

Employ the concept of "choice architecture/nudges" to guide students and faculty into choosing to adopt high impact practices.

CURRENT CHALLENGE:

Student utilization of support programs (e.g., DISCOVERe, Supplemental Instruction, etc.) and retention/graduate rates may not be where we want them to be. Likewise, lack of faculty buy in to some programs can serve as a barrier to effectiveness (e.g., faculty members who refuse to offer supplemental instruction sections for the classes).

PROPOSED SOLUTION:

Fresno State should employ the concept of "choice architecture/nudges" (from economist Richard Thaler) to guide students and faculty into choosing to adopt high impact practices. For example, having students register for multiple semesters at a time or limiting their registration options to those classes which will keep them on track to graduating. Or, in the case of student loans, offering students the choice of a "recommended" amount that is lower than their maximum offer. For faculty, utilizing an "opt out" structure (as opposed to "opt in") for courses that would benefit from a DISCOVERe or Supplemental Instruction component.

BENEFITS TO FRESNO STATE:

Choice architecture is preventative in nature as opposed to being reactive. By helping people make the right choices up front, we limit the number of bad choices we have to resolve on the back end. This saves students time and money, it would result in significant cost savings, it would allow us to more efficiently allocate our resources, and it would mean we have students who are more successful.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The following article from EAB does a nice job of explaining how a university could employ choice architecture: <http://bit.ly/1PYPrUB>

I am not in favor of a "no frills" university as the article suggests. Rather, I think that we could do a better job of guiding all university partners (students, faculty, and staff) to adopt high impact practices that make a positive difference in the lives of our students.