Connecting SAP to Retention

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As presented by Dan Dreves, FATV @ NCASFAA

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School Panel

- Terry Bland, Itawamba Community College
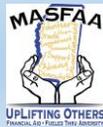- Christie Rocconi, Delta State University
- Isabelle Higbee, Millsaps College

Today's Objectives

- Explore reasons students leave
- Begin to connect SAP to retention
- Discuss the importance of proactive communication
- Examine communications strategies
- Share real school examples

Why Students Leave?

- Financial concerns
- Balancing work, life & academics
- Transportation
- Academic preparedness
- Not feeling a connection with the campus
- Transition difficulties
- Language barriers
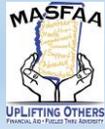
Why do students have difficulty with SAP?

- It's Complicated
- Students Rarely Read The Policy
- Proactive vs. Reactive?
- Others?

"If no aid = not enrolled?"

Photo: Futharkrunes- Greek Piggy Bank- (Flickr)

Importance of Retention

"When students drop out, it is bad for them because they lose huge future career and income potential; bad for the institution they leave because of lost reputation, revenue, and opportunity to make a difference in the students' lives; and bad for society because of the need for an educated work force that is able to compete in the global marketplace."

Read more: "Research to Improve Retention" by Robert J Sternberg, Inside High Ed 2/7/13
http://www.insidehighered.com/views/2013/02/07/essay-use-research-improve-/stud/ent-retention#ixzz2x6N6Eqix

#1 Concern of Dropouts is Financial
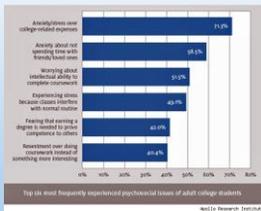
Source: Apollo Research Institute as reported by AOL Jobs
http://jobs.aol.com/articles/2012/08/13/top-6-reasons-older-college-students-drop-out/

Does Threat Of Pell Loss Lead To Improved Academic Progress?

While researchers found the threat of Pell loss could be a motivating factor for students to improve their efforts and thereby academic progress, they noted that because there is often little communication between the financial aid office and academic advisers, "early academic intervention is unlikely." As a result, students are unaware of SAP policies and how they affect Pell eligibility.

Study Ties SAP to Dropouts

- Students are unaware of SAP policies and how they affect Pell eligibility.
- Students who fail to meet SAP requirements are more likely to drop out.
- Pre-existing factors that lead to low GPAs likely also lead to low persistence rates.

NASFAA link to the article:
http://www.nasfaa.org/Main/orig/2014/open/Report__Does_Threat_Of_Pell_Loss_Lead_To_Improved _Academic_Progress_.aspx

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Performance – Based Funding for Higher Ed

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/performance-funding/utm_content/bufferd6d0f/utm_medium/social/utm_campaign/buffer.aspx?utm_source=twitter.com
Read more: "Half Of States Incentivize Colleges To Graduate More Students" by Reid Wilson, Washington Post, 3/17/14, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/govbeat/wp/2014/03/17/half-of-states-incentivize-colleges-to-graduate-more-students/

Top Program Review Findings

1. Crime Awareness Requirements Not Met
2. Verification Violations
3. Return to Title IV (R2T4) Calculation Errors
4. Student Credit Balance Deficiencies
5. Drug Abuse Prevention Program Requirement Not Met
6. NSLDS Roster Reporting- Inaccurate/Untimely Reporting

Top Program Review Findings

7. Verification Violations
8. Consumer Information Requirements Not Met
9. Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy Not Adequately Developed/Monitored
10. Inaccurate Recordkeeping
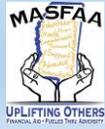
What's SAP?

What the ED Says about SAP

668.34 (a) Satisfactory Academic Progress policy

"An institution must establish a reasonable satisfactory academic progress policy for determining whether an otherwise eligible student is making satisfactory academic progress in his or her educational program and may receive assistance under the title IV, HEA programs."

How Can We Approach Students with Regard to SAP?
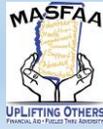
Financial Aid Warning

Ideas to Consider

- Highlight campus resources to put them back on track

- Check in part way through enrollment period

- Communicate what happens next if they fail

Financial Aid Probation

Ideas to Consider

- Help students know what a successful appeal looks like

- Again, highlight campus resources to put them get back on track

- Discuss the "costs" for failing (i.e., future earnings, more time)

Communications

Proactive Communications

- Deliver SAP content in Student Orientation
- Partner with Academic Advising & Registrar's Office to disseminate info
- Make an in-person SAP Counseling session available as an option to all students
- Offer online, video based SAP counseling

Proactive Communications

- During the first 2 weeks of the enrollment period, remind students of the student success services on campus.
- Monitor if these students drop classes and re-direct them to academic counseling. Intervention is key.
- Email students prior to Mid-Terms on the SAP policy.

Examples

Dear Student,

If you are currently receiving Federal, State or Institutional Financial Aid it is important to understand the Unity College Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy (Also known as "SAP"). SAP measures both the quantity of credits that you complete, and the quality of these completed credits.

Quantity Standards:
All students must complete 67% of their attempted credits (cumulatively, not semesterly) in order to remain in good SAP standing. You can find the cumulative percentage of credits you complete by dividing the number of credits you have received by how many credits you attempted. These numbers can be found on your transcript, which is available to you on the CAMS portal. **Example:** You have attempted 45 credits but have only received credit for 27. To find your completion rate divide 27 by 45. This gives you 0.60 or a completing rate of 60%. This means you are not meeting the SAP requirement of completing 67% of the credits you attempt.

Qualitative Standards:
Quality of credits completed is measured using your cumulative GPA. The standard is based on the number of credits you hold, including those that you may have transferred in from another school. Using the chart below, and you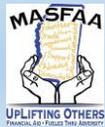r transcript, which is available to you on the CAMS portal, you can determine what your GPA must be to meet SAP standards. **Example:** You have earned 30 credits (which falls in the 24-47 credit range). Your cumulative GPA is 1.65. Even if your fall semester GPA is 2.0, you are not meeting the SAP standards.

Credits earned (including transfer credits)	Minimum Cumulative grade point average required (CGPA)
transferred)	1.70
1-23	1.80
24-47	2.0
48 & above	

What happens if I don't meet the SAP Standards? :
After your first semester of not meeting the SAP Standards you will generally be put on WARNING!. This provides you with a semester to catch up with either the quality or quantity standards. Our office, along with the registrar's office are happy to meet with you to discuss what steps need to be taken to meet the standards. If you fail to meet the standards after your semester of WARNING!, you will be placed on Satisfactory Academic Progress Denial. This means you will have two options. You can appeal the decision, coming up with a plan on how you will get back on track. This may require a visit with the registrar for a formal plan. OR you may choose to pay out of pocket for your expenses until you have met the standards.

Subject: **Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy**   1/19/17, 4:28 PM
by Me @

Dear Student,

If you are currently receiving Federal, State or Institutional Financial Aid it is important to understand the Centennial University Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy (Also known as "SAP"). SAP measures both the quantity of credits that you complete, and the quality of these completed credits.

Federal Satisfactory Academic Progress is run at the end of each term shortly after final grades are due typically in January, June and August.   Once the review is complete and your status is calculated, notifications are emailed.

Here is a video which reviews Satisfactory Academic Progress:

1. **Qualitative (GPA)**- Students must maintain at least a 2.0 cumulative grade point average to remain in good academic standing.
2. **Quantitative (Credit Hours Earned)**- All students must complete 67% of credits attempted to maintain good standing and be considered making Satisfactory Academic Progress.
3. **Maximum Time Frame**- Maximum Time frame is defined as the required length of time it will take a student to complete his/her degree. A student will remain eligible for federal aid up to 150% total attempted credits.

If you have any questions, please let our office know.

Jane Doe
Director of Financial Aid
Centennial University

Communications to At-Risk Students

- Offer one-on-one, in-person meetings to discuss the SAP evaluation and discuss appeal process

- Make online, video based SAP counseling available when notified of SAP status to explain the basics, review the appeal process, and measure their understanding

- Provide a SAP session to all those who failed to meet requirements and want to appeal

- Use notifications through multiple channels — admin system notification, email, and snail mail

Communications to At-Risk Students

- Consider adding a Financial Literacy Component to a SAP Academic Plan.
- Prior to midterms, cheer them on. Summarize student success services that can help them prepare for mid-terms
- Remind them they are on home stretch prior to finals. Inspire them to maintain their academic progress.
- Congratulate students who make it.
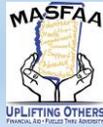
Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Appeal Considerations

Academic Plan

- Include financial and loan education information
- Hold an optional loan education presentation each payment period
- Recommend the FSA Financial Awareness Counseling Tool
- Remind students of available technology resources
  - GPA Calculator & Budgeting Calculator

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Appeal Considerations

Academic Plan (continued)

- Add campus student resources links. These can also be added to warning, suspension and appeal decision emails.
- Offer one-on-one counseling sessions for students on probation at the beginning of the semester to ensure success.
- Identify students indicating financial issues on their SAP Appeal and provide specific financial resources
- Promote student services resources by displaying posters in our office and sending informational emails to targeted populations

Real School Examples

Campus Discussion

- Does your school proactively reach out to students to educate them about SAP?

- Does your school include SAP overview during new student orientation?

- How do you notify students of their progress?

- What is your appeal process?

- To what degree have you connected SAP with Retention?

- Does your school require an in person meeting to prepare for or complete an SAP appeal?

- What have you implemented on your campus that you think might help? or something you have heard another campus has implemented that you think might be a good strategy or best practice?
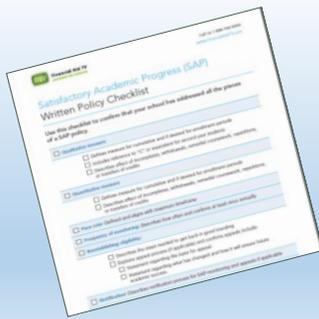

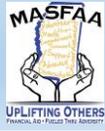### Looking at your SAP Policy?

Check out the SAP policy checklist

THANK YOU!

MASFAA would like to thank our Vendors for their support!

Please be sure to visit with them and let each of them know how much we appreciate their support of MASFAA!

MASFAA
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