

The University of Iowa

Higher Learning Commission Annual Meeting, April 2010

# A Grassroots Approach to Promote Student Success



# Agenda

- **What Leads to Student Success?**
- **The UI Student Success Team**
- **Lessons learned**
- **Questions?**

# Current Context for Attention to Student Success

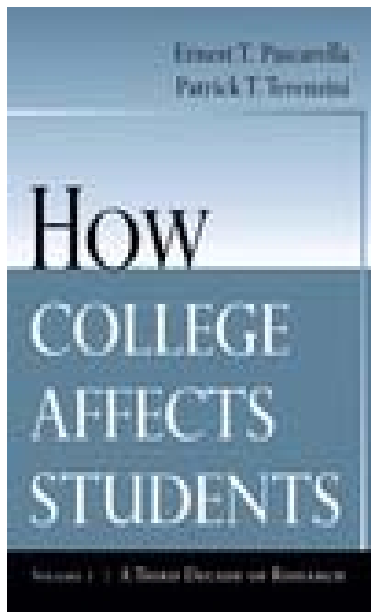
- *The Iowa Promise*, a Strategic Plan for the University of Iowa
- Goal #1: To create a University experience that enriches the lives of undergraduates and helps them to become well-informed individuals, lifelong learners, engaged citizens, and productive employees and employers.
- New retention and graduation goals.

# What Matters for Student Success

## Pre-college Characteristics Associated with Student Success:

- Academic preparation
- Family support (first-generation? parent?)
- Financial wherewithal (family, student resources)
- Part-time/Full-time attendance; employment (30+ hours)

# What Matters Most for Student Success: Student Engagement

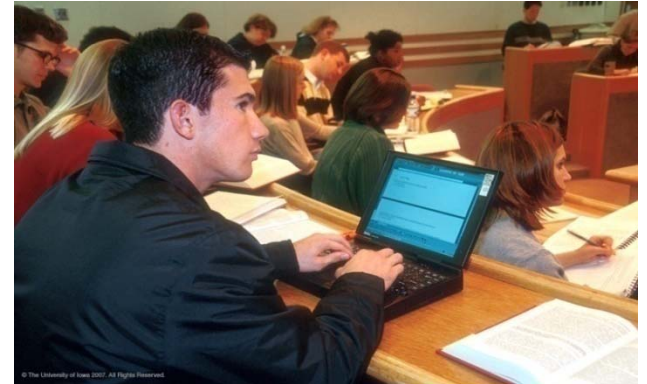


*The greatest impact appears to stem from students' **total level** of campus engagement, particularly when academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular involvements are **mutually reinforcing**...*

Pascarella & Terenzini, *How College Affects Students*, 2005, p. 647

# What Matters Most for Student Success: Student Engagement

1. What **students** do -- time and energy devoted to educationally purposeful activities
2. What institutions do -- using effective educational practices to induce students to do the right things



# What Matters Most for Student Success: Student Engagement

- Student-faculty interaction
- Active learning
- Time (and effort) on task
- High expectations
- 'Diversity' experiences
- Peer interactions





# Research on Iowa Student Experiences

Center for Research on Undergraduate Education, 2005-2006

<http://www.education.uiowa.edu/crue/publications/documents/RISE.Report.9-06.COMPLETE.pdf>



# **RISE Research Questions**

## **What matters for UI undergraduates?**

- What outcomes do UI undergraduates achieve and how?**
- How do UI undergraduates describe their experiences and the impact of college?**
- In what ways, if any, do the experiences and outcomes differ from those desired by the university?**
- First-year students and seniors**
- Quantitative and qualitative methods**

# **RISE Results: Outcomes**

- **First-year Students and Seniors – key experiences associated with desired outcomes:**
  - **Worked on a research project with a faculty member**
  - **Tutored or taught other students**
  - **Participated in a racial or cultural awareness workshop**

# **RISE Results: Engagement**

- **Results of analyses for first-year students:**
  - **57% of first-year students were involved in 'extracurricular activities' 0 hours per week in the current semester (Spring '06).**
  - **81% of first-year students worked 0 hours per week for pay on campus; 82.3% worked 0 hours for pay off campus.**
  - **62% of first-year students were involved in community service activities 0 hours per week in the current semester**

# **RISE Results: Engagement**

- **Results of analyses for first-year students:**
  - **34% of first-year students spent 0-10 hours per week preparing for class during the current semester; 0-15: 57%**
  - **Assigned books and readings read this academic year (as of the end of March/1<sup>st</sup> of April): 0-4 19.5%; 5-10 43.5%; 0-10 63%**

# Student Success at Iowa

- **“We offer an impressive range of major programs and other opportunities for specialized study, and an equally impressive array of opportunities for educationally purposeful co-curricular activity. We might not be doing all we can, however, to guide students to these programs or to help students make good choices among them . . . We can [and should] do more to encourage meaningful student engagement.” (UI Self-Study, 2007-08)**

# What Matters for Student Success

1. What students do -- time and energy devoted to educationally purposeful activities
2. What **institutions** do -- using effective educational practices to induce students to do the right things



# Project DEEP

What does an educationally effective college look like at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

## STUDENT SUCCESS *in* COLLEGE

CREATING CONDITIONS THAT MATTER

George D. Kuh  
Jillian Kinzie  
John H. Schuh  
Elizabeth J. Whitt  
and Associates

AAHE  
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# DEEP: Six Shared Conditions

1. “Living” Mission and “Lived” Educational Philosophy
2. Clearly Marked Pathways to Student Success
3. Improvement-Oriented Ethos
4. Shared Responsibility for Educational Quality
5. Environments Adapted for Educational Enrichment
6. Unshakeable Focus on Student Learning

# Lessons from Project DEEP

## “Living” Mission and “Lived” Educational Philosophy

- ❖ A clear mission, widely understood and endorsed.
- ❖ A web of complementary policies and practices tailored to the school’s mission and students’ needs and abilities.
- ❖ Institutional values really *do* guide important policy and operation decisions, from admissions to orientation to graduation requirements.

# Lessons from Project DEEP

## Clearly Marked Pathways to Student Success

- ❖ **Acculturation (expectations)**
- ❖ **Alignment (consistency, resources, maps, safety nets)**

# Lessons from Project DEEP

## Improvement-oriented Ethos

- ❖ **“Positive restlessness”**
- ❖ **Investments in student success**
- ❖ **Decision-making informed by data**
- ❖ **“We know who we are and what we aspire to.”**

# Lessons from Project DEEP

## Shared Responsibility for Educational Quality – and Student Success

- ❖ Supportive educators are everywhere
- ❖ Student and academic affairs collaboration
- ❖ Student ownership
- ❖ A caring, supportive community



# Implications for the University of Iowa

# Student Success Agenda at Iowa

- **Key Components, informed by DEEP:**
  - **“Positive Restlessness”**
    - Build on what’s going well, address what’s not; Do more of what works, do less of what we can’t demonstrate does.
    - Research and assessment
  - **“Lived” – clear, shared –mission**
  - **Clear pathways for success**
  - **Shared responsibility and collaboration across our silos: “We’re all responsible for Iowa students’ success.”**



# Making it happen: Mobilizing People

- **Student Success Team (SST)**
  - Over 200 faculty, staff, students
  - Ten member executive committee (incl. from student government, Staff Council, Faculty Council)
  - Annual retreat --> projects --> committees, task forces
  - **Budget moves:**
    - Hiring Coordinator
    - Commitment to HLC Assessment Academy
    - Investment in SST initiatives
    - Plans to expand Living-Learning Communities by 2015; expanding First-Year Seminars.

# Making it happen: Mobilizing People

- **SST Principles and Practices:**
  - “Ya’ll Come!” – started in the middle of the organization (paired with visionary leadership)
  - Continued focus on “what can we do?”
  - Meaningful collaborations between academic affairs-student affairs
  - Creating a body of work that is informing other campus processes

# Defining Student Success (UI SST, 2007)

*University of Iowa students succeed when they achieve personal and institutional educational goals.*

*Successful students develop skills and knowledge, become more mature in their thinking, assume greater responsibility for their own lives and learning, develop understanding of diversity and multiculturalism, and become effective leaders.*



# Defining Student Success at Iowa

- *Student success at . . . Iowa is a shared enterprise.*
- *Students succeed by active engagement in educationally-purposeful activities. Faculty, staff, and students create . . . learning opportunities [and] policies, programs, and practices that foster student engagement.*

# SST's Body of Work

## SST PROJECTS

- The "Message" (now called The IOWA Challenge)
- Pick One!
- Learning Communities
- Early Intervention
- New Traditions (Convocation)
- SST Ambassadors
- "Moving Forward Together"
- One Community, One Book

## SST REPORTS

- Learning Communities
- Barriers to Student Success
- Centralizing Assessment Resources
- Student Academic Engagement
- Peer Educators

# What is the Challenge?

EXCEL  
STRETCH  
ENGAGE  
CHOOSE  
SERVE

- **Goal: To communicate clear expectations for student success for UI undergraduates.**
  - A mission statement for our students
  - A set of expectations for what it means to be a Hawkeye
  - A message pointing students to clear pathways to student success

*Let's just write one!*

# Grassroots vs. Top Down

EXCEL  
STRETCH  
ENGAGE  
CHOOSE  
SERVE

- Formerly “The Message”
- Email feedback from thousands
- Vetted with over 500 UI community members
- SST: final approval of the message and the title.



# The IOWA Challenge

EXCEL  
STRETCH  
ENGAGE  
CHOOSE  
SERVE

As a University of Iowa student, you become part of the Hawkeye family—students and alumni transformed by their experiences at Iowa. The University asks you to follow their example and rise to the challenge of these five expectations:

*Excel.* Set high standards—push yourself academically.

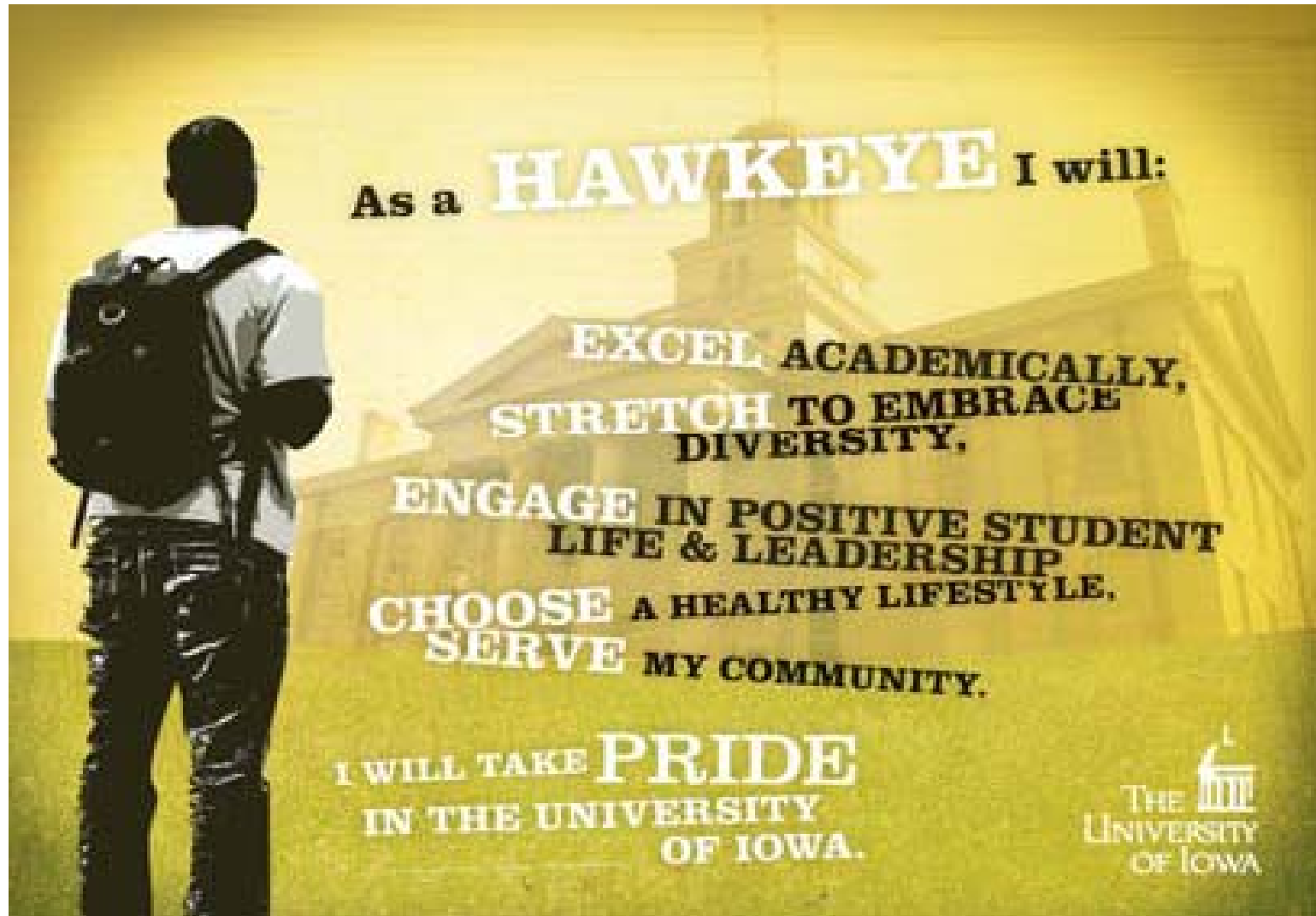
*Stretch.* Learn from diverse people, ideas, and experiences.

*Engage.* Get involved and be a leader.

*Choose.* Make decisions that support your goals.

*Serve.* Contribute to a community that's a great place to live and learn.

# The IOWA Challenge



# How will we know if it matters?

- Research tells us that clear expectations matter for student success
- At Iowa, we'll first assess whether students know about the Challenge, and what meaning they are making of it
- Later, we can also assess faculty/staff practices, and markers of *meeting the Challenge*, such as student engagement
- Graduating Senior Survey, Class of 2013+

**what's  
your  
ONE?**

[www.uiowa.edu/pickone](http://www.uiowa.edu/pickone)

# Pick One!

- To encourage all first-year students to “pick” at least one co-curricular activity in which to become involved
- Implemented Fall 2008
- Students could explore opportunities in 10 different categories and register their Pick on the Pick One website.
- Pick One! Prize Patrol



# Pick One Outcomes

| Outcome   | Mean (1=SD to 5=SA) | Mode | % Agree/ Strongly Agree |
|---|---------------------|------|-------------------------|
| Pick One helped me feel connected to the UI community.              | 3.6                 | 4    | 61%                     |
| Pick One helped me form positive relationships with other students. | 3.7                 | 4    | 66%                     |
| I would recommend Pick One to future incoming first year students.  | 3.8                 | 4    | 72%                     |



# Convocation: Where Being a Hawkeye Begins

## Goals:

- Communicate institutional expectations of students
- Establish a sense of identity for the “Class of 20XX”
- Establish a connection to The University of Iowa and the academic community



University of Iowa | [digital.lib.uiowa.edu/ictcs](https://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/ictcs)

# Convocation 2009



*The Class Of*  
**2018**

# How will we know if it matters?

- **Over half agreed that Convocation:**
  - **helped them feel welcomed into the UI community**
  - **provided them with a better understanding of what is expected of them as UI students**
- **Process feedback will be used to improve the event for Year 2.**

# Early Intervention

- **Goal: Create framework and intervention steps to identify students with academic or other difficulties and to connect those students with support resources**
- **Two committees over 4 years (first: external scan, now: creating the framework/piloting interventions)**
- **Strong committee ethos: What can we do?**
- **Pilot Project: Intervened to decrease # “not registered for spring” from over 350 to 192.**

# Lessons Learned, Continuing Challenges

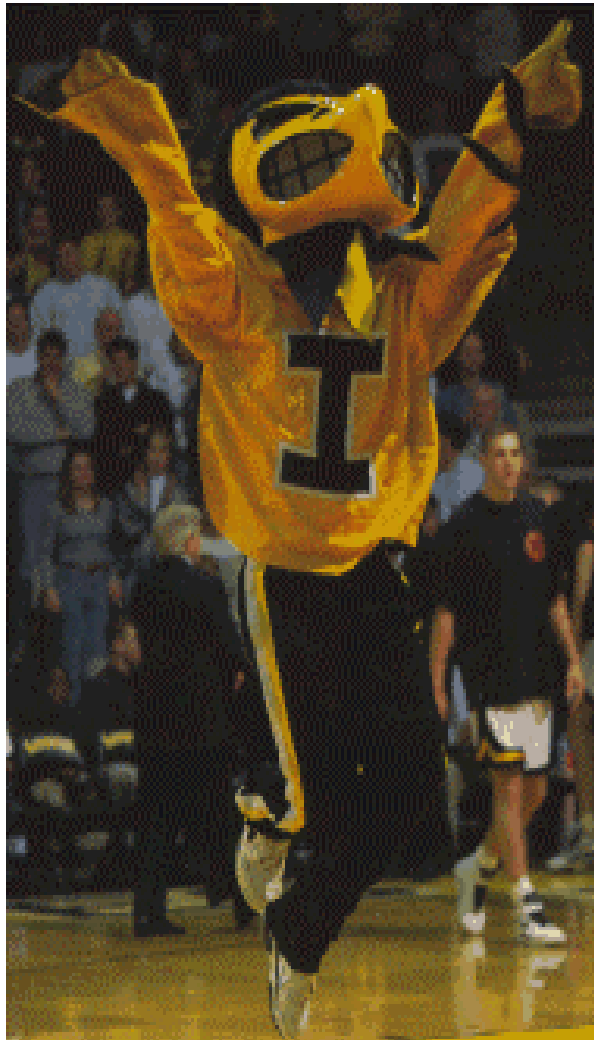
- ✓ Never lose sight of the data.
- ✓ Focus on low-hanging fruit.
- ✓ Working from the middle is great, but so is upper level buy-in
- ✓ Organic development can work, but we had to pay attention
- ✓ Herding cats, juggling plates = nice to have someone in a coordination role



# Lessons Learned, Continuing Challenges

- ✓ Leveraging faculty involvement for the biggest payoff
- ✓ True partnerships are a lot of work – continued focus on caring for relationships, communication, and alignment
- ✓ Lots of people want to be part of something they think matters for students

HILLCREST  
**MARKET PLACE**



# Questions & Discussion



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