It Takes a Village to Retain a Student

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Our Agenda

• Who are We? We are RU!
• Retention and Graduation Rate Concerns
• General Education Changes Begin
• The Birth of Financial Aid Services
• Advising’s Early Alert & Probation Process
• Creation of the “Learning Commons”
• Career Services and Mentoring
• Outcomes
• What’s Next for RU!
• Founded in 1945
• Total Students: 4,100
• Degree Programs: 120
• 2018-2019 Undergraduate Tuition: $29,832 - $37,836
• Mission: Dedicated to the enlightenment of the human spirit. Grounded in courage, acceptance and a commitment to social justice. Roosevelt began as an equality experiment to make higher education available to all students who qualify academically, regardless of their background.
Who are we? We RU!

• Change in leadership and an institutional emphasis on retention, which would improve graduation rates.
  – Renewed focus on academic preparedness and career readiness

• Our undergraduate student population: 2400 students
  – 92% of our students receive some form of financial aid
  – Over 50% receive the Federal Pell Grant
  – 55% of our Pell recipients have a 0 Expected Family Contribution (EFC)
  – 80% of students attend full-time
  – 72% are under 24 years of age
  – 55% are non-white
Retaining Students to Graduation

• National retention rate for fall 2015: 73.4%
  – Roosevelt’s freshmen rate for Fall 2015 – 58%
  – Roosevelt’s transfer rate for Fall 2015 – 63%

• National 6-year graduation rate for private institutions: 66%
  – Roosevelt’s 6-year graduate rate – 40%
General Education (CORE) Changes Begin

• Process begins to change the core/general education
  – Lead by Provost through an institutional committee
  – Better meet needs of Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI)

• Changes to Academic Communities of Practice (ACP)101 Course:
  – Focus on “belonging” combined with academic / career planning
  – Becomes Transfer Success (TRS) / First Year Success (FYS) courses for all students and IDEAS Course
Birth of Financial Aid Services

- Merged student-facing services from student accounts with financial aid
  - “One Stop Shop” for all things financial
- Assigned counselors to all students
- Conduct financial planning sessions each semester
- Stopped dropping students for non-payment
- Revised student communications and increased the frequency
Sample Revised Communication

• Original registration email:

Thank you for your Summer 2017 registration at Roosevelt University!

In accordance with the acceptance of the Registration Agreement, your payment arrangements must be made for the total amount due for tuition, fees, room and board, by the official due date for each academic semester.

Please be advised that you will be responsible for paying all collection fees incurred by the University as a result of pursuing any unpaid balance. The collection agency fee is based on a percentage of your balance, not to exceed 35% of the account balance. In the event your account is turned over to an outside collections agency, it will have a negative impact on your credit report.

You may not attend classes if you have not made your payment arrangements and submitted a completed promissory note to the Student Accounts Office.
Sample Revised Communication

• Updated registration email:

Thank you for your Spring 2018 registration at Roosevelt University! We are excited to have you continue your educational journey with us.

As a reminder, your payment arrangements must be made by December 15, 2017. Do you need assistance selecting the option that works best for you? Schedule a Financial Planning session with your Financial Aid Services Counselor at fas@roosevelt.edu.

Students who have not made payment arrangements are not financially cleared and are at risk of having their enrolled courses, room and board assignments cancelled for the upcoming semester.

Roosevelt University offers a variety of ways for you to be financial cleared. This will occur when any of the following take place:
Early Alerts

• Received 145 early alerts in Fall 2016
• Revised the early alert process and workflow
  – Single point of contact and defined follow-up for student and faculty
  – Faculty provided feedback on “closing the loop”
• Received 262 early alerts in Fall 2017
  – 45% increase!
Academic Probation and Advising

• In Fall 2017, there were 112 students on academic probation.
• In Spring 2018, there were 67 on academic probation.
• What changed?
  – Students were required to meet with academic advisors three times per semester.
  – Students attended at least two workshops on various topics
    • Time management, test anxiety, study skills, etc.
Creation of the Learning Commons

• No longer called “Tutoring”
• One stop shop for tutoring and accessibility services in a dedicated space
• Collaborative peer-tutor training
• FYS assignments intentionally provided opportunities for students to visit
Career Services and Mentoring

• Collaboration with faculty to think about careers well before graduation
  – The importance of advising
  – Resume building
  – Experiential learning opportunities

• Graduation Plan for Success (GPS)

• Professional mentoring program
Outcomes of the Changes

- National retention: Fall 2015: 73.4%
  - RU’s freshmen rate:
    - Fall 2015 – 58%
    - Fall 2017 – 74.2%
  - Roosevelt’s transfer rate:
    - Fall 2015 – 63%
    - Fall 2017 – 66%
- Incorporated financial planning exercise into New Student Orientation
What’s Next for RU?

• EAB and The Guide App
• Fine tuning the method and frequency in which we communicate with students
• Implementing and assessing the Core
• FAS office visit survey to collect student feedback
• Learning Communities (Block Scheduling)
Questions?

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