**RESULTS**

Development of Academic Services Center Infrastructure

Establishment of a centralized, library-located, Academic Services Center, comprised of the Advising Center, a new Writing Center, new Mathematics Achievement Center and General Tutoring Services, with bi-weekly meetings.

Establishment of a Student Advisory Council to the Academic Services Center, with weekly meetings.

Collaborations among offices in Advising, Tutoring, Career Services, Residence Halls and other Support Services units in an expanding, Student Success Center Network

**Data Collection/Data Analysis**

Quantitative Data Analysis

Automated data extract from Admissions applications for a logistic regression model to identify characteristics of students at risk of withdrawal in first and second years

Calculating, and tracking retention statistics for minorities, low-income and first-generation college students, in comparison to the rest of Eastern’s students.

Monitoring support service usage statistics for each of the units at the Academic Services Center, with comparison to measures of academic performance

Qualitative Data Analysis

Conducting focus groups with students from the various targeted cohorts, full-time and part-time faculty involved in professional development, professional advising staff, students tutors and peer mentors.

Analysis to determine satisfaction with services and ways to improve the services.

Analyzing pre-intervention survey data of incoming first-year students assigned to professional advisors to help identify potential for academic risk

Surveying students receiving professional advising for satisfaction and evaluation of their first-year advisors

Surveying faculty for their input on advising and supplemental instruction

**Logistic Regression Model**

**Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Sig</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West of CT River</td>
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<tr>
<td>State MA</td>
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<tr>
<td>State NY</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commute</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission</td>
<td>0.449</td>
<td>0.091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed GE</td>
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<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need at 1K to 6K</td>
<td>0.640</td>
<td>0.076</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Logistic Regression Model - Second to Third Year Persistence - 2008 Cohort**

**Variables**

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<tr>
<td>ERG A, B, C</td>
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<td>0.070</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

- Students who leave Eastern and enroll in another institution account for at least 1/3 up and 1/2 of all non-retained students, often come from west of the CT river (farther from Eastern), and leave to pursue academic programs not found at Eastern.

- Non-retained non-transfers are lower GPA students and are more likely to be Project Compass cohort students, primarily Latino. Less than 1/3 of the Connecticut River (closer to Eastern) and come from slightly lower Education Reference Groups.

- There are no significant differences in the average Math or Verbal SAT scores across non-transferred and non- transferred. The average Admissions Ratings is slightly higher for the non-transfers.

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**METHODS**

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Collaborations among offices in Advising, Tutoring, Career Services, Residence Halls and other Support Services units in an expanding, Student Success Center Network

**Data Collection/Data Analysis - Quantitative Data Analysis - First Year Retention Model**

**Logistic Regression Model**

**Variables**

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**Qualitative Data Analysis**

Qualitative data analysis from faculty, staff and student focus groups has provided greater understanding of why students leave Eastern suggesting that greater focus is needed on family issues, financial and other counseling, and especially in engaging students in university activities early on through student clubs, employment, peer advising and tutoring.

**GOALS OF EASTERN’S PROJECT COMPASS INITIATIVE**

- To develop a data-driven, campus-wide Community of Practice focused on early identification of at-risk student cohorts.

- To centralize and target improved advising and tutoring services to reduce existing academic achievement gaps, while developing an increased understanding of student characteristics associated with higher risk of withdrawal from the university.

- To engage faculty, staff and students, in a culture shift on how to best utilize assets of targeted student cohorts, and understanding of their characteristics, to improve their probability of retention and progress to graduation.

**INTRODUCTION**

At the core of its mission, Eastern Connecticut State University strives for educational access. Its 2008-2013 Strategic Plan outlines multiple pathways for improving student retention and progress to graduation, within a framework of inclusive excellence.

In 2007, as Eastern’s Strategic Planning process developed, a New England region educational initiative, Project Compass, emerged, funded by the Nellie Mae Foundation in Boston, MA. Eastern became one of four partnerships (Bridgewater State Univ., MA, Lyndon State College, VT and Univ. of Maine-Presque Isle) to receive grant funding over a five-year period for the purpose of reducing the academic achievement gap for minority, low-income and first-generation college students, which represent more than 50% of Eastern’s student body.

**DEVELOPMENT OF PROJECT COMPASS**

Eastern Connecticut State University, in collaboration with the overseeing New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE), composed of faculty, staff and students from Student Affairs, Academic Affairs and Information Technology Services, organized into working groups, led by the Dean of Arts and Sciences, and coached by the overarching New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE)

**METHODS**

- Focusing on identifying students’ assets and developing a repertoire of teaching and advising strategies based on these assets. Making the future hybrid online course for faculty more specific to utilizing students’ assets and culturally relevant pedagogy.

- Focusing on differences among groups of minority students in order to tailor interventions and resources to better meet their specific needs.

**PROJECT COMPASS**

Developed, a New England region educational initiative, in 2007, as Eastern’s Strategic Planning process.

At the core of its mission, Eastern Connecticut State University – one of four partnerships (Bridgewater State Univ., MA, Lyndon State College, VT and Univ. of Maine-Presque Isle) to receive grant funding over a five-year period for the purpose of reducing the academic achievement gap for minority, low-income and first-generation college students, which represent more than 50% of Eastern’s student body.

**RESULTS**

**Community of Practice Process**

Rapid change from a traditional-departmental-silo approach for student support services to a systems-management approach, with shared responsibility and accountability for understanding and improving student retention and progress to graduation.

**Development of innovative partnership among staff from Information Technology Services, Residence Halls, Career Services, the Academic Services Center, and members of Data Analysis working groups— facilitating automated data transfer and electronic report development.

**Data Collection/Data Analysis - Quantitative Data Analysis - First Year Retention Model**

**Logistic Regression Model**

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Qualitative data analysis from faculty, staff and student focus groups has provided greater understanding of why students leave Eastern suggesting that greater focus is needed on family issues, financial and other counseling, and especially in engaging students in university activities early on through student clubs, employment, peer advising and tutoring.

Student satisfaction with advising and the services at the centralized Academic Services Center has increased substantially over previous years, and are consistent for all groups interviewed.

**Academic Services Center Infrastructure – Physical and Faculty/Staff/Student Resources**

Centralized and expanded academic support services now engage students and faculty and capitalize on their strengths, aided by IT-provided assessment tools – Centralized, targeted tutoring, has led to highest usage ever of these services, and continue increasing.

The Academic Services Center has greatly expanded the opportunities for experiential learning for Eastern’s students and students have greater understanding of why students leave Eastern suggesting that greater focus is needed on family issues, financial and other counseling, and especially in engaging students in university activities early on through student clubs, employment, peer advising and tutoring.

**METHODS**

- Monitoring support service usage statistics for each of the units at the Academic Services Center, with comparison to measures of academic performance.

- Analyzing pre-intervention survey data of incoming first-year students assigned to professional advisors to help identify potential for academic risk.

- Surveying students receiving professional advising for satisfaction and evaluation of their first-year advisors.

- Surveying faculty for their input on advising and supplemental instruction.

- Comparing NSSSE survey with Eastern results on advising.

- Surveying ENG 100 students for tutor satisfaction and identifying factors affecting their use of the Writing Center.

- Establishing a Student Advisory Council to the Academic Services Center, with weekly meetings.

- Collaborations among offices in Advising, Tutoring, Career Services, Residence Halls and other Support Services units in an expanding, Student Success Center Network.

- Conducting focus groups with students from the various targeted cohorts, full-time and part-time faculty involved in professional development, professional advising staff, students tutors and peer mentors.

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- Collaboration of innovative partnership among staff from Information Technology Services, Residence Halls, Career Services, the Academic Services Center, and members of Data Analysis working groups— facilitating automated data transfer and electronic report development.

**TO PURSUE FURTHER**

**FURTHER RESEARCH**

- Research on second to third year persistent patterns and logistic regression models and projections toward graduation.

- Creation of models to predict academic success.