Graduate TA Role in Undergraduate Student Success

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MSU: Pioneer Land Grant University

• What is a land-grant university (or college)?
• What are the historical commitments of a land-grant institution?
• How does MSU fulfill these historical commitments?
  • Research and graduate education
  • Outreach
  • Undergraduate education
One Challenge and One Philosophy

• Challenge: Increasing student success at MSU

• Re-organizing across institutional cultures to create ecosystem of student success
Who are MSU undergraduates? (Fall 2017)

• 38,996
• 52% female, 48% male
• 20% US students of color
• 14% international students
• 70% from Michigan (all 82 counties), all 50 US states, 133 countries
• 72% admission rate
• 67% receive financial aid
• 2018 Tuition/fees $14,460 (in state), $39,750 (out)
Michigan State University Overall Graduation Rate

US average at public universities = 61% (64% at similarly selective)

Data used to prepare these slides are first-time students entering MSU in Fall 2011
MSU Aim Statement

Improve student success by
• increasing the graduation rate,
• decreasing time to degree, and
• closing opportunity gaps, particularly for lower-income, first generation, Black, Latino, and/or Native American students

Goal: 82% 6-year graduation rate by 2020
Ecology of College Student Development

Macrosystem
- cultural expectations
- historical trends & events

Exosystem
- family of origin
- Federal fin aid policies
- faculty curric comtee
- immigration/naturalization policy
- instal policy makers

Mesosystem
- academic classes
- friends
- job
- roommate

Microsystem
- Renn (2003), adapted from Bronfenbrenner (1993)
Higher Education Organizes Itself More Like This
Re-organizing to Create an Ecosystem of Student Success

Neighborhood Student Success Collaborative

A residentially-based, cross-functional, cross-unit organization that

1) provides student services (e.g., health, housing, academic & career advising, academic support),
2) uses analytics to guide real-time interventions by cross-unit teams, and
3) connects instructors (like you!) to resources to help students succeed.
MSU Neighborhoods Model of Student Success

- **Academic Proficiency**
  - Enhanced academic performance and skills
  - Understanding learning styles/strategies
  - Early knowledge/use of academic resources

- **Institutional Navigation**
  - Understanding policies related to academic standing and time to degree
  - Knowledge of policies/procedures
  - Confidence to seek resources

- **Socio-Emotional Engagement**
  - Balanced involvement
  - Sense of belonging
  - Reflection and self-assessment
  - Sense of Purpose
  - Intercultural awareness and engagement

(Royal, Noto, High McCord, Pitcher, 2015)
Where do graduate TA’s fit?

- Over 1200 TAs campus wide teaching
- Over 1750 sections enrolling
- Over 45,000 students.
  - Allowing for double or triple counting, TA-student contact hours are very high
  - Most sections are 100- or 200-level, meaning students newer in the major, required, or core courses and newer to MSU.
Example of a Student Success Challenge

- First-year students earning less than a 2.0 GPA are on academic probation (AP) after their first semester.
- 6-year graduation rate of 35% compared to over 80% for students not on AP after first semester.
- Historically, over 10% of first-year students ended up on AP.

![Bar chart showing the comparison between students on probation and not on probation.](image-url)
Our Philosophy of Coordinated Care
Neighborhood Success Teams

- Service Usage Data
- Early Warning System
- Socio-Emotional Self-Report Survey
- Advising Predictive Analytics

Success Team

Customized Interventions

Student

- Tutoring
- Health Services
- Academic Advising
- Diversity Programming
- Coaching
- Residential Programming
- Intercultural Engagement
- Career Services
Early Academic Alert: EASE Reports

• **Enhancing Academic Success Early**
• Confidential report on grade, attendance, or engagement
• Uses Registrar’s course grade system
• Alert goes to academic advisor and student
• Fall 2017: over 75,000 reports on over 18,000 unique students
  • Advisors followed up on 80% of reports of <2.5
Academic Probation after First Semester

10% → 7% = 240 fewer students
TAs = Critical Link

• Referring students to resources
  • Tutoring, office hours, study groups
  • Neighborhood, advisors, resident assistants
• Setting norm that being a Spartan means using resources to succeed
• Setting example that you can learn to learn
  • Talk about your own learning, set backs, do-overs
• Making clear that students belong at MSU
• Submitting EASE reports (or information to instructor of record)
TAs = Critical Link to Student Success

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Thank you!

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