Case Study Compendium

Highlighting Diverse Institutions That Achieved Breakthrough Results with SSC

- Georgia State University
- California State University, Fullerton
- Flagler College
- Middle Tennessee State University
- Stony Brook University
- Fort Lewis College
- University of South Alabama
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- Salisbury University
- Elizabeth City State University
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 Royall & Company 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, including four- and two-year institutions, use the Student Success Collaborative combination of analytics, interaction and workflow technology, and consulting to support, retain, and graduate more students.

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.

1,100+ College and university members
10,000+ Research interviews per year
475M+ Course records in our student success analytic platform
1.2B+ Student interactions annually
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<td>• 25,945 total enrollment</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 51% six-year graduation rate</td>
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<td><strong>California State University, Fullerton</strong></td>
<td>Amplifying the impact of new initiatives with technology to exceed strategic goals</td>
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<td>• 33,000 undergraduate enrollment</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 2,500 undergraduate enrollment</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>• 22,729 total enrollment</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 52% six-year graduation rate</td>
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<td>1.3% Percentage point increase in rising junior retention</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Part of the SUNY System</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 16,831 undergraduate enrollment</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 70% six-year graduation rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Public Baccalaureate College</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 3,704 undergraduate enrollment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 37% six-year graduation rate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>University of South Alabama</strong></td>
<td>Integrating SSC into campus-wide policies and practices for quick wins and long-term change</td>
<td>12% Percentage point increase in retention</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Public Research University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 16,211 total enrollment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• 36% six-year graduation rate</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Virginia Commonwealth University</strong></td>
<td>Seeing early ROI by targeting discrete pockets of risk</td>
<td>8% Percentage point increase in four-year grad rate</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Public Research University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 23,000 undergrad enrollment</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 59% six-year graduation rate</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Salisbury University</strong></td>
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<td>2.2% Percentage point increase in retention</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Public Masters University</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• 7,900 undergrad enrollment</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• 59% six-year graduation rate</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Elizabeth City State University</strong></td>
<td>Embedding faculty engagement into campus culture</td>
<td>41% Percentage point increase in faculty response rate to progress reports</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Public, Historically Black University</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1,535 total enrollment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• 39% six-year graduation rate</td>
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**CASE STUDY**

Improving Student Outcomes with Data-Driven Advising and Institutional Transformation

Georgia State University, Public Research University in Atlanta, GA

- **About:** George State University is a public research university with a total enrollment of 25,945 and a six-year graduation rate of 51%. GSU has historically served large populations of low-income and underrepresented minority students.

- **Challenge:** Ten years ago, GSU’s six-year graduation rate hovered around 32% and was especially low for their growing population of Pell students. When Georgia joined Complete College America in 2011, GSU was required to implement a plan to improve student outcomes, with state appropriations tied to these improvements.

- **Solution:** GSU saw an opportunity to target resources through structured, data-driven interventions such as course redesign, supplemental instruction, freshmen learning communities, and fee-drop grants. In 2012, GSU joined the Student Success Collaborative and extended this data-driven approach to academic advising.

- **Impact:** GSU’s advisors use SSC on a daily basis, helping students make smarter decisions, reduce time to degree, and lower their risk – contributing to a 3% increase in six-year graduation rate since 2012.

Making Impressive Gains Across All Students, Especially Special Populations

**Moving the Dial on Graduation Outcomes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degrees</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conferred</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2012 to 2014)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Outperforming Peers With Low-Income Students**

Graduation and Pell Rates of Urban Research Universities

![Graph showing graduation rates and percent of students receiving Pell grants for Georgia State University and peers with low-income students.](image)

**Impact Highlights**

- **3%**
  - Percentage point increase in graduation rate (2012–2014)

- **$3M**
  - Estimated additional tuition revenue in 2014

- **8**
  - Fewer credit hours at completion on average (2012–2016)
### Creating a Culture Where Numbers Matter

#### Smarter Advising Sessions Positively Impacting Student Progress

#### Decreasing Time to Degree...

**Average Credits at Time of Graduation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2010</th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>141</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**8 Fewer credit hours at completion on average**

#### ...And Reducing Overall Cost

**$4M**

Total savings by students in the graduating class of 2014 compared to the class of 2013

#### Prior to 2012

- High attrition due to delayed admission into certain academic majors
- Unclear which students needed support in which courses
- Students dropping out due to unmet need, as little as $300

#### After 2012

- Redesigned Pre-Nursing, Pre-Business sequences based on SSC insights
- Used analytics to strengthen supplemental instruction offerings
- Retention grants (fee drops) deployed based on student need

#### Integrating SSC Into the Advising Enterprise

41K+

Total interventions in the SSC platform (2014)

SSC allows us to be hugely supportive of any student. We can encourage students that are on path with the data; we can provide a visual to students who are off path; or if a student is right in the middle, we can teach them about the hill they have to climb.

Advisor

GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Among other initiatives
Amplifying the Impact of New Initiatives with Technology to Exceed Strategic Goals

California State University, Fullerton, Public Master’s University in Fullerton, CA

- **About**: California State University, Fullerton is a public master’s university with an undergraduate enrollment of 33,000 students and a six-year graduation rate of 62%.
- **Challenge**: CSU Fullerton enrolls almost 70% ethnic minorities and 40% students from historically underrepresented groups. Three years ago, graduation rates hovered in the low 50s and the graduation gap was 12%.
- **Solution**: In 2013, CSU Fullerton launched a five-year strategic plan with ambitious goals of narrowing the graduation gap for underrepresented minority students by half and raising overall graduation rates to 60%. To accomplish this, Fullerton took an innovative approach that combined infrastructure changes, the addition of a new ‘Graduation Specialist’ role empowered with a technology toolbox, and a focus on tech-enabled, scalable interventions.
- **Impact**: CSU Fullerton exceeded their strategic goals, inflecting graduation rates by 11% in three years and narrowing the graduation gap by 4%.

**Impact Highlights**

- 11%: Percentage point increase in six-year graduation rate between spring 2012 and spring 2015
- 4%: Percentage point reduction in the graduation gap for underrepresented minority students

**Exceeding Strategic Goals by Rapidly Inflecting Long-Term Student Outcomes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Six-Year Graduation Rate for FTFT Freshmen</th>
<th>Graduation Gap for Underrepresented Minority Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring 2012: 51%</td>
<td>Spring 2012: 12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring 2013: 53%</td>
<td>Spring 2013: 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring 2014: 56%</td>
<td>Spring 2014:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring 2015: 62%</td>
<td>Spring 2015:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Building a New Student Success Infrastructure

New Roles and Structure Promote Holistic Student Support and Accountability

Technology Toolbox Amplifies the Impact of the ‘Graduation Specialist’ Role

College-Based Success Teams

- Associate Dean
- Assistant Dean
- Graduation Specialist
- Retention Specialist
- Career Specialist
- Major Advisors (Primarily Faculty)
- Weekly Grad Specialist Pull-Ups
- Monthly Student Success Steering Committee Meetings

Exploring New Scalable, Tech-Enabled Advising Practices

Piloted Mandatory Advising for Juniors in Fall 2014

**PREVENTATIVE**

Why Target Juniors?
Desire to reduce time to degree and improve four-year graduation rate

Barriers to Timely Graduation
- Students miss first possible application deadline
- Graduation applications deferred due to minor missing requirements

**SCALABLE**

Mandatory Graduation Advising Workshops
- Generated lists of targeted students with SSC
- Reviewed graduation application process and deadlines in groups
- Consulted degree audit and graduation requirements
- Explored career paths

- 2,110 Students targeted with between 75-84 units
- 166 1-hour group workshops delivered
- 98% Attendance rate

**EFFECTIVE**

Post-Workshop Surveys
- 94% Of students would recommend this workshop to a friend
- 87% Said they are now confident in creating a plan to complete remaining requirements
- 68% Now anticipate graduating at some point in 2016
Embracing Data-Driven Curriculum Change to Reverse Retention Declines

Flagler College, Small Private Baccalaureate Institution in FL

- **About**: Flagler College is a small private college with an undergraduate enrollment of 2,500 students and a six-year graduation rate of 60%.
- **Challenge**: From 2001 to 2013, Flagler’s enrollment grew by nearly 75%, yet across the same time period retention dropped 12%. Faculty were unfamiliar with academic risk data and unsure of how to use it to support the student body.
- **Solution**: Flagler used the SSC implementation process to confirm data quality and accuracy. They then used academic risk data to identify changes to academic policies, risk monitoring, and course sequences in order to better support underprepared students.
- **Impact**: Through its partnership with SSC, Flagler was able to cultivate faculty trust in academic risk data and improve their retention rate by 3 percentage points.

Focusing on SSC Success Markers to Secure Faculty Buy-In for Academic Risk Data

**Starting with General Education Requirements**

- **Convoked a Committee to Create Gen Ed Success Markers**
- **Built Faculty Trust in Success Marker Data**

A small faculty committee used SSC analytics to identify Success Marker courses for four general education requirement categories.

Leaders encouraged faculty to imagine the “typical B student” versus the “typical C student” to make each Success Marker concrete.

**Enfranchising All Academic Departments**

**Empowered All Faculty with an “It Takes a Village” Approach**

New Success Marker grade thresholds for every department empowered all faculty to monitor and better support students.
## Deploying New Data to Inform Curricular Design and Monitor At-Risk Students

### Concentrated Improvements Through the Use of SSC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Identifying Systemic Problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identified key student behaviors that impede academic progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Began tracking academically dismissed students</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>EXAMPLE</strong> Freshmen taking fewer than 15 credit hours not on track to graduate on time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rooting Curriculum Change in Data</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Updated course sequences to ensure a logical progression</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluated course capacity for predictive milestone courses</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>EXAMPLE</strong> Students completing remedial MAT113 not performing well in algebra due to course timing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Equipping Faculty to Monitor At-Risk Students</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Created internal benchmarks based on what successful students “look” like</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provided faculty with course rosters that included SSC risk data</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>EXAMPLE</strong> Students receiving C in COM101 class fail to meet predictive success standard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Clean Data Paving the Path to Retention Gains

**Gains achieved in collaboration with SSC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>75%</td>
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</table>

**IMPACT**

"Previously we had been making curricular decisions based on the feelings of faculty. Curricular decisions can’t be emotions based. This is the beginning of a paradigm shift in how we make curricular choices."

*Former Director of Institutional Analytics*
Strategic Interventions Generate Rapid Persistence Gains

Middle Tennessee State University, Public Research University, Murfreesboro, TN

- About: Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) is a public research university with a total enrollment of 22,729 and a six-year graduation rate of 52%.

- Challenge: In response to state-wide pressure to improve outcomes, MTSU created the “Quest for Student Success” plan, but needed a way to track and move the dial on metrics across the institution. MTSU’s advising units were also severely understaffed and under-resourced to serve a challenging student population on the ground.

- Solution: MTSU set out to drive rapid gains through changes informed by data and best practices. Joining SSC in spring 2014 allowed MTSU to empower staff with data and execute a campus-wide strategy focused on persistence.

- Impact: Through its partnership with SSC, MTSU was able to increase overall persistence by 1.5 percentage points, retaining an additional 390 students for $1.5M in spring tuition revenue.

Impact Highlights

- 4.3% Increase in four-year graduation rate (2012 to 2014)
- 10.8% Increase in fall to fall freshman retention (2013 to 2016)
- $1.5M Estimated additional revenue from tuition and fees (spring 2015)

SSC Support During Launch Ensured High Engagement, Quick Wins

Created a Launch Strategy
MTSU’s Dedicated Consultant worked with leadership to create a plan based on historical data

Trained Advisors Campus-Wide
- SSC and MTSU trained all advisors prior to peak registration season
- Communicated clear expectations

Prepared to Hit the Ground Running
SSC and MTSU helped advising managers to design initiatives and campaigns before the site went live, for immediate implementation

Tracked Impact Immediately
During and after launch, administrators tracked and analyzed advisor activity

Summer 2014  Fall 2014  Winter 2015

15K+
Student profile views each month
Building a Coordinated Network of Persistence Campaigns

Using SSC to Plan and Scale Efforts

Identify
SSC lists and filters allowed staff to quickly identify 2,500+ stop outs

Target
Robust student data helped to prioritize unique, high-impact populations

Manage
SSC toolkits provided a framework and resources for campaign management

Stop Outs
Units used outreach to engage targeted stop outs in re-enrollment conversations

Struggling Freshman
Based on EAB analysis of historical first-year GPA patterns, created REBOUND program to contact new freshman with fall GPA <2.0 to offer specialized early-return advising

BHS Students with Registration Holds
Prioritized contacting students in Behavioral & Health Sciences (largest college) who had simple hold barriers to registration

Students Close to Completion
One department targeted likely returners: Low and Medium risk students with few credits remaining

Immediate Impact: Seeing Impressive Gains Beyond First Year Retention

Fall to Spring Persistence
For All Undergraduate Years Across All Colleges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2014</th>
<th>Spring 2015</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic &amp; Applied Sciences</td>
<td>88.2%</td>
<td>89.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral &amp; Health Sciences</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
<td>90.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>87.8%</td>
<td>90.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
<td>92.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Arts</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
<td>89.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Comm.</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University College</td>
<td>83.0%</td>
<td>92.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+2.2% FTFT Freshman
+4.5% New Transfers
+2.1% Sophomores

Overall Results
+1.5% Increase in overall fall to spring undergrad persistence
390 Additional undergrad students enrolled in spring 2015
$1.5M Estimated additional revenue from spring tuition and fees
Piloting a Risk-Segmented Mentoring Program to Inflect Rising Junior Retention

Stony Brook University, Public Research University, Stony Brook, NY

- **About:** Stony Brook University is a public research university in the State University System of New York serving 16,831 undergraduates with a six-year graduation rate of 70%.
- **Challenge:** Over the past decade, Stony Brook’s focus on the first-year experience helped them achieve a first-to-second-year retention rate of 91%. However, with four-year graduation rates in the high 40s, Stony Brook had concerns about attrition in the sophomore year and beyond. They faced the challenge of improving without new resources, and advisors were already stretched thin with high student-to-advisor ratios.
- **Solution:** As part of the “Class of 2018 Advising Initiative,” Stony Brook segmented second-year students based on SSC risk level and other indicators, then assigned high-risk students to professional advisors while pairing low-risk students with volunteer mentors. Advisors applied casework-style interventions and strategic outreach campaigns to support high-risk students.
- **Impact:** The initiative helped Stony Brook achieve a rising junior retention rate of 83.9%, highest in the University’s history.

### Diagnosing and Segmenting the Class of 2018 Based on Risk-Level

**Area of Focus:** One Class of Rising Sophomores

**Goal:** Provide one-on-one support to all Class of 2018 students to promote persistence, beginning at the end of their first year and continuing across their academic career

Small group of advisors completed audit for each student

**Excerpted Audit Criteria**

- Did this student earn less than a 2.5 GPA?
- Did this student earn fewer than 30 credits?
- Did this student not receive any A or A- grades in their first semester?
- Does this student have a medium or high risk level based on SSC data?

Stony Brook’s IR Office found that the graduation rate for students who get no A or A- in their first semester drops from 49% to 35%

SSC risk level data independently confirmed majority of risk assignments

**Impact Highlights**

1.3%

Percentage point increase in overall rising junior retention (2015 to 2016)

82.7%

Percent of undeclared sophomores who declared majors by the end of the year
Assigning Students to One of Two Support Models

**Assigned to Professional Advisors**
- High risk students assigned to full-time advisors
- Each advisor manages cohorts of 50-60 students, deploys “social work”-style advising to break through to at-risk students and support their needs

**Assigned to Volunteer Mentors**
- Low risk students assigned to volunteer faculty mentors
- Each volunteer assigned 5-7 students, in the same major when possible
- Volunteers taught basic skills and resources, serve more as coaches than advisors

**Centrally-Coordinated Campaigns**
*On Top of Cohort Assignments*
- Created monthly outreach campaigns based on missed benchmarks like registration
- Campaign lists generated using SSC and include students from both cohorts
- Leadership provides specific messages (email templates) for staff to send at specific times

**Highest Retention of Rising Juniors in the University’s History**

**Improved Retention of Class of 2018 Students**

- Increase in students returning for a fifth semester, 83.9% compared to the University’s previous highest rate of 82.6%

**Timely Major Declaration a Sign of Improved Degree Progress**

**Number of Sophomores Without a Declared Major**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IMPACT</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IMPACT**

“Advisors love having an assigned caseload now. Some of them come from a social work background, saying they have yearned for this. They never would have met with these students without the risk segmentation. And students are so excited to have a designated person supporting them.”

*Rick Gatteau, Associate Provost for Academic Success*
Coordinating and Restructuring Around Technology to Better Support Students in Need

Fort Lewis College, Public Baccalaureate College in Durango, CO

- **About:** Fort Lewis College (FLC) is a public liberal arts college in rural Colorado with an undergraduate enrollment of 3,704 and a six-year graduation rate of 37%.
- **Challenge:** FLC’s student population is comprised of 32% Native Americans, which is the most under-represented population in higher education. In addition, 30% of FLC’s students receive Pell Grants. Historically, 12% of freshman students become academically disqualified after the first year. To improve outcomes, FLC knew it would need to change its approach to student support.
- **Solution:** Fort Lewis restructured its advising and student services model and set ambitious goals to begin improving student outcomes. SSC set this transition in motion and enabled FLC to take a comprehensive, coordinated approach that included strategic, data-driven advising campaigns.
- **Impact:** With the help of SSC, FLC reduced the number of academically disqualified freshmen from 12% to 10% and boosted enrollment, helping realize a 4% increase in FTFT retention in fall 2015.

**Impact Highlights**

- **4.0%** Percentage point increase in FTFT retention from fall 2013 to fall 2015
- **2.0%** Percentage point decrease in academically disqualified freshmen from fall 2013 to fall 2015

**SSC Enabled Rapid Results to Sustain Continued Growth**

**Laying the Groundwork**

“SSC has given us the framework to make systematic changes, and made us very bold and brave as we set out to reach our student success goals.”

*Carol Smith*
Associate VP of Enrollment Management

**Planning to Reinvest Revenue Gains in 2016-17**

- **4%** Increase in FTFT retention in 2015
- **2%** Decrease in freshman disqualifications in 2015
- **2% (GOAL)** Increase in sophomore and junior persistence by 2016
- **10% (GOAL)** Increase in timely major declaration by 2017
- **$345K** Anticipated tuition revenue to be reinvested in student support
A New Student Support Model, Integrated Through SSC

**FLC Deconstructed Advising Functions to Match Expertise to Student Need**

### Curriculum Completion

**Teams:**
- Professional Academic Advisors
- Faculty Advisors
- Registrar

**Responsibilities:**
Assist with degree plans, curriculum transitions, registration clearance, and transfer evaluation queries

### Academic Achievement

**Teams:**
- Success Coaches
- Tutors
- Peer Achievement Team

**Responsibilities:**
Monitor grades; frequently check in; actively nudge; assess risk; provide 1:1 academic assistance

### Student Financing

**Teams:**
- Financial Aid
- Bursar’s Office
- Financial Literacy

**Responsibilities:**
Ensure students are applying for and maintaining financial aid; help students manage debt loads

### Post-Baccalaureate Readiness

**Teams:**
- Career Office
- Faculty Mentors
- Student Development

**Responsibilities:**
Guide students on curricular path to post-grad goals; prepare students for the job search and cultivate skills

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**Data-Driven Advising Campaigns Target Essential Populations**

**Beginning with Pockets of Urgent, Actionable Student Risk**

#### Curriculum Completion Campaign

"The Chase” for Enrollment

1. Identified and conducted outreach to students yet to enroll for fall
2. Started campaign earlier with added SSC functionality
3. Customized SSC statuses and mandated use of them along with notes
4. Tracked and communicated results to motivate professional academic advisors

**Before SSC (Fall 2013)**
- 60% FTFT retention

**With SSC (Fall 2015)**
- 64% FTFT retention

- **Increase in FTFT retention**
  - 4%

#### Academic Achievement Campaign

**Students at Risk of Disqualification**

1. Identified all freshmen on probation based on fall grades
2. Contacted all students via email, phone, text starting in Feb 2015
3. Met with probationary students who responded (54%)

**Before SSC (Fall 2013)**
- 12% disqualified freshmen

**With SSC (Fall 2015)**
- 10% disqualified freshmen

- **Decrease in disqualified freshmen**
  - 2%
Integrating SSC into Campus-Wide Policies and Practices for Quick Wins and Long-Term Change

University of South Alabama, Public Research University, Mobile, Alabama

• **About:** The University of South Alabama (USA) is a public research university with a total enrollment of 16,211 and a six-year graduation rate of 36%.

• **Challenge:** Since 2005, USA had experienced declining retention in the midst of enrollment growth. With six- and four-year graduation rates plateauing at 36% and 17%, respectively, USA sought to help students graduate on time and improve overall student performance.

• **Solution:** USA developed a four-pronged strategy to help more students graduate in a timely manner with the right major. They used SSC data to identify areas of focus. USA then launched two campaigns in 2016, one to encourage high credit-hours students to graduate and the second to enroll high risk students in intensive academic coaching.

• **Impact:** Through its partnership with SSC, USA was able to increase retention by 12% across four years and graduate an additional 126 students in 2016.

**Impact Highlights**

12%  
Increase in institutional retention across four years

126  
More students who graduated in 2016 due to SSC High-Hours Campaign

**Capturing Quick Wins by Helping High-Hours Students Graduate**

**Using SSC Data**

to identify enrolled students with:

- 120+ credits
- >2.0 GPA
- Not yet pending graduation

**Shared list of 340 identified students**

Advising center staff and college deans sent out notices to students to select or change majors and apply for graduation

126 more students graduated in 2016 because of the high-hours campaign
Identifying Highest Risk Students for Intensive Academic Coaching

Piloting an Academic Success Coach Campaign for High Risk Students

1. Using the following risk factors, USA found 200 students to target (later expanded program to 400)
   - In one of four majors with low faculty-to-student ratio
   - Sophomore or junior
   - GPA <3.0
   - **SSC indicator**: medium or high risk
   - Qualitative input from faculty

   Assigned each student to a designated faculty member who serves as a high-quality academic coach. Academic coaches:
   - Access SSC alerts and midterm grades
   - Provide support across academic struggle, financial distress, and personal problems

Results: High Risk Cohort Making Positive Progress

- **Increase in Cumulative GPA**
  - Campaign: 0.11
  - Non-campaign: 0.06

- **Increase in Credit Completion**
  - Campaign: 4.9%
  - Non-campaign: 4.2%

- **Retention Rate**
  - Campaign: 81%
  - Non-campaign: 80%

- 82% of students said coaching helped them a lot

Long-Term Strategy Combined Quick Wins Moving the Dial on Retention

Four-Pronged Strategy for Transforming Student Success at USA

- **Structure**
  - Convening academic success committee

- **Practice**
  - Targeting at-risk majors with academic coaching

- **Performance**
  - Using institutional reports for internal performance metrics

- **Campaigns**
  - Encouraging high-hours students to graduate

Growth in Institutional Retention

- 73% increase in four years
- 65% 2011
- 73% 2015

The best practices are the ones that work for you.™
Seeing Early ROI by Targeting Discrete Pockets of Risk
Virginia Commonwealth University, Public Research University, Richmond, Virginia

- **About:** Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) enrolls 23,000 undergraduate students and has a 59% six-year graduation rate.
- **Challenge:** VCU has steadily improved its first-year retention rate, but needed a new way to identify and address the less-obvious needs of at-risk populations, especially those beyond the first year.
- **Solution:** In fall 2014, VCU advisors used SSC predictive analytics to run targeted advising campaigns that proactively intervened with 12 student subpopulations.
- **Impact:** Persistence-focused campaigns resulted in the retention of an additional 65 students in the spring of 2015 and $346,000 in spring tuition and fees revenue. Momentum from campaigns and other initiatives has positively impacted four- and six-year graduation rates.

### Impact Highlights

- **8%** Percentage point increase in four-year graduation rate (spring 2014 to spring 2016)
- **3%** Percentage point increase in six-year graduation rate (spring 2014 to spring 2015)
- **$346K** Additional spring 2015 tuition revenue

### Enabling Targeted Advising Initiatives Across a Decentralized System

**SSC Webinar**
VCU leaders impressed by the "targeted campaign" concept introduced in an SSC webinar

**SSC Training**
SSC consultant trained 40+ advisors from seven programs to use SSC for targeted intervention

**SSC Toolkit**
SSC toolkit provides guidance to help advisors design and execute campaigns

### Interventions Impacting Key Micro Metrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campaign Type</th>
<th>Population and Intervention</th>
<th>Student Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Academic Performance Improvement</td>
<td>Connect Business School students on probation to needed support resources</td>
<td>34% Percent of students that raised GPA above 2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Major Selection</td>
<td>Assist high-risk Undeclared students with major planning and declaration</td>
<td>19 Additional students enrolled in Education and Career Planning course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Transfer Persistence</td>
<td>Facilitate academic planning for low-GPA transfer Biology students</td>
<td>8% Higher persistence than previous year cohort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Accelerating Degree Completion</td>
<td>Assist underperforming psychology students with course sequencing</td>
<td>25 Upper-class students enrolled in gatekeeper statistics course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Graduation Application</td>
<td>Remind qualified seniors to apply for graduation</td>
<td>19% Increase in graduation candidates compared to spring 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Campaigns Yielding Impressive Overall Results

#### Intervention Campaigns
**Improving Persistence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional students enrolled</td>
<td>65+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in spring 2015 due to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>five persistence-focused</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interventions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional spring 2015 semester tuition and fees revenue</td>
<td>$346K</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Graduation Application Campaign
**Boosting Graduation Rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage point increase in four-year graduation rate for Spring 2016 compared to Spring 2014</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage point increase in six-year graduation rate for Spring 2015 compared to Spring 2014</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Although VCU has had success in getting students to return to its Richmond campus for a second year, the university has struggled to get them all the way to graduation. Now the school is turning to big data to help it identify students who are most at risk of falling through the cracks.”

*The Washington Post (June 14, 2015)*
*Cited in USA Today (June 22, 2015)*
Rallying Campus Around Data-Driven Best Practices to Improve Retention by 2% in Less Than One Year

Salisbury University, Public Master’s University in Salisbury, Maryland

**About:** Salisbury University is a public master’s university with an undergraduate enrollment of 7,900 and a four-year graduation rate of 46%.

**Challenge:** Advising at Salisbury was owned by faculty and housed within each school, with no shared information about goals or outreach efforts. Many students were not well-prepared for critical courses in their degree path, with some stopping out as a result, or delaying their time to graduation. As enrollment increased, Salisbury “outgrew” its faculty advising model but lacked sufficient resources and buy-in to move to a hybrid professional-faculty model.

**Solution:** Over the course of one year, Salisbury’s AVP of Academic Affairs and Assistant VP of Enrollment Management led the charge to rally campus around new, data-driven best practices. They conducted a large-scale retreat that brought together advising, student affairs, and enrollment management to collaborate and build a campus-wide targeted campaign calendar. Simultaneously, they enacted programmatic changes to encourage timely degree completion.

**Impact:** As a result of these efforts, Salisbury saw a 2% increase in first-time, full-time retention and successfully made the case to transition to a hybrid advising model for the fall of 2016.

### Impact Highlights

- **2.2%** Percentage point increase in first-time full-time retention (2015 to 2016)
- **$340K** Additional tuition revenue from increase in retention

### Overview: Instilling a Data Driven Mindset

*How Salisbury Transformed Their Student Success Culture Across 2016*

- Identified and shared relevant SSC historical insights with each department
- Convened a “Retention Think Tank” with the help of EAB to bridge various functions
- Brought stakeholders together to build a central, coordinated campaign calendar
- Enacted best practice programmatic changes to encourage timely degree completion
Establishing a Culture of Collaboration and Action with the Help of EAB

FALL 2015

Identified relevant SSC Historical Insights for each department

Sample Insight: Students on the cusp of probation (GPA 2.0-2.5) are just as likely to drop out as students on probation.

Consultant presented an Opportunity Assessment and led discussion to build buy in and momentum

WINTER 2016

AVP of Academic Affairs and Assistant VP of Enrollment Management brought together advising, student affairs, enrollment, and financial aid for a Two-Day Campaign Retreat

Participants built a campus-wide calendar of Targeted Campaigns inspired by SSC

The retreat drove engagement and cross-functional coordination

Encouraging Timely Degree Completion with Data-Driven Programmatic Changes

New Four-Year Plans Help Students Progress to Their Chosen Degree

- Academic departments charged with creating four-year plans for every major
- Embedded recommended grades from SSC into the plans and identified courses that did not have enough seats to meet demand
- 120 new degree plans now housed on a student-facing landing page

Creation of New “Mini-Mesters” Promotes Credit Accumulation

- Historical data from SSC and new four-year plans helped make the case to pilot two condensed courses offered in the first or last 8 weeks of the semester
- Mini-mesters give more students the ability to complete critical courses within the recommended credit ranges

Results After the First Year

26 Additional students retained through revised probation efforts, including campaigns

+2.2% Increase in first-time, full-time retention 2015 to 2016

$340K+ Additional tuition revenue from increase in retention

President approved the transition to a centralized advising model to be in place by the fall of 2016
Embedding Faculty Engagement into Campus Culture
Elizabeth City State University, Public, Historically Black University in Elizabeth City, NC

- **About**: Elizabeth City State University is a public, historically black university with a total enrollment of 1,535 and a six-year graduation rate of 39%.
- **Challenge**: At ECSU, advising is owned by the faculty who are often skeptical of new initiatives. Farrah Jackson Ward, Chair of the Math and Science Department, knew that in order to ensure faculty engagement with the Student Success Collaborative (SSC), she would need to change the culture.
- **Solution**: To ensure faculty had resources to use the SSC technology effectively, Farrah developed an extensive support infrastructure, including a website to house training materials, a dedicated email address for faculty questions, and an SSC liaison in every department. To keep faculty on track with SSC, Farrah announces new campaigns during faculty meetings and on the faculty listserv, and sends regular reminders. Department chairs receive a list of those who have not complied to create a sense of accountability. Farrah also engages directly with faculty to build confidence. A faculty member herself, she sets the tone by having advisees and piloting new ideas.
- **Impact**: As a result of this work, faculty response rates have jumped from 50% to 91% for Progress Reports. The process “practically runs itself,” freeing Farrah’s time to focus on other ways to help her students succeed.

Making SSC Engagement Part of the Culture to Improve Student Support

**How ECSU Successfully Rolled Out SSC to Faculty**

1. **Provided Access to Tailored Resources**
   ECSU created a website to house SSC training materials and set up a dedicated email address to answer faculty questions

2. **Engaged Faculty Directly**
   Farrah appointed an SSC liaison in every department to engage faculty through one-on-one and group trainings

3. **Instilled Accountability**
   Farrah announces progress reports and other campaigns with fanfare, and dept. chairs can easily see lists of faculty who have not submitted through SSC

4. **Rinse and Repeat**: ECSU runs campaigns with ongoing accountability across the year, making faculty engagement the norm

**Impact: Increase in Response Rate to Faculty Progress Reports**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>50%</th>
<th>91%</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With SSC</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

“...you have to embed faculty engagement into your culture by repeating your process over and over. After about three times, it becomes ‘what we do’ and faculty will buy in.”

*Farrah Jackson Ward, PhD Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Math and Computer Science*
The best practices are the ones that work for you.℠