

STUDENT SUCCESS BEST PRACTICE: BLUE RIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



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STUDENT SUCCESS CATEGORY --

- ACADEMIC PROGRAM
- STUDENT SERVICES
- WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
- COLLEGE BUSINESS PRACTICE
- TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION
- OTHER: FINANCIAL AID

TITLE: "SAP STUDENT SUCCESS PROJECT"

PROCESS

BRCC looked at the number of students who were on Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) suspension after the spring semester 2015 and found that on average 300 students were in jeopardy of losing their financial aid eligibility and therefore would likely not be able to afford to continue taking classes at BRCC.

This was an initiative started in summer 2015 as a pilot based on the College's Success Team's participation in their second CCSSE High-Impact Practices Institute in March 2015. This team consisted of the Dean of Student Services, a sociology faculty member, the IER Director, the VP of Instruction and Student Services, and the President of BRCC.

STRATEGY & IMPLEMENTATION

The initiative's objective is to improve retention of students on Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) suspension. The BRCC policy on SAP is stated below. The College wanted to employ intrusive interventions for students identified on SAP Suspension as BRCC was losing many of those students who didn't have a "Plan B" to pay for their courses out of pocket. This effort is focused on students on SAP Suspension as indicated in the policy. When a student is classified as SAP Suspension, the student is asked to attend a Student Success Workshop, which is a 2 hour workshop, taught by a Career Coach, covering the following topics - Developing a College Plan, Identifying Goals and Priorities, Understanding Your Learning Style, Managing Your Time, Defining Your Support Network, Knowing and Using Campus Resources, Getting Engaged, Utilizing Academic Advisors, Anticipating Obstacles and Practicing Good Money Management. Each session incorporates interactive learning activities to encourage, support, and reinforce the development of habits resulting in student success. Once the student completes the Student Success Workshop, the student then schedules an appointment with an Academic Success Advisor. During the appointment with the Success Advisor, the student and advisor work together to develop a plan for improvement through the creation of a learning contract. The student attaches his/her learning contract to the SAP appeal form which is reviewed by the Financial Aid team and either approved or denied. Students who

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complete the Student Success Workshop and learning contract are more likely to have their financial aid reinstated for the next semester which improves BRCC retention rates as most students are not able to pay out of pocket for courses. We have used Student Success Advisors, Career Coaches, and other advising personnel to support this initiative. Most of the work on this initiative is done during the summer months, as the summer months allow more time for intrusive interventions.

ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

Data provided in attached PowerPoint presentation, as well as, project summary document.

PLAN FOR SCALE & SUSTAINABILITY

BRCC is currently trying to touch all BRCC students on SAP suspension. We can do this during the summer because we have enough time to have the students attend a workshop, but during the fall to spring break, there is not enough time for the workshops. We are planning on completing an on-line version of the workshop by the end of the fall 2016 semester, so that students will be able to do this during the break and come back ready to meet with success advisors and hopefully regain their financial aid eligibility. We believe we can sustain our current program. We would like to expand it to SAP warning students, but will work on that at a later date if resources are available.

COLLEGE DESCRIPTION

Blue Ridge Community College serves the counties of Augusta, Rockingham and Highland, and the cities of Harrisonburg, Waynesboro and Staunton, which includes about 250,000 residents. The unemployment rate is 4.2%.

Current headcount per semester is about 4150. Current FTE per semester is about 2350.

(From the VEDP Community Profile on the Shenandoah Valley) The Shenandoah Valley is located in the heart of the historic and scenic Shenandoah Valley of west-central Virginia. A high-quality educational system; inexpensive cost of living and doing business; friendly, quiet communities and a scenic and unspoiled environment are just a few of the qualities that make the Shenandoah Valley an ideal place to visit, live or do business. The Shenandoah Valley offers an environment friendly to families and industry. The Shenandoah Valley has long been recognized for a dedicated labor force with a strong work ethic and lifelong commitment to learning. About 16% of employment is in manufacturing, and 11% in healthcare.

The BRCC service area is home to five colleges and universities (in addition to BRCC) that strengthen the workforce and enrich the cultural vitality of the Valley region. High academic standards, new technologies and the application of classroom learning to real world situations prepare Valley graduates to enter the job market as educated and skilled professionals.

Interstates 81 and 64 traverse the region, providing an excellent transportation infrastructure and connection to markets North or South and East or West.

National, state and local parks offer unlimited recreational opportunities for hiking, biking, fishing, canoeing and camping. The Skyline Drive, Shenandoah National Park and Blue Ridge Parkway draw visitors from around the world to view the scenic vistas of the Shenandoah Valley. A four-season climate means year-round outdoor recreational activities from skiing at Massanutten resort to golfing at one of the many championship golf courses in the area to hiking the Appalachian Trail.

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