Strategic Interventions Generate Rapid Persistence Gains

Middle Tennessee State University, Public Research University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee

• **About**: Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) is a public research university with a total enrollment of 22,729 and a six-year graduation rate of 52%.

• **Challenge**: In response to state-wide pressure to improve outcomes, MTSU created the “Quest for Student Success” plan, but needed a way to track and move the dial on metrics across the institution. MTSU’s advising units were also severely understaffed and under-resourced to serve a challenging student population on the ground.

• **Solution**: MTSU set out to drive rapid gains through changes informed by data and best practices. Joining SSC in spring 2014 allowed MTSU to empower staff with data and execute a campus-wide strategy focused on persistence.

• **Impact**: Through its partnership with SSC, MTSU was able to increase overall persistence by 1.5 percentage points, retaining an additional 390 students for $1.5M in spring tuition revenue.

### Impact Highlights

- +1.5%
- Percentage point increase in overall fall to spring undergraduate persistence
- $1.5M
- Estimated additional revenue from spring tuition and fees

### SSC Support During Launch Ensured High Engagement, Quick Wins

**Trained Advisors Campus-Wide**

- SSC and MTSU trained all advisors prior to peak registration season
- Communicated clear expectations

**Created a Launch Strategy**

MTSU’s Dedicated Consultant worked with leadership to create a plan based on historical data

**Prepared to Hit the Ground Running**

SSC and MTSU helped advising managers to design initiatives and campaigns before the site went live, for immediate implementation

**15K+**

Student profile views each month

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Building a Coordinated Network of Persistence Campaigns

Using SSC to Plan and Scale Efforts

**Identify**
SSC lists and filters allowed staff to quickly identify 2,500+ stop outs

**Target**
Robust student data helped to prioritize unique, high-impact populations

**Manage**
SSC toolkits provided a framework and resources for campaign management

**Stop Outs**
Units used outreach to engage targeted stop outs in re-enrollment conversations

**Struggling Freshman**
Based on EAB analysis of historical first-year GPA patterns, created REBOUND program to contact new freshman with fall GPA <2.0 to offer specialized early-return advising

**BHS Students with Registration Holds**
Prioritized contacting students in Behavioral & Health Sciences (largest college) who had simple hold barriers to registration

**Students Close to Completion**
One department targeted likely returners: Low and Medium risk students with few credits remaining

Immediate Impact: Seeing Impressive Gains Beyond First Year Retention

**Fall to Spring Persistence**
*For All Undergraduate Years Across All Colleges*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spring 2014</th>
<th>Spring 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic &amp; Applied Sciences</td>
<td>89.9%</td>
<td>90.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral &amp; Health Sciences</td>
<td>87.8%</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mass Comm.</td>
<td>83.0%</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>University College</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Overall Results**

- Increase in overall fall to spring undergrad persistence: **+1.5%**

- Additional undergrad students enrolled in spring 2015: **390**

- Estimated additional revenue from spring tuition and fees: **$1.5M**

- **FTFT Freshman**: +2.2%
- **New Transfers**: +4.5%
- **Sophomores**: +2.1%