PERSISTENCE AND COMPLETION

A regular newsletter brought to you by the HLC Persistence and Completion Academy Teams

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Top stories in this newsletter

Persistence and Completion Academy at WIU

In late 2013, WIU applied and was accepted to the Higher Learning Commission’s Persistence and Completion Academy. The Academy is a structured, mentored, four-year program aimed at evaluating and improving student persistence and completion. WIU has made significant progress. We have developed a communication structure to share information, data and analysis. We have also begun to build a data warehouse which, once completed and tested, will open the door to ongoing analysis of more than just persistence and completion trends. It will also allow for more just-in-time data needs to be met, more data driven decisions to be made and resources appropriately targeted. To read more about the history of this project and its goals, click here.

What Can We Learn from the Data?

Data from Institutional Research and Planning shows that WIU freshmen and transfer students who take up to 25% of their courses online graduate at a significantly higher rate than those who take no online courses. The three-year average graduation rate after four years for freshmen was 11% higher for those who took up to 25% of their coursework online. For transfers, the corresponding graduation rate is 10% higher.

Upcoming Research

The Academy teams have six goals for the academic year. One of them is to begin qualitative research on student satisfaction and “belongingness”. We will use the National Survey of Student Engagement report, faculty and staff expertise on satisfaction and engagement research, and a survey developed in-house of WIU alumni who have taken two or more online courses. We anticipate the results of this research to enhance our understanding of the student experience and provide us with a clearer direction for quantitative research.

Student Retention Tip

High Impact Practices (HiPs) have been shown to increase student persistence, graduation rates, and learning outcomes. Almost any student experience can be high impact with the right combination of elements. One element of a HIP that can be used in a variety of settings is the Public Demonstration of Competence. Example: An oral presentation to classmates that is evaluated by a faculty member, or an oral narrative presented to an adviser or work supervisor about accomplishments in an internship, practicum, field placement or campus work assignment. For further reading on High Impact Practices click here: http://www.aacu.org/resources/high-impact-practices. For more tips, visit our website.

How can I get involved?

Contact the HLC Persistence and Completion Academy Teams

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http://www.wiu.edu/university_planning/hlc/