

High Impact Practices

To Improve Retention & Degree Completion

Custom Research Brief
Future High Impact Practices Subcommittee
California State University, Fresno
January 2016

January 2016

Lead Author:

Kizzy Lopez, M.S., Coordinator, Renaissance Scholars Program (Student Affairs and Enrollment Management)

Leadership:

Frank Lamas, Ph.D., Vice President, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management

Lynette Zelezny, Ph.D., M.B.A., Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs

Dennis Nef, Ph.D., Vice Provost, Academic Affairs

Contributing Authors:

Gil Harootunian, Ph.D., Director, University Initiatives (Academic Affairs)

Chuck Radke, M.F.A., Dissertation/Thesis Consultant (Division of Graduate Studies)

Mai Kou Vang, M.S., Coordinator, Learning Center (Student Affairs and Enrollment Management)

Janell Morillo, Ed.D., Executive Director, Student Affairs Administration (Student Affairs and Enrollment Management)

Michelle DenBeste, Ph.D., Interim Dean, College of Social Sciences (Academic Affairs)

Micheala Bojorquez-Ford, M.A., Director, Office of Student Professional Development (Craig School of Business)

Jacques Benninga, Ph.D., Chair, Department of Curriculum and Instruction (Kremen School of Education and Human Development)

Jessica Medina, M.A. Ed., Coordinator, Food Security Project (Student Affairs and Enrollment Management)

Chris Vieira, Ed.D., Interim Director, Academic Technology, (Academic Affairs)

Mike Pronovost, B.S., Manager, DISCOVERe Hub (Academic Affairs)

Graphic Designers:

Tianna Arredondo, Project Lead, DISCOVERe Hub (Academic Affairs)

Elisa Villanueva, Graphic Designer DISCOVERe Hub (Academic Affairs)

Brief History • The Student Success Task Force (SSTF) was established at Fresno State in 2002. SSTF is comprised of faculty, staff, administrators, and students. This task force was created in response to the Chancellor’s office charge to improve student retention and graduation rates and is responsible for a number of initiatives to ensure the continued improvement of students’ retention and degree completion.

Current Task Force • In 2015, SSTF was broken up into six subcommittees in order to specifically focus on particular aspects related to student success. These subcommittees include these topics:

- Remediation
- Campus Employment
- Class Availability, Capacity, Bottlenecks
- First Year Experience and University One
- Future High Impact Practices (HIPs) for Student Success
- High Advising Ratios & Uneven Student to Advisor Ratios in College

Purpose • The purpose of the research brief is to provide an overview of current high impact practices that contribute to student retention and degree completion.

Guiding Question • The guiding question for the research brief is as follows:

- What are the current high impact practices that contribute to student retention and degree completion?

Methodology

The methods for identifying and locating resources involved accessing the Liberal Education & America's Promise (LEAP) report and the Education Advisory Board (EAB), and Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) online cataloging systems, Fresno State's Henry Madden Library, the lead author's professional library, and Google Scholar search were also used. The university library was used for the large collection resources and the internet was used as a source for the expansive network of resources. The Google Scholar sources were written by professionals and published refereed publications and or and professional higher education organizational sites.

A variety of key work descriptors were used with online searches. The descriptive search terms included high impact practices in higher education, best practices in higher education, student success practices for retention and graduation, high impact practices for student success, high impact practices for retention and college completion, and high impact practices for college retention and graduation.

The initial sources were selected by reviewing literature abstracts and determining reliability of sources was based on the following criteria: (a) quality of content, (b) relevance of content, and (c) publication date of literature. A majority of the sources included in the literature review are within the past five years. A few sources older than five years were included if seminal.

Overview of Brief

This report covers several aspects of HIPs in higher education. First, the report provides an overview of HIPs that contribute to students' deep learning and retention. Second, information is provided regarding HIPs specific to four-year, public universities that contribute to retention and degree completion. The third portion of the report identifies HIPs and their contribution to the deep learning and retention of at-risk and underserved students. This section also identifies barriers as to why under served students do not participate at the same rate as traditional students. The fourth portion of the report provides a comparison of HIPs and Fresno State initiatives to HIPs. The last section offers recommendations for implementing campus-wide HIPs and steps to evaluate HIPs' effectiveness.

LEAP's Report

In LEAP's 2008 report, *High Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter*, 10 high impact practices (HIPs) are identified. This report focuses on HIPs that contribute to students' deep learning and persistence. George Kuh's findings suggest that students who engage in deep learning are more likely to earn higher grades, be engaged with faculty and on campus, and be retained. Below is a table with the HIPs that contribute to student persistence.

Leap's High Impact Practices

First-Year Seminars

First-year seminars pull together a small group of first year students with faculty and staff on a regular basis to engage in activities that develop intellectual and practical competencies and skills.

Common Intellectual Experiences

Common intellectual experiences are a required set of courses that have advanced integrated studies that usually require participation in a learning community.

Diversity/Global Learning

Diversity/global learning is courses and programs that focus on students' exploration of racial, gender, equity, human rights, and world views different than their own.

Writing-Intensive Courses

Writing-Intensive courses are classes that emphasize writing at all levels of curriculum and provide students opportunities to produce and revise work for various audiences to impact effectiveness in quantitative reasoning, oral communication, and information literacy.

Service Learning, Community-Based Learning

Service learning, community-based learning is experiential learning with a community partner (usually coupled with a course) that provides students with direct, hands-on opportunities to apply what they are learning to real-world experience with a focus on giving back to the community and enhancing students citizenship.

Collaborative Assignments and Projects

Collaborative assignments and projects are opportunities for students to participate and work together in activities from studying, writing, projects, or research to provide students with experiences to effectively listen and with others to solve problems in a group context.

Learning Communities

Learning communities are small group of students take two or more courses together with specific faculty who deliberately link curriculum and a common topic allowing students to explore a topic from an interdisciplinary lens.

Undergraduate Research

Undergraduate research is an opportunity for undergraduate students to participate in research opportunities with faculty to actively engage in challenging inquiry, empirical observation, and modern technology

Internships

Internships are experiential learning in a work related setting providing students with coaching and mentoring by a supervisor. At the end of the experience students usually produce a final project reflecting on their learning and experiences.

Leap's High Impact Practices (cont.)

Capstone Courses and Projects

Capstone courses and projects are completed during students' last year that integrates a culmination of what students have learned and application into a final project "of their best work" which can be research project, a performance, art work, or portfolio.

Noel Levitz Reports

Noel Levitz provides bi-annual reports titled Student Retention and College Completion Benchmark Reports. These reports identify current high impact practices that have a positive effect on students' college retention and degree completion across institution type. Below are the HIP from Noel Levitz reports for years 2011, 2013, and 2015 specifically for four-year, public universities.

Noel Levitz Top 10 Most Effective Strategies and Tactics for Student Retention and College Completion for Four-year, Public Institutions

2015	2013	2011
Honors programs for academically advanced students	Honors programs for academically advanced students	Honors programs for academically advanced students
Academic support (e.g., learning center, math lab, tutoring)	Academic support program or services	Academic support program or services
Programs designed specifically for first-year students (e.g., orientation for first-year students, a first-year experience program)	Programs designed specifically for first-year students	Programs designed specifically for first-year students
Giving students practical work experiences in their intended major (e.g., internships, volunteer work, experiential learning, service learning)	Giving students practical work experiences in their intended major to apply their learning	Giving students practical work experiences in their intended major to apply their learning
Mandatory advising by professional staff, one-on-one	Mandatory advising by professional staff, one-on-one	Mandatory advising, one-on-one and face-to-face, between faculty and students
Advising by professional staff, one-on-one	Programs designed specifically for students who are at risk academically	Programs designed specifically for at-risk students
Supplemental instruction	Providing supplementary instruction	Programs designed specifically for conditionally admitted students
Providing each student with an academic plan/road map of courses	Learning communities	Learning communities

Noel Levitz Top 10 Most Effective Strategies (cont.)

2015	2013	2011
Mandatory first-year experience or orientation course	Tutoring	Using a CRM (customer relationship management system) software application to help track and manage student retention
Training residence hall staff to recognize at-risk students	Programs designed specifically for international students	Title III or Title V funding

Source: Adapted from Noel Levitz reports on Student Retention and College Completion Benchmark Reports (2011, 2013 and 2015)

Discussion of Table Results

There are five HIP that have remained consistent from 2011- 2015: (a) honors programs for academically advanced students, (b) academic support program or services, (c) programs designed specifically for first-year students, (d) practical work experiences in students' intended majors to apply their learning, and (e) mandatory advising by professional staff, one-on-one. The consistent reporting of these high impact practices suggests that these are effective practices to support student retention and degree completion.

HIPs that have been identified in two of the three reports are: (a) programs designed specifically for students who are at risk academically, (b) supplemental instruction, (c) and learning communities. These practices may be effective to support at-risk students.

HIPs for At-Risk and Under-represented Students

• The section below summarizes information from EAB report, *Using Data to Identify At-Risk Students and Develop Retention Strategies*, and LEAP report, *Assessing Underserved Students' Engagement in Higher Education*.

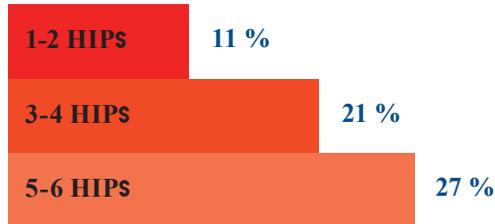
The Educational Advisory Board (EAB) article, *Using Data to Identify At-Risk Students and Develop Retention Strategies*, provides an overview of how to use data to identify at-risk students and interventions to create retention strategies. There are three general categories of at-risk students identified in this study, and these students were identified as having a higher probability of not being retained. These categories of at-risk students include: (a) students who encounter academic challenges, (b) students who do not engage socially in the campus community, and (c) students who encounter financial challenges. In the article, a few suggestions were offered to support at-risk students. These interventions were referring academically at-risk students to academic success centers, pairing freshmen with other freshmen in housing to help increase engagement, and offering merit-based scholarships to help supplement the unmet need of students with high financial need. Several recommendations were identified to use data to create retention strategies. First, establish a small team of administrators who come together as a task force to implement interventions and improve student retention outcomes. Staff would document the interventions and the documentation would be part of tracking the impact on students. The campus could purchase retention software, which could provide standardized codes and definitions for retention across campus and offer a centralized location for data. Institutions in the study that utilized these strategies noticed increases in the retention for at-risk students.

The LEAP report, *Assessing Underserved Students' Engagement in Higher Education*, provides quantitative and qualitative analysis of underrepresented students' participation in HIPs and the impact on their perception of their own learning. The quantitative analysis found that the more HIPs underrepresented students participated in, the higher their perception was with regard to educational gains.

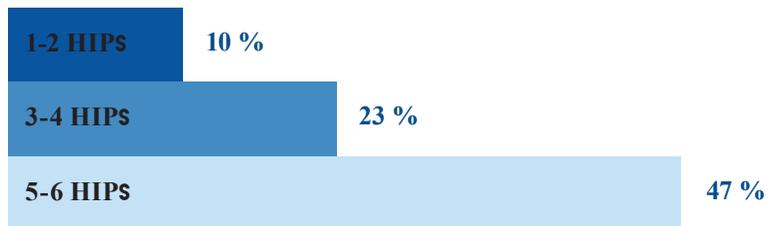
The qualitative portion of the study uncovered some of the barriers keeping underrepresented students' from participating in HIPs. Although there are well-documented benefits to participating in HIPs, many underrepresented students participated at a lesser rate due to competing priorities, lack of time and finances, and lack of social networks. Students indicated that they also lacked an understanding of the value of participating HIP practices (e.g. service-learning, study abroad, or internships). Students reported that some of the HIPs seemed like unnecessary activities especially as they did not directly connect to their academics.

Within-Group Comparisons by Racial or Ethnic Category: Average Boost in Deep Approaches to Learning and Self-Reported Gains in Learning with Multiple High-Impact Practices (HIPs) vs. No Participation

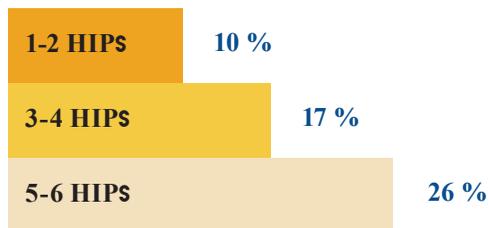
African American



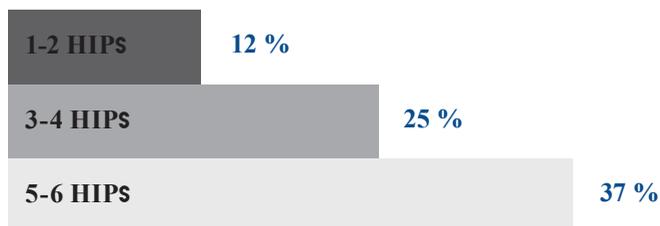
Asian American



Hispanic



White



Levitz HIPS 2015 and Fresno State's HIPS

The chart below provides comparison of Noel Levitz HIP recommendations from 2015 and Fresno State's HIPS with the number of students or impact provided in the right column.

Noel Levitz HIP Recommendations 2015	Fresno State HIP	Number of students served or impact by Fresno State's HIPS
Honors programs for academically advanced students	Smittcamp Honors Program. There are also honors programs in all colleges/schools (except Kremen) as well as departmental honors programs in Criminology, Biology, Chemistry, and Psychology.	Approximately 200 students enrolled (50 per cohort) in Smittcamp. College/School honors programs vary in size.
Academic support (e.g., learning center, math lab, tutoring)	Learning Center	In 2014-15, 5,620 students were provided academic support through the Learning Center.
Programs designed specifically for first-year students	Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) and Student Success Services (SSS)	In 2014-15, EOP served approximately 1,500 students. In 2014-15, SSS served 200 students.
Giving students practical work experiences in their intended major (e.g., internships, volunteer work, experiential learning, service learning)	Internships within colleges and schools, plus Richter Center internships Jan and Bud Richter Center (volunteer/service-learning)	Each college and school has their own internship program, however; there is no centralized location to gather specific numbers on students' participation in these internships. Among 14,910 students, faculty, and staff, the Jan and Bud Richter Center there are 1,324,977 hours of service this past year.

Levitz HIPS 2015 and Fresno State's HIPS (cont.)

Noel Levitz HIP Recommendations 2015	Fresno State HIP	Number of students served or impact by Fresno State's HIPS
Mandatory advising by professional staff, one-on-one	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Mandatory second semester freshmen advising 2) Mandatory first semester transfer advising 3) Mandatory undeclared advising 60 units 	The number served is difficult to track because there is not a centralized location to gather specific numbers on students' participation with these advising services. Work is in-progress to centralize this information and provide valuable future data.
Advising by professional staff, one-on-one	Student Success Services which includes (University Advising Center, Educational Opportunity Program, and Renaissance Scholars Program)	In 2014-15, 9,619 students were seen for one-on-one advising within Student Success Services.
Supplemental instruction (SI)	Supplemental instruction (SI)	In 2014-15, 4,148 students were served through SI.
Providing each student with an academic plan/road map of courses	Mandatory advising with major advisor before completing 75 units Implementing student-friendly U.Direct software: work include designing road maps in six largest majors at Fresno State, including predictive modes based on student course-taking patterns.	http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/degreeroadmap
Mandatory first-year experience or orientation course	Freshmen Year Experience (FYE), University 1	In 2014-15, 150 students were enrolled in FYE.
Training residence hall staff to recognize at-risk students	Recognizing at-risk students in residence hall training	In 2014-15, 85 staff were trained.

AAC&U HIP

Fresno State HIPs

First-Year Seminars

University 1 is a three unit course designed to help students become lifelong learning. Students participate in team building exercises outside of class, learn how to use eportfolios to display their learning, and participate in extracurricular activities they choose

Common Intellectual Experiences

Learning Communities

A number of programs exist including one in the residence halls, one in science and math (150), one for students needing remediation (100), and one for freshmen from rural high schools (50)

Writing-Intensive Courses

Every lower division GE course requires a minimum of 1000 words of writing and an iterative assignment on which faculty provides feedback and to which students must respond. Upper division GE courses require 2000 words of writing. Additionally every student must take and pass an upper division writing course (5000 words) or an exam.

Undergraduate Research

Approximately 100 undergraduate students per year are funded by the provost and many others by their college to work with faculty on research projects

Collaborative Assignments and Projects

Diversity/Global Learning

The university provides support of approximately \$1000 per student for study abroad. Study abroad programs include the Craig School International Business programs (???), Agricultural Business International Summer Study program (20) , and London Semester (20) ,

Service Learning, Community-Based Learning

59 different courses, 204 sections, involving 4700 students.

Internships

Almost all programs have an internship program of some sort. Some are very well developed such as the Craig School where over 200 students per year participate

Capstone Courses and Projects

80% of programs have a culminating experience

Discussion of Equity

Examining HIPs and their implementation on campus is important to Fresno State as a campus that values diversity, has a diverse racial student composition, and serves a majority-minority region. Fresno State has over 24,000 students and the racial composition is diverse, consisting of African-American (3.3%), American Indian (.3%), Asian (14%), Hispanic (45.8%), Pacific Islander (.2%), White (22.4%), Unknown (8.3%), Non-resident Alien (5.7%), and International Students (3.5%). However, diverse student racial enrollment does not guarantee the same level of achievement for retention and graduation rates. There is a disparity in retention and graduation rates among students of color compared to White students. One purpose in examining and implementing HIPs is to close the gaps in retention and graduation rates.

According to Fresno State's Office of Institutional Effectiveness, the average 6-year graduation rate for cohorts 2003 to 2009 is the lowest for African-American/Black students compared to all racial groups at 42.9%. The average graduation rates for other racial groups are Pacific Islanders (45.6%), Asian (52.2%), Hispanic (55.5%), Two or more races (58%), American Indian (58.1%) and White (66.3%).

The average 6-year graduation rate at Fresno State is 58.4%. The students of color are graduating at the same rate or lower than the university's average graduation rate while White student groups average a 66.3%, which is 8% higher than the university average.

The EAB and LEAP reports above discuss barriers under-represented students encounter when trying to engage in HIPs. The lack of participation can have a negative outcome on student learning outcomes and their ability to persist toward degree completion. Addressing this will help Fresno State achieve its "Graduation Initiative 2025" that is making important strides in increasing the graduate rates for all students.

Evaluation Recommendations

- The gap in retention and degree completion presents a valuable opportunity to closely measure the impact these practices have on student outcomes and any address equity disparities within the way HIPs are implemented, delivered, or accessed at Fresno State. The LEAP report, *Assessing Underserved Students' Engagement in Higher Education*, provides six steps to evaluating HIPs for equity.

Six steps for evaluating HIPs for equity:

Step 1: Select a High-Impact Practice for Assessment

Step 2: Gather and Analyze Data

Step 3: Interrogate Policies and Practices

Step 4: Plan Inquiry Activities

Step 5: Identify Culturally Inclusive Practices and Interventions

Step 6: Implement Actions and Set Equity Goals

The complete tool kit for assessing HIPs and creating equitable benchmarks are available on pages 36-47.

Fresno State's Asian-American student population is largely Southeast Asian (Hmong, Cambodian, Laotian, and Vietnamese). OIE prepared a "Hmong Student Profile" (July 2010) documenting the socioeconomic challenges faced by this student population. For example, new undergraduate Hmong students have both the highest first generation rate (97%) and low income family rate (51%).

References

- Beaudion, B., and Kumar, P. (2012). Using data to identify at-risk students and develop retention strategies. Education Advisory Board.
- Finley, A., and McNair, T. (2013). Assessing underserved students' engagement in high education. Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Kuh, G. D. (2008). Excerpt from high-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter. Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Liberal Education & America's Promise (2011). The LEAP vision of learning: Outcomes, practices, impact and employers' views. Retrieved from https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/leap_vision_summary.pdf
- Noel-Levitz (2013). 2013 student retention and college completion practices report for four-year and two year institutions. Coralville, Iowa: Noel-Levitz. Retrieved from www.noellevitz.com/BenchmarkReports.
- Noel-Levitz. (2011). 2011 student retention practices at four-year and two-year institutions. Coralville, Iowa: Noel-Levitz. Retrieved from: www.noellevitz.com/BenchmarkReports.
- Ruffalo Noel Levitz (2015). 2015 student retention and college completion practices report for four-year and two-year institutions. Coralville, Iowa: Ruffalo Noel Levitz. Retrieved from www.noellevitz.com/BenchmarkReports.