The Link between Data and Policy
Dispelling Campus Myths about Timely Graduation

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Outline of Presentation

- Context
- Role of Institutional Research
- Information Collected
- Guiding Principles
- Recommendations
- 12 months later
Background

- Visibility of graduation rates - *College Results Online*
- Continuing quest to improve quality of educational experience – *DEEP*
- HLC recommendation to raise admissions standards
Role of Institutional Research

- Staff task force
- Compile and analyze data
- Link data and policy
- Monitor for improvements
Information Collected

- Cultural Context
- Student Behavior
- Courses
- Institutional Practices and Policies
Information Collected

Cultural Context

- University messages and actions inconsistent
- KU traditions emphasize student flexibility
  - “ease into college life”
  - “time to explore”
- Costs associated with additional semesters not well understood
Information Collected

Student Behavior

- Average student course load declined from 14.7 credit hours in Fall 1982 to 13.4 credit hours in Fall 2004
- Initial course load during students’ first semester sets a pattern for subsequent semesters
Information Collected

Courses

- Between 20% and 30% of first-time, first-year students do not successfully complete freshmen math courses

- Remedial math
  - enrolls 1,000 students each fall
  - around 300 students (30%) do not pass the course
Graduation expectations not consistently communicated
  - advisors, faculty, administrators
  - program materials, speeches, brochures

Some rules and guidelines not consistently enforced

Some policies enable longer times to graduation
Task Force
Guiding Principles

1. KU expects and encourages timely graduation. Practices need to reinforce this principle.

2. Policies and practices need to encourage timely graduation.

3. A consistent message that graduation in four years is attainable.
Guiding Principle 1
Recommendations

- Set minimum enrollment of 15 hours
- Students must declare major by 60 hours
- Contact new frosh with math ACT of 18 or lower and recommend taking equivalent math course prior to enrollment at KU
- Develop standardized institutional policies for drops and withdrawals
Guiding Principle 2
Recommendations

- Enforce existing policies of continuous math and English enrollment
- Check and enforce prerequisites
- Limit number of repeat applications to professional schools
Guiding Principle 3
Recommendations

- Advising philosophy and practices should align with graduation goals
- Adopt “expectations setting” language of encouraging on-time graduation
- All publications should support timely graduation
12 months later ...

- Conversations with advisors/front line staff about importance of timely graduation ongoing
- Average course load for first-time, full-time students
  - essentially unchanged between Fall 2005 and 2006.
  - increased by almost 3% between Spring 2005 and 2006
- Task force formed in Spring 2006 to examine higher admissions standards
- Impact of recommendation to take remedial math prior to enrolling at KU known in Summer 2006
- Policy changes to drop/withdrawal policy approved by University Governance for Fall 2006
Additional Information

Task Force Report:


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