



HLC Accreditation Evidence

Title: Activities to Improve Student Retention, Persistence, and Completion of Programs

Office of Origin: Vice President of Instruction/Vice President of Student Services

Barton Activities to Improve Student Retention, Persistence, and Completion of Programs

A. Communication Project

Three years ago, based on information received from other schools and conferences, a student services team developed a strategy to improve the engagement between Advisors and Advisees with a series of emails throughout the semester. The topics are situational. For example, a 'Welcome' communications before semester start, a 'Checking in' email a third into the semester to see how students are doing, other motivational or informational messages, etc.

The pilot is voluntary for Advisors. As the data indicates for the most recent academic year, fall to spring retention is greater for advisees in the Plan. For the last three years, the retention rate for students in the Communication Plan has consistently been higher than those. As a result, the team will expand the pilot in the 2017-2018 Academic Year and increase the number of participating Advisors.

	Degree Seeking	Returned	Fall to Spring Retention Rate
Fall 2016	2539	1531	60.30%
Not in Plan	1303	712	54.64%
In Plan	1237	819	66.21%

	Degree Seeking, New Transfer	Returned	Fall to Spring Retention Rate
Fall 2016	1005	612	60.90%
Not in Plan	481	262	54.47%
In Plan	524	350	66.79%

B. Early Alerting and Grade Reporting

Student services selected Barton athletes as the cohort for Phase I of the Early Alert Pilot. The focus of this project is to transition the Barton Early Alert process from instructor initiated to data driven. Canvas, the Barton LMS, now identifies students who appear to be falling behind. At the beginning of this pilot, the Early Alert reports were generated twice a semester. Based on data and anecdotes from both students and Advisors, the reports are distributed on a bi-weekly schedule.

Based on improvements in academic performance, the Athletic Department added an 'Athletic Mentor' to provide timely support services. Additionally, based on the success of the Athletic Pilot, the College expanded the pilot to include Barton TRIO students and several Barton Advisors.

C. Application Portal.

Recognizing the existing Application and Enrollment processes/systems may be contributing to questionable class choices by new degree-seeking students, Barton is implementing a new Application Portal. This activity builds on the experiences from the Communication Plan project. The new portal is layered on the Salesforce CRM and provides powerful communication work flows to help guide students through the application – enrollment process. The pilot cohort includes all new degree-seeking students who choose to enroll with the Barton Admissions Portal. Eventually, based on the project plan the majority of students will use the Portal.

D. Degree Works

Noting a need for improved advising tools for academic advisors and self-service options for students, Barton implemented the [Degree Works Degree Audit System](#) during the 2013-2014 academic year. Program requirements and graduation requirements are scribed into the Degree Works software which pulls information nightly from the Banner Student Information System. Thus, students and advisors have 24/7 access to real time program status, outstanding requirements, etc. With its business rules based system, Degree Works has enabled Barton to standardize the Degree Audit process. The standardization has measurably reduced the time for Degree Audits. In addition to assisting with current students, Barton has worked to learn the Degree Works reporting capabilities which will assist in identifying students very close to program completion but who may have stopped out/not returned to Barton to complete their final program requirements. This project will become a new retention initiative for Barton.

E. BARTonline (BOL) Audit Project

Issue: online enrollment decline.

BOL enrollment has been on the decline since Fall 2016 and unfortunately, a turnaround has not occurred this year. The College has more competition than ever in the history of Barton's online offerings and as such, it is important to take a closer look at BOL operations. The focus is on a quality learning experience and a support system that attracts and retains students to their educational opportunities.

In response, a BOL audit has been initiated and a cross-functional team is working to review three operational categories: scheduling/programming, student services,

and promotion/marketing. The team's priority is to identify opportunities to restore and grow enrollment, while ensuring effective processes to support students. The audit is a not a short-term project and involves a myriad of data points, decisions, and organizational enhancements. It is expected that the Audit Project outcomes will evolve into an institutional function and serve as a permanent team.

Outcomes-to-Date:

- Plans for accelerated offerings to match student interest and enhancement of opportunities for reduction in time needed for certificate or degree completion
- Shift in processing online faculty payments to supervisors
- Plans for expanded online academic calendar
- Shift in scheduling processes – coordination between online staff and supervisors
- Enhanced student services for online students including shift in service location as well as alignment of services with ground students
- Adjustment of payment procedures to align with ground student

F. Future Plans

The Executive Leadership Team, as well as subcommittees from Student Services and Instruction, are researching strategies to improve student engagement. Many of the planning sessions focus on the intersection between Guided Pathways and Academic Coaching. Planning strategies include identifying best practices, consulting representatives from institutions with recognized programs, and contacting service providers such as InsideTrack to formulate a long-range plan. The College will submit the resulting plan for external funding.