

Unconference: Retention/Graduation Efforts
Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Fall Meeting
Wednesday, September 26, 2018
Session Notes

Are the things we are doing making a difference?

University level priority.

Some institutions retention/graduation rates have impact on funding from state.

What is happening:

- Calling every student who had not registered for classes
- Retaking courses for free if they had taken a course and failed
 - Included library instruction as a form of additional support
 - If grade improved, allowed to return in the fall
- Mentoring program for undeclared majors
 - Exploratory studies to find a major by second year
 - Find adjacent or related fields to desired major if can't get in to preferred major
 - Library instruction team reached out to coordinators of exploratory studies, programs are so generic, it can be difficult to tie library instruction in meaningful ways and was just low impact
 - Academic advisor vs major advisor
 - Build community around exploratory group
- Community building/engagement with campus
 - Encourage students in danger of leaving to use library more
 - Communi-tea event
 - Freshmen dance club in the Library the week before classes start and at Halloween. 1500 students attend. Wellness event. Friendly way to introduce people to intimidating space. Swipe attendees.
 - Game night with raffle. Swipe attendees
 - Foundations of Excellence year long study of retention, at high stress times of semester, now have community building events at those times, beginning of semester, midterms, and that lull period is critical for community building before finals. Not a swipe culture.
 - Soft things that might happen, cookies and coffee fairy at high study periods, stress free cart in library, stress free zone during no conflict time and use event space for therapy dogs, popcorn, treats.
- Required information literacy course - one credit. Comes with dollar amount.

- If using library is indicator of retention and graduation, and minority students feel uncomfortable in library, how do you bring them in? How do you retain first generation students?
 - Bring in early to campus and help them get acclimated to services, programs, etc. and hook up with jobs on campus -- get jobs in library!
 - Would like to do study of library student employee and their retention and graduation rates compared to rest of campus. Or compared to other campus student workers and or student athletes
 - Best place to meet lots of people and not wear a hair net
 - Talk to alums, love and the library.
 - Are we looking at any potential bias with data we are collecting? E.g. if African Americans or indigenous people aren't comfortable in the library, are they represented in the data we are collected?
 - What are the other campus indicators for retention?

Drop in enrollees, so must do better with retention

Correlation vs causation impact of Libraries activities on Retention/graduation

Can this help get more funding for Libraries to keep moving the needle

Show impact on retention and if it makes a difference (RCM budget space)

Value of Academic Libraries report. Assessment in action projects report. Demonstrate impact on retention, study out of Wyoming, GWLA, Minnesota.

Data analytics:

- Privacy of students is important consideration.
- Concern about learning analytics and using swipe cards.
- Reference desk tracking of individuals like happens in IT help desk (resistance based on patron privacy)
- Neo liberal university critique of learning analytics - many librarians feel this way and it is balanced with administrators that need info to help support funding request
- What about the online user? Easy Proxy collects lots of data, can get students who are going into library systems, can you then anonymize the user and get retention data? Map user to major?
- Data Fellows program, test case.
- Research and learning analytics and related ethics - future program topic? James Hilton gave a webinar on this recently.

- Our system staff can scrub data, but the FBI can unscrub it.
- Need to understand what is possible
- Are WE more concerned about their privacy? Should we ask them to opt in or opt out?
- Work with IT to help educate students about their online privacy

Local culture. Student testimonials vs data analytics.

Need to consider graduate student retention, does the library have a greater role in this? Politics around this? Priorities?

Takeaways:

Community building and creating engagement with students and campus is critical.

Need to have deeper discussion in regards to use of student data, including ethics, FRPA, privacy. What do we mean and how do we define the terms and for what specific purposes? How do we avoid inherent bias in the data?

Need to consider graduate student retention.

Final Thoughts:

Collaborative event space, find a group and provide space to their community and get the librarian involved.