Building Bridges & Crossig Silos to Inspire Student Success

**Question**
Is there a relationship between the use of personalized library services by at-risk students and academic success?

**Problem**
As a part of Academic Affairs, the Evans Library has worked with other academic divisions in providing library services in the classroom.

This project partners the Evans Library with Student Affairs to provide specialized academic services outside the classroom to students who are on Warning or Probation.

**Literature Review**

**Process and Methods**

**Data**

**Fall 2014**
- Encouraged students to report their contact information
- Librarians met with several students
- Librarians sent introductory letter
- Turnout was less than anticipated

**Fall 2015**
- Encouraged students to report their contact information
- Librarians met with several students
- Librarians sent introductory letter
- Turnout was less than anticipated

**Spring 2015**
- urged students to participate in the project
- Students received personalized letter
- Students were asked to complete a survey
- Over one thousand students participated

**Participation**

We had hoped to see more students than the actual number of 168 students, but not enough participation that would allow for a valid analysis of contact or relation.

**Retention**

Low participation in the project made any real data analysis difficult. The graphs depict those students who did not contact their personal librarian, number of contacts, and end of semester status.

**Student Feedback**

Once the final week of classes was over, students did not participate what they thought of the program.

**Problems with Gathering Data**

This data is not easily collected from the system, except for those courses for which the students received a failing grade, since in those courses the students had withdrawn.

**Perseverance/Class Attendance**

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**Claims & Contributions**

Research shows that engagement with campus personnel is a factor of student success. Our claim was that those at-risk/transitional students who took advantage of such a service were more likely to successfully complete classes, the semester, and reduce rates of warning or probation.

At the completion of the Spring semester, the number of students participating in the new service was statistically insignificant.

For fall 2015, only 37% of students were retained, while 27% in fall 2014, only 2% were retained.

Therefore, our claim (i.e. interest in having a direct impact on student learning is impossible to substantiate through this study. However, what data we do have (i.e. conversations with the few students that did take advantage of the services) provided us with food for though as to future actions and how to reach at risk students and ultimately all students as needed.

**Conclusions & Recommendations**

In spite of the disappointing participation, we continue to believe there is merit in a project of this type. This belief is based not only on the research found through literature reviews, but due to the conversations and feedback we have had from students with whom we have established connections. We know there’s additional to reaching students in the classroom via the library’s instruction and information literacy program, connecting with them on a more personal level is another avenue leading to student success.

Our core library values are to “Empower Learning & Offer User-Centered Service” – this project is the essence of these concepts, as evidenced in only five of the comments we did receive upon completion of the project.

We heard comments to the effect of not being able to reach them, or that they did not receive anything.”

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**Students who felt a sense of belonging**

“Nice having someone to talk to about my work load and advice on which task to tackle first and to have that external support and push to get it done.”

Therefore, for the fall 2015, we will:

- Work closely with retention office/advisor to develop strategies to more effectively communicate the project and its benefits to students.
- Assign personal librarians to at-risk students.
- Work with faculty to encourage student use of personalized service.
- Provide librarian mentors for new transitional learning community project in fall 2015.
- Work with W & campus Assessment Coordinator to improve internal data collectors as well as access to campus data sets.
- Assign all incoming freshmen a personal librarian.