

Enhancing retention & success

Implementing a systematic program to
monitor and intervene with at-risk students.

Karen Nelson

**Director, First Year Experience
Queensland University of Technology**

Workshop Agenda

20 minutes

- **Overview**
 - Rationale for monitoring engagement
 - Business Case
 - QUT's FYE Student Success Program

65 minutes

- **Workshop activities**
 - Introduction (5 minutes)
 - Identify, policies, practices and partnerships (for one campaign - 30 minutes in groups)
 - Groups report back and discuss (30 minutes)

Overview

The social justice case

- Important that all students who are made an offer encounter “institutional conditions” designed to facilitate learning engagement and success
- Widening participation demands equity of opportunity

The economic case

- Recent Aust retention study estimates total cost of attrition to be ~\$1billion per annum for sector **or** \$20-\$36 million per public university (Adams, Banks, Davis & Dickson, 2010)
- QUT Student Success Project (SSP) demos the business case

Rationale

The more students learn; the more value they find in their learning; the more likely they are to stay and graduate... Least we forget the purpose of higher education is not merely that students are retained, but that they are educated. In the final analysis, student learning drives student retention. [Emphasis added]

Vincent Tinto (2002, 4)

- ENTER scores are more highly correlated with SES status / opportunity than academic potential (Trevor Gale, 2009)
- Equity students show similar attrition and completion patterns as their non-equity peers (QUT data)

Engagement → Learning → Retention

Economic Business Case ...

If only 10% leave after the census date in first year

- Another 10% may have left before census date ¹

This is a loss of 20% potential students annually

Income per student per year ~\$15,000

200 of every 1000 commencing students leave 1/5

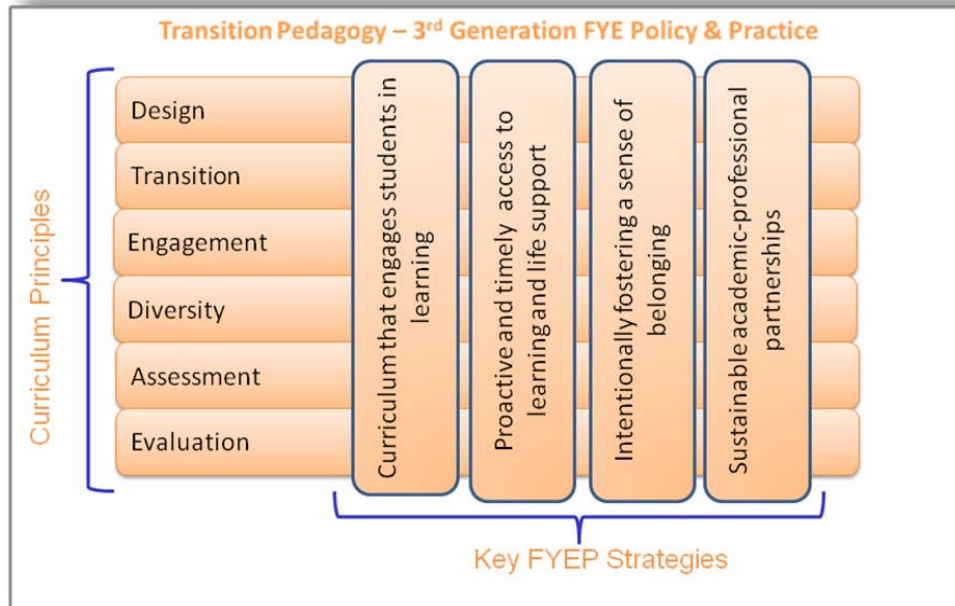
Annual loss of income \$3M/1000 ²

If 10% of the 200 are retained (20/1000 students) =
\$300,000

1 – between 0 week and DEEWR census date (week 3 or 4)

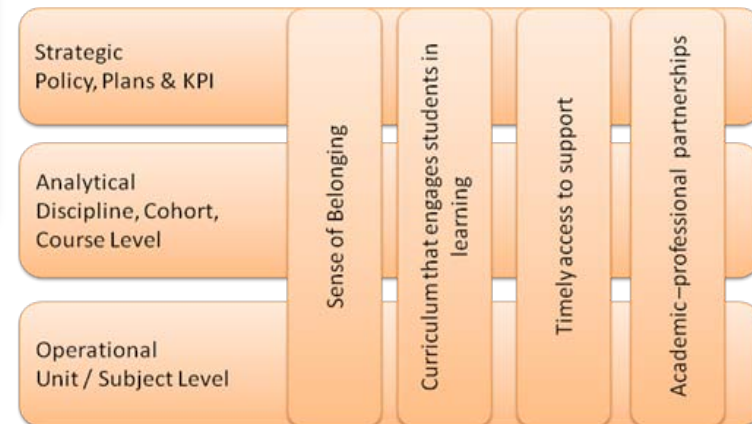
2 - Potential for amount to be far greater given the relationship with SPR

Conceptual Model of QUT's FYEP



Transition Pedagogy
Organised by Curriculum Principles

Enacted at all levels



Student Success Program

- An ‘organisational (infra)structure’ consisting of people, protocols & processes, information, and institution-wide partnerships.
- Four campaigns – throughout each semester
 - Follow up of non or late acceptances of offer (esp. equity cohorts) & / accepted but not enrolled students
 - Welcome calls – by cohort & discipline
 - Learning engagement – via units/courses
 - Unsatisfactory academic performance processes – end semester

Nelson, Duncan & Clarke, 2009 <http://sleid.cqu.edu.au/viewissue.php?id=19>;

Nelson, Duncan, Marrington & Clarke, 2009 <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/28331/>

“At-risk” Indicators – Examples

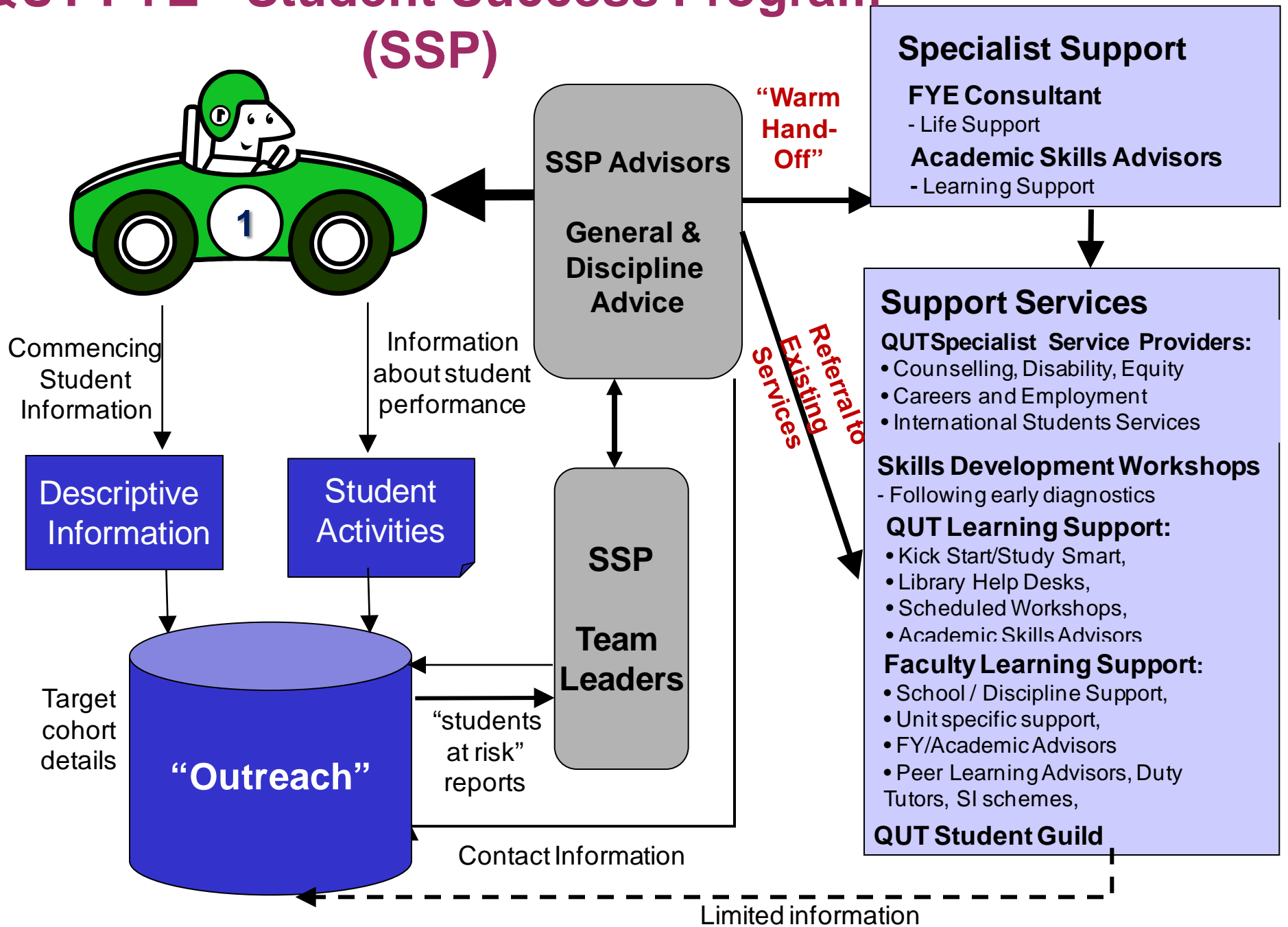
Descriptive

- Member of a known at-risk cohort
- Failure or ‘at-risk’ in previous semester
- Did not attend faculty orientation event
- Low entry score – proxy for disadvantage
- Repeating unit

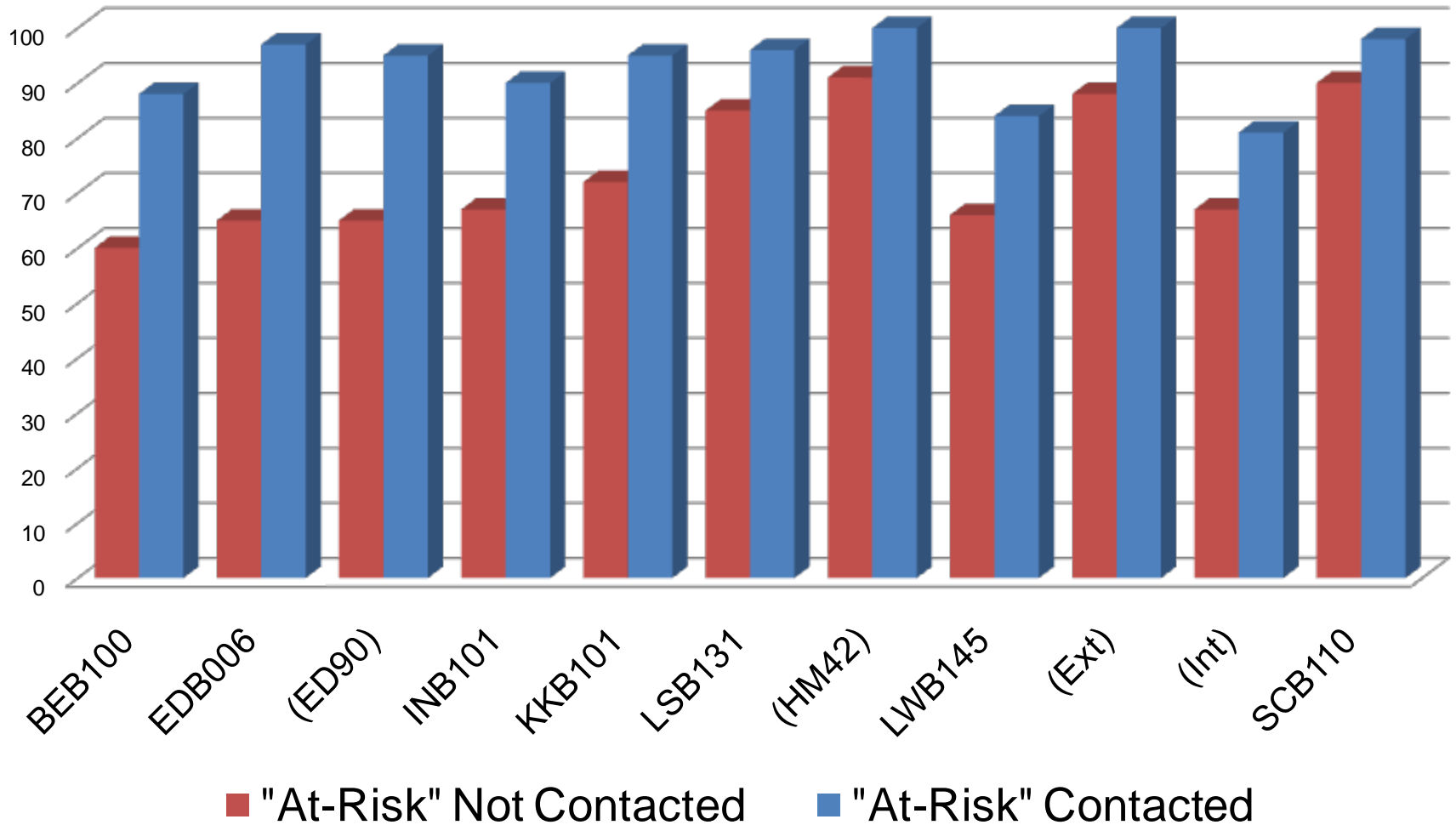
Academic Performance

- Non-participation in course (tutorials)
- Not participating in teamwork activities
- Not submitting / failure of 1st early course assessment
- Non-submission or failure of subsequent assessments
- On-line quizzes & results

QUT FYE - Student Success Program (SSP)



SSP Impact on Persistence S1 2009



SSP Impact 2008-2009

	Total number of students	Number of students who completed the semester	Percentage of students who completed the semester
At-risk contacted Grade = 4	946	843	89.2%
At-risk not contacted* Grade = 3.4	903	601	66.6%
Not at Risk	8223	7292	88.7%
Total	10072	8736	86.7%

*All At-risk students receive an action plan via email – these students were unable to be contacted by phone



Monitoring Student Engagement Workshop - Notes

