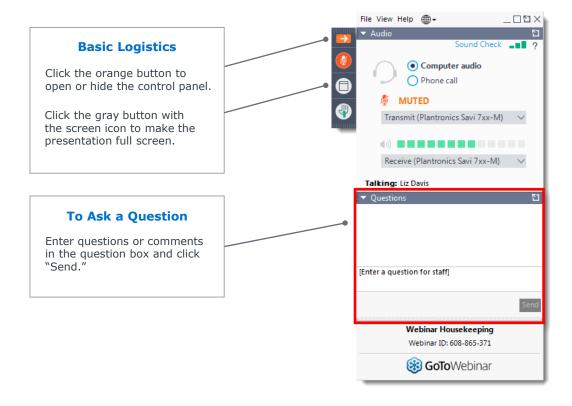


A Data-Informed Approach to Improve Course Completion Rates

Navigating GoToWebinar



2



- Start with best practices research
 - Research Forums for presidents, provosts, chief business officers, and key academic and administrative leaders
 - > At the core of all we do
 - > Peer-tested best practices research
 - > Answers to the most pressing issues

Then hardwire those insights into your organization using our technology & services

Enrollment Management

Our **Enrollment Services** division provides data-driven undergraduate and graduate solutions that target qualified prospective students; build relationships throughout the search, application, and yield process; and optimize financial aid resources.

Student Success

Members of the **Student Success Collaborative** use research, consulting, and an enterprise-wide student success management system to help students persist, graduate, and succeed.

Growth and Academic Operations

Our **Academic Performance Solutions** group partners with university academic and business leaders to help make smart resource trade-offs, improve academic efficiency, and grow academic program revenues.

 $1.2B^{+}$

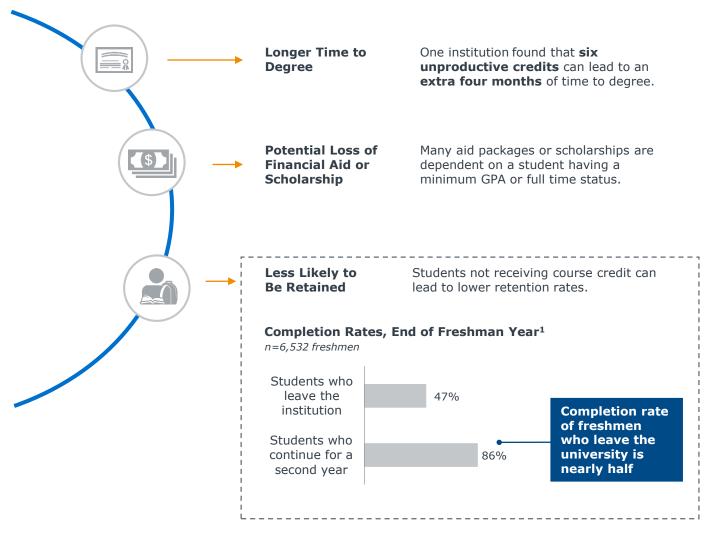
 $1M^+$

 $1,200^{+}$

1

Goal: Make education smarter

The High Cost of Credits Taken But Not Earned



Source: University of Wisconsin-Madison, Predictors of Time-to-Degree for Recent UW-Madison Undergraduates, December 2014: https://apir.wisc.edu/timetodegree/Predictors TimetoDegree 2014.pdf; Academic Performance Solutions research and analysis.

¹⁾ Average end-of-freshman-year completion rate at one regional comprehensive university.

Common Root Causes of Low Course Completion Rates

Challenging to know where to begin....

?

Contextual Black Hole

Difficult to determine what constitutes high and low levels of performance

"Boiling the Ocean"

Tough to prioritize efforts amid hundreds and thousands of courses and sections

Academically Unprepared

- Students with low high school GPAs or who attended academically weak institutions and lack critical study skills
- Contributing factor, but high school GPA and standardized test scores are often poor predictors of classroom performance

First Year Struggles

- Financial, personal or emotional issues can prevent students from being fully engaged in coursework
- Challenging to address in classroom, better suited for counseling and advising staff

Student Demographics

Low Course Completion

- Factors such as socioeconomic background or status as a first generation student have been associated with performance
- Institutions can address disparities related to demographic characteristics though support services or inclusive pedagogical approaches

Instructor Variation

- Differences in grading philosophy and pedagogical style can impact student success in the classroom
- A major driver of higher DFW rates that can be addressed with support for improved pedagogy

Outside the Classroom

Inside the Classroom

Improvement efforts often met with skepticism by faculty, citing quality concerns or use of gateway courses to screen students

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Three Steps to Determine Your Improvement Strategy

Size the Opportunity

Quantify unproductive credits, examining both the rate and absolute number; compare to benchmark

Critical analyses:



Course Completion Rates v. Peer Benchmarks



Completion Rates v. Attempted Student Credit Hours



D,F, and W Grade Distributions¹

2 Identify Root Causes

Analyze specific courses with low completion rates and drill into section-level variation

Critical analyses:



Median Course Completion Trends by Instructor



Completion Rate Analyses with Drilldown to Course Reference Number



Intercurricular Dependencies

3 Prioritize Resources

Focus on courses where you can have the largest impact on students, such as high enrollment and capacity constrained courses

Critical analyses:



Courses with Highest Unearned Credit Hours



Bottom 30 Courses by Completion Rate



Impact of Course Bottlenecks on Course Completion

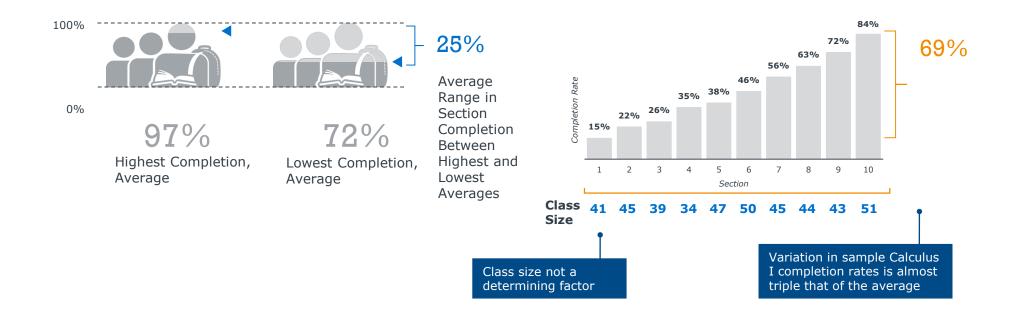
How Much Variation Can We Expect?

Range of Section Completion Rates¹

n=43 institutions

Even Wider Variation for Gateway Courses²

n=1 Very Large Research Institution, Fall 2015



¹⁾ Methodology: Found the range of completion rate for each course with five or more sections at each school in the collaborative, then took the average.

Sample data from one institution in the collaborative. All sections with class size greater than 25.

Best Practices in Action as Boise State Scales Course Redesign



Nine Tactics for Improving Course Completion

Assessment #1: Early and Frequent Low-Stakes **Assessment** #2: Standardized **Assessment** Instruction #3: Active Learning #4: Supplemental **Instruction** Course-Level **#5:** Course Behavior Advising **Alerts** #6: Automated Withdrawal Advising Pre- and #7: Growth Mindset Post-course **Priming** Support #8: Intensive Early Start Cohorts

#9: Accelerated Catch-

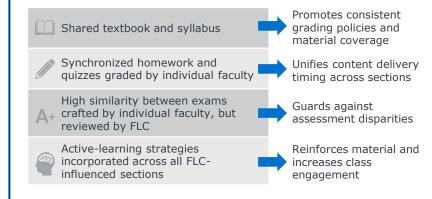
Up Terms

Case in Brief



As part of a course-based faculty learning community (FLC), Boise State brought together instructors from a multisection calculus course to improve teaching and learning through adoption of shared materials and approaches

A Coherent Multi-Section Course



Impact Highlights

13%

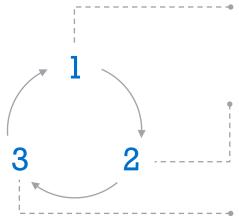
Increase in pass rates

100%

Non-FLC Calculus I instructors adopted redesigned structure an materials the following semester

Source: Bullock D, et al., "Coherent Calculus Course Design: Creating Faculty Buyin for Student Success," 122nd ASEE Annual Conference & Exposition, 2015; EAB interviews and analysis; Academic Affairs Forum, The Course Completion Playbook.

Closing Principles



Share Completion Rates

Increase awareness of opportunities for improvement by including completion rates department and course planning discussions

Carve Out Time to Innovate

Focus on courses where pedagogical innovation has the most support, engaging faculty that are excited by the opportunity to improve student outcomes

Recognize Improvement

Measure changes over time and acknowledge success that positively impacts students and the institution



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