The Context for Learning at UK

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Director of Institutional Research

William T. Young Library Gallery
March 31, 2010
Presentation Outline

- **Student Attrition**
  - Retention rates for UK and Top 20 benchmarks
  - Theoretical view of student departure
  - DEW Rates and Probation/Suspension Trends

- **A model to predict first–semester grades**

- **Relevant Survey Data from UK and NSSE**
  - Time spent studying/doing homework
  - Perceived academic challenge
  - Perceived gains in skills and knowledge
  - UK students’ standing on 5 NSSE Benchmarks
Thoughts on Retention Rates

- Retention rates are widely regarded as an indicator of institutional effectiveness.
- Low retention rates may indicate that an institution has difficulty meeting students’ needs and expectations.
- Half of all students who fail to earn a bachelor’s degree drop out either during or just after their first year.
Retention Rates: 1999 – 2008 Cohorts

- 1999: 80.4%
- 2000: 77.7%
- 2001: 79.3%
- 2002: 77.1%
- 2003: 78.4%
- 2004: 78.9%
- 2005: 77.8%
- 2006: 76.4%
- 2007: 81.0%
- 2008: 80.3%
Retention Rates at Top 20 Benchmark Institutions
The Fall 2007 Cohort

University of Kentucky  81.0%

- Penn State Univ.  92.3%
- Univ. of Pittsburgh  90.8%
- Univ. of Illinois  93.7%
- Rutgers Univ.  90.7%
- Univ. of Michigan  96.1%
- Univ. of Minnesota  88.0%
- University of Virginia  97.3%
- Univ. of California-D  88.9%
- Univ. of Texas  90.9%
- Univ. of California-SD  94.4%
- Ohio State Univ.  92.8%
- Texas A & M Univ.  92.4%
- Univ. of California- B  96.1%
- Univ. of Wisconsin  93.6%
- Univ. of California- LA  96.7%
- Univ. of Maryland  94.0%
- Univ. of Washington  92.7%
- Georgia Tech.  93.2%
- Univ. of North Carolina  96.2%
- Univ. of Florida  95.7%

Source: CSRDE; data are for internal planning and policy development purposes only.
A Theory of Student Departure

Interactionist Models (Astin, 1968; Bean, 1980; Tinto, 1975)

- Focus on a student’s interaction with the college over time and her integration into the academic and social life of the institution

- A student is unlikely to persist when there is a poor ‘fit’ – frequent negative encounters with college’s informal and formal academic and social systems

- To improve retention, an institution must help students adjust to the environment, including policies, procedures, educational programming and culture
Academic Status of First-Year Students Who Left UK During or After Their First Year

- **Good Standing**: 48.5%
- **Probation**: 16.6%
- **Probation (suspen. pending)**: 4.8%
- **Suspension**: 30.1%

Source: OIR and SRC Telephone Survey, 2004
Students’ Most Important Reasons for Leaving UK

- Wanted to be closer to home: 17.4%
- Too expensive: 15.0%
- School too large/classes too big: 13.8%
- Changed major: 8.5%
- Problems at home: 6.1%
- Other reasons: 39.2%

Source: OIR and SRC Telephone Survey, 2004
DEW Rates in Selected Courses for First-Year Students (2008 cohort)

Source: OIR Analysis, 2008 cohort
Note: Students are now subject to suspension if their GPA is below 0.6 after their first term, if the semester’s GPA is based on at least 9 hours of grades, A, B, C, D, or E.
Selected Research Undertaken by the Office of Institutional Research
Regression Model Designed to Explain Students’ First–Semester Grades

- Models were based on demographic data, academic credentials, and information obtained from the fall Survey of First–year Students

- The GPA model explained 36% of the variance in students’ grades
Regression Model Designed to Explain Students’ First-Semester GPAs

Grades were positively associated with . . .

- High school GPAs
- ACT Composite scores
- Being female
- Participation in UK 101
- The distance between a students’ home and UK
- The number of hours students reported studying/doing homework during HS senior year
- Self-reported ‘drive to achieve’
- Level of identification with being a good student
Grades were negatively associated with . . .

- Being a first-generation college student
- The number of hours students planned to be employed during their first term
- Self-reported procrastination tendencies
- Self-reported ‘serious financial difficulties’ during the previous year
Freshman Survey Findings:
Reported Time Spent Studying
Perceived Academic Challenge

Senior Survey Findings:
Perceived Gains in Skills and Knowledge
Hours Reported Studying/Doing Homework in a Typical Week During the HS Sr Year and Freshman Year

Source: First-year Surveys conducted in Fall 2008 and Spring 2009
Hours Reported Studying/Doing Homework in a Typical Week During the HS Sr Year and Freshman Year

Source: First-year Surveys conducted in Fall 2008 and Spring 2009
Self-reported Academic Challenge During the HS Sr Year and Freshman Year at UK

Source: First-year Surveys conducted in Fall 2008 and Spring 2009
Self-reported Academic Challenge During the HS Sr Year and Freshman Year at UK

Source: First-year Surveys conducted in Fall 2008 and Spring 2009
Compared with when you started, how would you describe your skills and knowledge?

- Thinking critically and analytically
  - Stronger: 59%
  - Much Stronger: 33%

- Making effective oral presentations
  - Stronger: 62%
  - Much Stronger: 27%

- Writing effectively
  - Stronger: 57%
  - Much Stronger: 29%

- Using Computers
  - Stronger: 55%
  - Much Stronger: 26%

- Applying Scientific Principles
  - Stronger: 53%
  - Much Stronger: 20%

- Using Statistical or Math Reasoning
  - Stronger: 50%
  - Much Stronger: 19%

- Appreciating the Arts
  - Stronger: 43%
  - Much Stronger: 17%

- Using Foreign Language
  - Stronger: 27%
  - Much Stronger: 16%

Source: Graduating Senior Survey, 2008-09
Selected Findings from the National Survey of Student Engagement
What is Student Engagement?

- Represents two important aspects of collegiate quality:
  - The amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other meaningful academic activities
  - How the institution deploys resources and organizes its curriculum and other learning opportunities

- Correlates with student learning and retention
# NSSE 2009 Respondent Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Doc-Ext</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Response rate</strong></td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of Students</strong></td>
<td>1,068 1-st Yr. 1,217 Seniors</td>
<td>19,520 1-st Yr. 21,637 Seniors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sampling Error</strong></td>
<td>+/- 2.6%</td>
<td>+/- 0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>+/- 2.4%</td>
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Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice

*Clusters of related activities, institutional actions, attitudes, and perceptions*

- Level of academic challenge
- Active and collaborative learning
- Student–faculty interaction
- Enriching educational experiences
- Supportive campus environment
Level of Academic Challenge

Items on this benchmark include:

- Students’ level of preparation for class (studying, reading, writing, etc.)
- The number of assigned books and written papers or reports of varying length
- The different levels of learning experienced (e.g., analysis–synthesis–application)
Level of Academic Challenge

- Seniors scored significantly lower than their Carnegie peers on the following items:
  - Synthesis and organization of ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships
  - Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings
  - Amount of time preparing for class
  - Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work
Level of Academic Challenge
Comparison with Carnegie Peers

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Class</th>
<th>2005</th>
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<td>First-year Students</td>
<td>⇔</td>
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<td>⇔</td>
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Active and Collaborative Learning

*Items on this benchmark include:*

- Contributions to class discussions
- Class presentations
- Work with other students on projects
- Frequency of discussions about readings outside of class
# Active and Collaborative Learning

## Comparison with Carnegie Peers

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First-year and senior students reported meeting more frequently with faculty to talk about career plans, as well as reporting more prompt feedback from faculty about their academic performance.

Seniors spent more time discussing grades and assignments with faculty than their Carnegie peers.
Student–Faculty Interaction
Comparison with Carnegie Peers

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Items on this benchmark include:

- Participation in co-curricular activities
- Involvement in community service
- Participation in internships and co-ops
- Enrollment in capstone courses
- Study abroad
- Engagement in discussions with diverse students
Comparison of UK Freshmen and Peers On Four Diversity–Related Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UK Freshmen Responding ‘Often’ or ‘Very Often’</th>
<th>Doctoral-Ext. Freshmen Responding ‘Often’ or ‘Very Often’</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How often have you had serious conversations with students different races/ethnicities?</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often have you had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values?</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often have you tried to better understand someone else’s views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective?</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does your institution emphasize encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial/ethnic backgrounds?</td>
<td>55%*</td>
<td>59%*</td>
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*Note: reflects the percent of students who responded ‘quite a bit’ or ‘very much’
Enriching Educational Experiences
Comparison with Carnegie Peers

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Supportive Campus Environment

*Items on this benchmark include:*

- Perceived support to succeed academically
- Perceived support to thrive socially
- Perceived quality of relationships with:
  - Other students
  - Faculty
  - Administrators
In 2009, seniors reported significantly less institutional emphasis than their Carnegie peers on the following dimensions:

- Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically
- Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)
Supportive Campus Environment
Comparison with Carnegie Peers

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For more information . . .

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