



P116X150010

A Statewide Model to Improve Persistence and Completion Using an Individualized Success Coaching Program



Project Director: Dr. Brian S. Merritt

Co-Director: Sarah Hoffarth

Abstract

Carolina Works will introduce proactive and individualized success coaching to validate the effectiveness of the intervention across 10 North Carolina community colleges. Proactive success coaching has been proven in other contexts to remove academic barriers leading to increases in persistence and completion rates (Bettinger & Baker, 2014).

Background

In 2008, only 26% of first-time community college students attained a degree or certificate within five years (DOE Completion Toolkit, 2011).

40% of community college students leave without a credential within the first two semesters, especially at risk students (DOE Completion ToolKit, 2011).

*"Few colleges have significantly improved overall outcomes." [as a result of college success initiatives]
(Smith, Baldwin, & Schmidt, 2015)*

Research Goals

The Carolina Works project will test whether or not success coaching has a positive and significant impact on community college students' retention and credential completion rates compared to the business as usual condition. Carolina Works will gather evidence through a randomized controlled trial (RCT) meeting the What Works Clearinghouse standard-without reservations.

Methodology

Sample intake will occur across 4 semesters and sample will be comprised of students not enrolled in the prior three terms. 50% of students will be randomly assigned to treatment (assignment of a Success Coach) and 50% of students will be randomly assigned to the business as usual condition.

Success coaches will be informed of their students' progress through a web-based early alert system using predictive analytics. Proactive outreach to students will occur beginning when an alert is generated, then prioritized by risk of attrition.

Participants:

- ~15,000 students from 10 North Carolina community colleges

Key Outcome Measures:

- First to second semester retention (i.e. fall to spring, spring to fall)
- First the third term retention (i.e. fall to fall, spring to spring)
- Credential completion during the study period

Research Findings

Study begins Fall 2016.
Final results will be reported Fall 2019.

Practical Applications

- Success coaching is validated as an effective intervention on retention and credential completion
- Best practice characteristics of success coaching will be identified for adaptation by other colleges statewide and nationally
- A return on investment analysis will prove success coaching is a sustainable practice

References

- Bettinger, E.P., Baker, R. (2014). The Effects of Student Coaching An Evaluation of a Randomized Experiment in Student Advising. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 36(1), 3-19.
- Smith, C.A., Baldwin, C., & Schmidt, G. (2015). Student Success Centers: Leading the Charge for Change at Community Colleges. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, Vol. 47, Iss. 2.
- U.S. Department of Education, *College Completion Tool Kit*, Washington, D.C., (2011).

Contact information

Project Director: Dr. Brian S. Merritt, bmerritt@cccc.edu
Co-Director: Sarah Hoffarth, shoffarth@cccc.edu
Central Carolina Community College
1105 Kelly Drive, Sanford, NC 28326
(919) 718-7486

Evaluator: Derek Price, derek@dvp-praxis.org
DVP-PRAXIS LTD
333 North Alabama Street, Suite 350
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 489-5008