ENHANCING RETENTION THROUGH THE STUDENT EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

Undergraduate Research Assistants:
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WASHBURN UNIVERSITY

- Topeka, KS
- Municipal university
- Open access
- 6,600 students
- 62.2% retention before FYE/Center for Student Success and Retention in Fall 2011
Three-credit-hour first year seminar

- Required to graduate, must earn C or above

- 6 faculty specifically associated with furthering the development of the CSSR

- Academically Driven

- Retention Increased to 68.4% as of Fall 2015
WHY HIRE STUDENTS?

- Director of Success Evaluation & Retention hired
- Recognized a constant need for data
- IR was not physically equipped to meet our constant need for data
- Unit itself was not equipped to meet their research needs
- Unit already seeking to enhance student employment
- Hiring students allowed for the department to expand without pushing the already limited budget
TYPES OF STUDENTS?

- Students hired already recognized as model students
- Selected by unit leadership
- Selected based on character displayed in the university community and commitment
- Test trustworthiness and dependency over time
- All different stages in college careers
- Variety of majors and chosen career paths
- Students find common ground within job
- Collaboration is encouraged
NATURE OF WORK

- Not boxed off from unit
- Understand university inner workings because of proximity
- Connected to the larger conversation
- Unit respects our insight since we are pulling the data
- Valuable frontlines experience as students
- Utilizes our efforts for projects that occasionally reach dead ends to conserve time of professional staff
- Ultimately, our voices matter
Research limited to institutional and unit use only
None of our research is published or goes through IRB
Considered Washburn University administrative staff
Work considered a legitimate educational interest related to FERPA
Received FERPA training and ongoing FERPA guidance from our Unit
Due to the sheer amount of information encountered, no specifics are retained
Most of the time we do not know the results of our research because further analysis is required

http://www.washburn.edu/statements-disclosures/ferpa/
OUTCOMES

- Course Evaluations
- Communicate and respond to faculty and staff
- Tutoring Center
- Re-recruiting efforts
- Grant research and collaboration
- Special topics projects:
  - DFW rates per instructor/course
  - Math department
  - Athletics
  - Probation
- Evaluate pre-Washburn characteristics in students to predict likelihood of success at our institution
- Assess characteristics such as GRIT and Resiliency within the current student body through surveys
- Analyze early alerts
CHALLENGING PROJECTS

- Math Project
- Grant Project
- Probation Project
PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Athletics
- Tutoring Center
- Course Evaluations
Encourages student investment in university community
Broadens students understanding of university inner workings
Expands students research abilities
Drives students to critically assess data
Academically motivates
Motivates students to support fellow students
Benefits the university and the student
Ultimately encourages students to pursue a career in Higher Education
QUESTIONS?

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