



The National Dialog on Student Retention June 2–3, 2008

Academic Affairs and Student Affairs: Collaborative Strategies to Put Attrition in Reverse

Ralph J. Rascati, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs & Dean of University College
Stephen W. Braden, Course Coordinator, KSU 1101: First-Year Experience Seminar
Kathy L. Matthews, Director of First-Year Retention Initiatives
Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA

RPG Initiative

Retention, Progression, Graduation

- ▶ **University System of Georgia (USG) Initiative that provided additional funding to 5 of 35 institutions including Kennesaw State University (KSU) to increase retention, progression and graduation rates**
- ▶ **Most of it is being spent on initiatives that affect first-year students**
 - **Faculty in Department of First-Year Programs (FYP) in University College**
 - **Advisors in Counseling & Advising Program Services (CAPS)**
 - **Personnel in Center for Student Leadership (CSL)**

Factors Known to Affect Retention

- ▶ **First-Year Experience Seminar Course (KSU 1101;FYE)**
 - Campus & Community Connections
 - Life Skills
 - Strategies for Academic Success
 - Foundations for Global Learning

- ▶ **Learning Communities**
 - Two, three or four courses taken by a cohort of students
 - At least one course in the LC is limited to 25 students
 - May or may not have a KSU 1101 course
 - Some involve tight coordination among faculty while others do not

Effects of FYE Seminar Course on Retention

Cohort Year	Enrolled in KSU 1101		Not Enrolled in KSU 1101		Retention Enhancement
	N	%	N	%	by KSU 1101
2002	752	79	1070	74	5%
2003	771	81	1303	73	8%
2004	743	78	915	71	7%
2005	1465	76	618	66	10%
2006	1714	79	697	70	9%

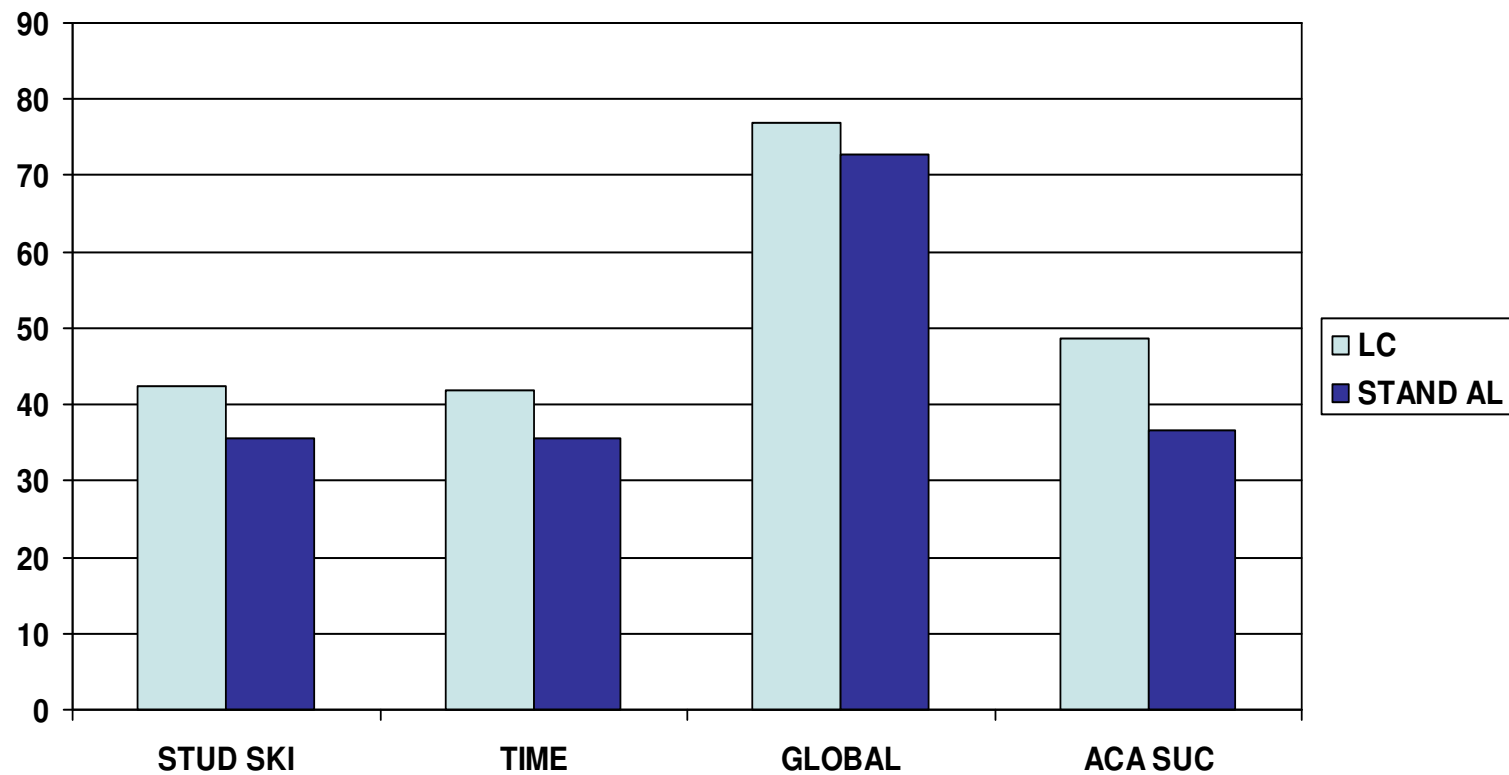
Effects of Learning Communities on Retention

Fall 2006 Cohort

Cohort	N	% Ret
Students not enrolled in LC or KSU 1101	378	68
Students enrolled in LC without KSU 1101	261	71
Student enrolled in standalone KSU 1101	878	76
Students enrolled in LC with KSU 1101	836	82

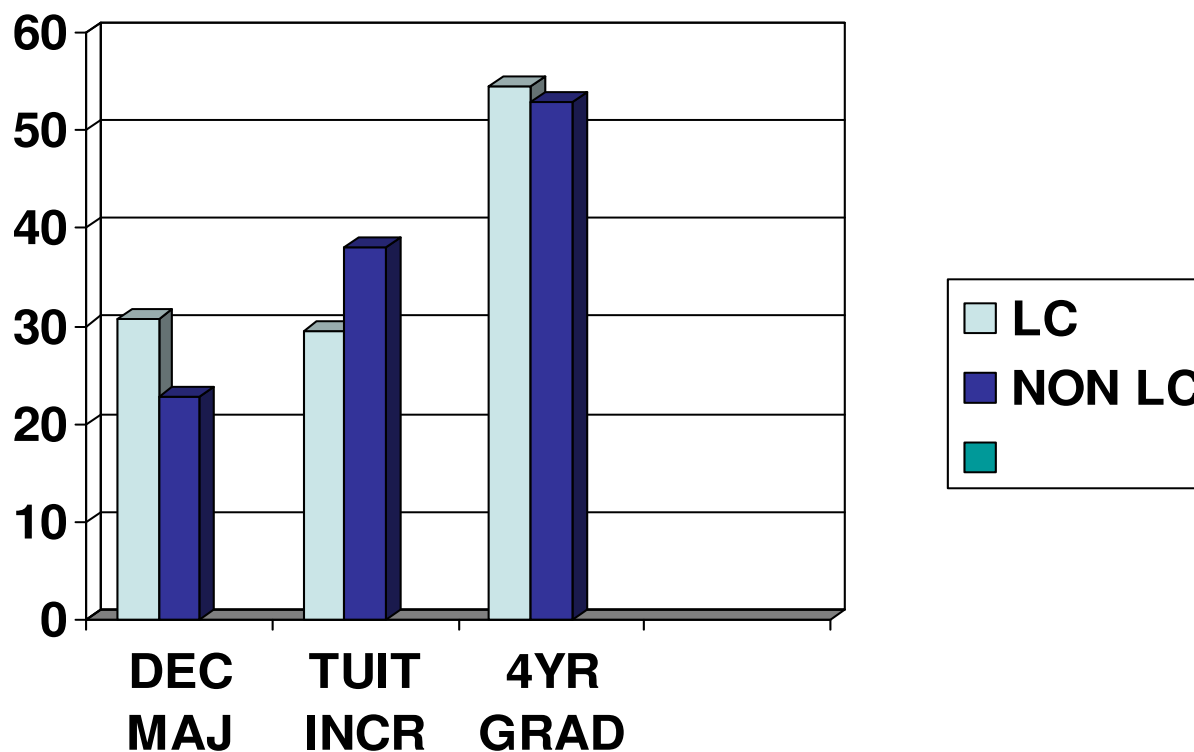
LEARNING COMMUNITY VS. STAND ALONE FYE

Effects on Learning Outcomes

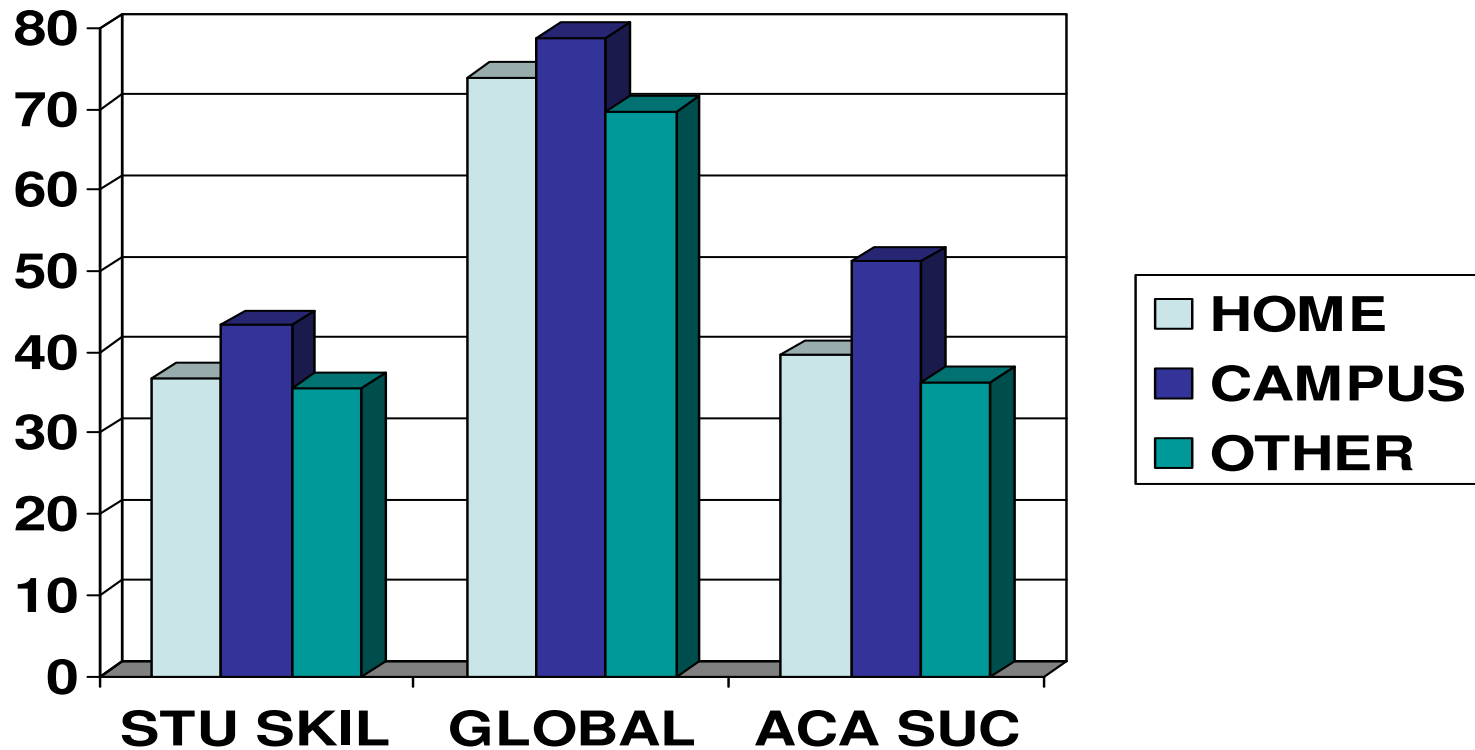


LEARNING COMMUNITY VS. STAND ALONE FYE

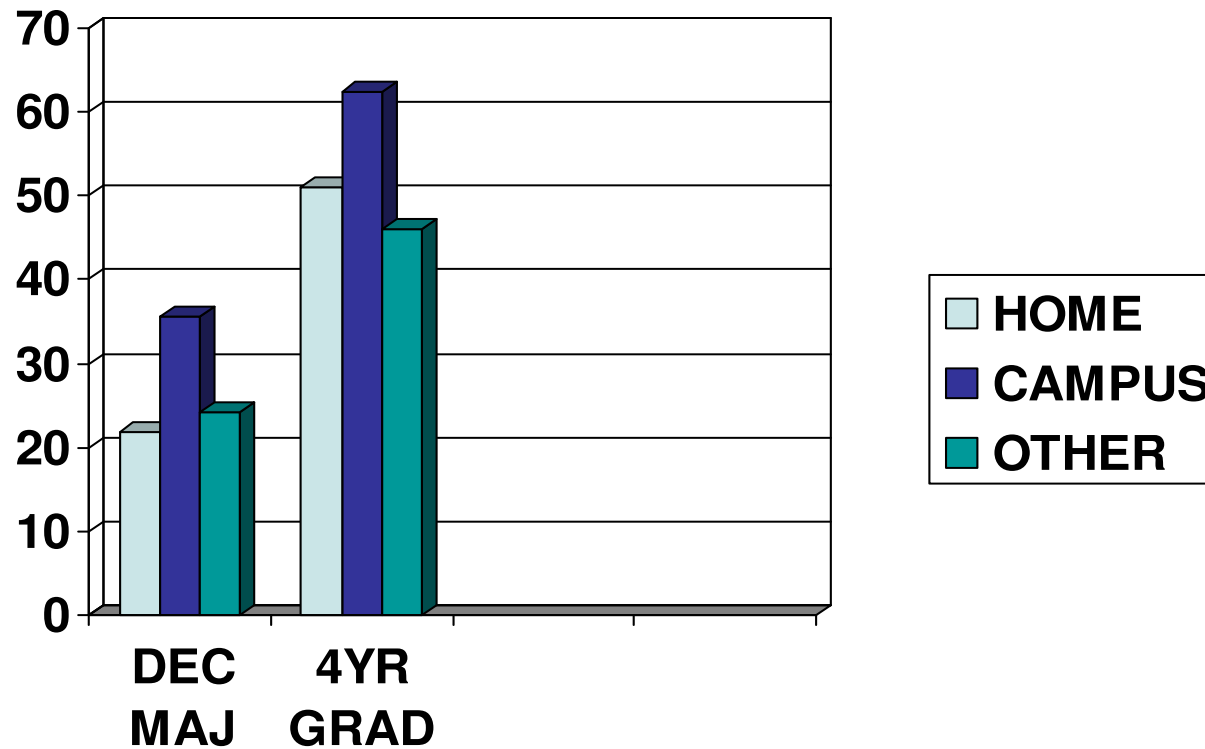
Effects on Measures of Student Success



Effects of Living Environment on Learning Outcomes



Effects of Living Environment on Other Measures of Student Success



Collaborative Strategies

Implemented in KSU 1101

- ▶ **Early Alert/Early Intervention**
- ▶ Peer Leaders
- ▶ Advising Teams
 - A Faculty Advisor (KSU 1101 Instructor)
 - A Professional Advisor (from CAPS: the counseling & advising unit in the division of Student Success & Enrollment Services)
 - A Student Peer Advisor (from the Center for Student Leadership; CSL)

Responding to the Call for Action

Part 1

- ▶ **2003: KSU begins administering Your First College Year survey**
- ▶ **2004: KSU participates as a Founding Institution in the Policy Center on the First Year of College “Foundations of Excellence in the First College Year” project**
- ▶ **2004: KSU begins participation in NSSE**

YFCY and NSSE Findings

▶ YFCY Results

- 84% (8 out of 10) reported being satisfied with KSU; 7 out of 10 satisfied with their overall college experience, similar results on the national survey
- 84% planned to re-enroll at KSU the following fall, compared to 87% in the national survey

▶ NSSE Results

- 9 out of 10 first-year respondents rated their experience as “good” or “excellent”
- High proportion of students in that group also reported they would attend KSU again if they could start college over

--summary data reported by KSU's Center for Institutional Effectiveness

YFCY Indicates First-Year Student Behaviors as Reason for Concern

KSU's first-year students' responses to YFCY items related to behavior that could undermine their potential for academic success

- ▶ **79%** skipped class occasionally or frequently
- ▶ **44%** turned in course assignments late
- ▶ **83%** submitted assignments not reflective of their best work
- ▶ **29%** studied or prepared often for class
- ▶ **31%** received tutoring

--summary data reported by KSU's Center for Institutional Effectiveness

Using the Research to Shape FY Retention Initiatives (continued)

- ▶ **67%** of KSU first-time full-time students spend **less than five hours** per week on studying/homework
 - At peer institutions, 53% of first-time full-time students reported similarly low commitments to studies outside of class)
- ▶ **76%** of KSU first-time full-time students reported their social life competes with their schoolwork; national data showed 70% responded similarly

--summary data reported by KSU's Center for Institutional Effectiveness

Using the Research to Shape FY Retention Initiatives (continued)

Early Alert systems have proved to be an effective tool to help monitor first-year students' behavior in class and to intervene with strategies to improve the student's experience and chances for academic success

- ▶ Attempt to reduce absenteeism
- ▶ Emphasize importance of preparing for classes
- ▶ Connect students with study groups and tutorials
- ▶ Increase student contact with faculty and support staff

Responding to the Call for Action

Part 2

2007: KSU Strategic Plan 2007-2012 lists an early warning/early intervention program among top campus priorities

- ▶ Summer session 2007 Early Alert system piloted in KSU 1101
- ▶ Fall term 2007 Early Alert system pilot expanded in KSU 1101



Red Flags: Faculty Report First Impressions

Faculty use a report form to identify student problem areas:

- ▶ **Not attending**
- ▶ **Attending inconsistently; constant tardiness**
- ▶ **Attending but lack of preparation and participation**
- ▶ **Poor attitude; lack of motivation**
- ▶ **Weak academic skills**
- ▶ **Heavy demand on time outside of school**
- ▶ **Sense of being overwhelmed by college**
- ▶ **Personal issues (self-disclosed)**



Red Flags: Early Alert Early Identifiers

- ▶ **Probation Students**
- ▶ **Students whose schedules contain high-risk courses (D,F,W rates at or above 30%)**
- ▶ **Students enrolled for excessive credit loads**
- ▶ **Students identified in “at risk” target group based on Admissions index (high school GPA, test scores, COMPASS placement scores)**

Fall 2007 Early Alert Pilot: KSU 1101

Why Pilot in KSU 1101: First-Year Seminar?

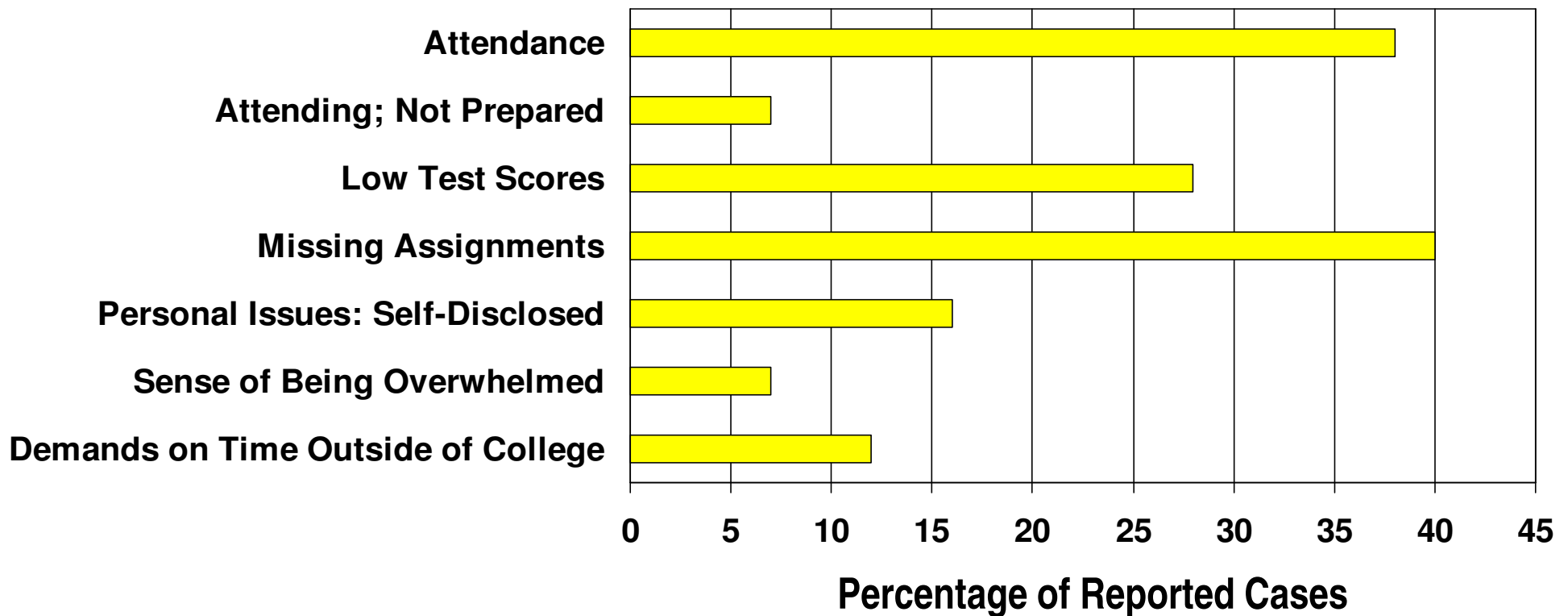
- High enrollment of First-Year students
- Course required for most first-time full-time students
- Small class size (25) enables early detection of student issues
- Instructors are supportive of goals of Early Alert.
- Instructors have high interest in student success.
- Front-loaded course curriculum reveals student's academic problems early enough to enable student to make adjustments.
- Instructors are able to intervene to provide student assistance.

KSU Early Alerts: Fall 2007 Summary Report

Course Enrollment KSU 1101: **1885**

Number of Students Referred to Early Alerts: **198**

Percentage of KSU 1101 students on Alert: **10.5**



Student Responses to Early Alert Outreach Fall 2007

- ▶ **88 Students Contacted Early Alert**
 - Phoned Office: 66
 - Phoned in response to receiving post card: 23
 - Visited Office: 22
- ▶ **Student contacted KSU 1101 instructor (unable to collect data)**

Early Alert Fall 2007 Outcomes and Results

- ▶ **KSU 1101 Course Withdrawal*:** **23 (12%)**
- ▶ **Semester Withdrawal:** **14 (7%)**
- ▶ **Probation Status:** **36 (18%)**
- ▶ **Good Academic Standing:** **125 (63%)**

*in some cases, course withdrawal was best course of action given the individual's situation

Early Alert Issue: Student Compliance

Should Early Alert be Intrusive?

- ▶ **Should there be incentives or sanctions (registration holds) for students to comply with the Early Alert system?**
- ▶ **Should Probation students be required to follow through on recommended intervention?**

Collaborative Strategies

Implemented in KSU 1101

- ▶ **Early Alert/Early Intervention**
- ▶ **Peer Leaders**
- ▶ **Advising Teams**
 - **A Faculty Advisor (KSU 1101 Instructor)**
 - **A Professional Advisor (from CAPS: the counseling & advising unit in the division of Student Success & Enrollment Services)**
 - **A Student Peer Advisor (from the Center for Student Leadership; CSL)**

Peer Leaders



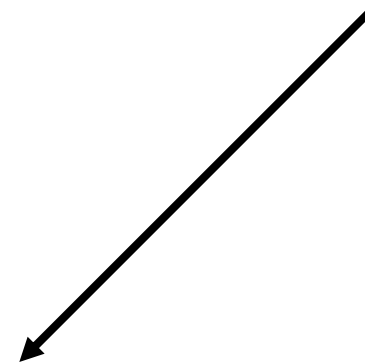
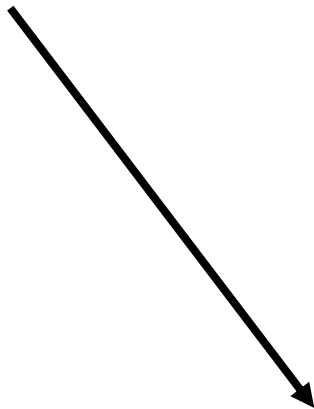
Peer Leader Program

Peer Advisors

A manifestation of leadership practice

**Academic Affairs
University College**

**Student Success &
Enrollment Services**



A unit of Academic Affairs and Student
Success and Enrollment Services (SSES)

Leaders in Kennesaw (LiNK)



• **Developing Self**



• **Developing Others**



• **Helping Others**

Peer Leader Program

- ▶ **The program connects a LINK Ascend student with a KSU 1101 Instructor to provide first year students with the tools they need to be successful at KSU.**
- ▶ **Secondly, the Peer Leader program serves to strengthen the LINK Ascend members' leadership skills.**

Roles of the Peer Leader

- ▶ **Attend all classes of the assigned section**
- ▶ **Serve as a bridge between the instructor and new students**
- ▶ **Assist with the planning of the syllabus and teaching course content**
- ▶ **Moderate and facilitate class discussions**
- ▶ **Communicate with students outside of class**
- ▶ **Alert instructor of students having difficulties either personally or academically**
- ▶ **Advocate for new student needs**
- ▶ **Guide new students to campus resources and academic support centers**
- ▶ **Serve as role models for academic, co-curricular, and leadership behaviors**

Peer Leaders Use Facebook

- ▶ **Intentional method to create connections and build relationships**
- ▶ **A tool to “break the ice” with new students and create an opening for more personal interactions**
- ▶ **A tool for disseminating information to the group**
- ▶ **A tool for members of the class to begin to develop relationships**

Roles of the Peer Advisor

- ▶ **Attend at least 3 classes of the KSU 1101 class assigned**
- ▶ **Set up a Facebook site for the section (if not already set up) as a way for the students in the class to connect with each other and with others on campus**
- ▶ **Work with professional advisor and faculty member to help students create academic and social connections**
- ▶ **Assist with the registration process**
- ▶ **Assist in process of declaring a major**

Advising Team Data Fall 2006

	Control-1*		Study-1		Study-2**	
	N=130		N=168		N=75	
	Fall-Spring	Fall-Fall	Fall-Spring	Fall-Fall	Fall-Spring	Fall-Fall
Retention (%)	92.3	69.2	92.5	73.5	100	80
GPA (End of Summer)	2.60		2.72		3.06	
Declared Majors (%)	67.8		78.1		84.0	

* Students in Control Group (no advising team assigned) who
independently sought advice at CAPS = 0%

**Students in the Study Group (advising teams assigned) who
sought advice at CAPS = 30.8%

Advising Team Data Fall 2007

	Control -1	Control -2*	Study-1	Study-2**
	N=544	N=143	N=796	N=389
	Fall-Spring	Fall-Spring	Fall-Spring	Fall-Spring
Retention (%)	91.9	97.9	90.3	96.9
GPA (End of Fall)	2.82	3.12	2.75	3.17
Declared Majors (%)	69.0	66.0	78.0	65.0

* Students in Control Group (no advising team assigned) who independently sought advice at CAPS = 20.8%

**Students in the Study Group (advising teams assigned) who sought advice at CAPS = 32.8%

What's Next?

- ▶ **Early Alert/Intervention**
 - Extend beyond KSU 1101
 - Use Software to semi-automate the process
 - Add staff to implement interventions more efficiently
- ▶ **Advising Teams**
 - Expand to all sections of KSU 1101
 - Develop modified version for LCs w/o KSU 1101
 - Emphasize benefits of advising to encourage more students to seek advising
- ▶ **Early Start Bridge Academy**
- ▶ **First Year Advising Center**
- ▶ **Phone contact with first-year drop-outs/stop-outs**
- ▶ **Track differences in retention in LCs with tight faculty coordination vs. LCs without tight faculty coordination**