Enhancing retention & success

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

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Workshop Agenda

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

- **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
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 \(\sim \$15,000\)

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

“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)

**Outreach**

- **Descriptive Information**
- **Target cohort details**

**Commencing Student Information**

**Student Activities**

- **SSP Team Leaders**
  - "students at risk" reports

**SSP Advisors**

- **General & Discipline Advice**
- "Warm Hand-Off"

**Specialist Support**

- FYE Consultant
  - Life Support
- Academic Skills Advisors
  - Learning Support

**Support Services**

- QUT Specialist Service Providers:
  - Counselling, Disability, Equity
  - Careers and Employment
  - International Students Services

- Skills Development Workshops
  - Following early diagnostics

- **QUT Learning Support**
  - Kick Start/Study Smart,
  - Library Help Desks,
  - Scheduled Workshops,
  - Academic Skills Advisors

- **Faculty Learning Support**
  - School / Discipline Support,
  - Unit specific support,
  - FY/Academic Advisors
  - Peer Learning Advisors, Duty Tutors, SI schemes,

- **QUT Student Guild**

**Contact Information**

- QUT Learning Support:
  - Kick Start/Study Smart,
  - Library Help Desks,
  - Scheduled Workshops,
  - Academic Skills Advisors

- Faculty Learning Support:
  - School / Discipline Support,
  - Unit specific support,
  - FY/Academic Advisors
  - Peer Learning Advisors, Duty Tutors, SI schemes,

- **QUT Student Guild**

**Limited information**
SSP Impact on Persistence S1 2009

"At-Risk" Not Contacted
"At-Risk" Contacted
## SSP Impact 2008-2009

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Total number of students</th>
<th>Number of students who completed the semester</th>
<th>Percentage of students who completed the semester</th>
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<tr>
<td>At-risk contacted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade = 4</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>843</td>
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<tr>
<td>At-risk not contacted*</td>
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<td>Grade = 3.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10072</td>
<td>8736</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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