RE-ENGAGING DATA

Center for Community College Student Engagement

Tribal Colleges: Using Data to Make a Difference

Preserving Culture and Planning for the Future: An Exploration of Student Experiences at Tribal Colleges, a special report the Center published in February 2019, focuses on the experiences of students at tribal colleges. The report includes findings from the 2017 administration of the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (*SENSE*) and the 2018 administration of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (*CCSSE*).

To understand the experiences of these students more fully, special-focus items specifically for the tribal college respondents were added to the survey administrations, and these findings are also highlighted in the report. These items were developed through a collaboration of the Center, Achieving the Dream, the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, and the American Indian College Fund, with additional input from the field.

An article* recently published by **Achieving the Dream** illustrates that several of the tribal colleges are taking action on the survey results. The following is directly excerpted from that article. Please see the article for more information and additional college stories.

United Tribes Technical College

United Tribes Technical College (UTTC), an Achieving the Dream Network College, located in Bismarck, North Dakota, serves almost 1000 students representing over 75 tribal nations from across the US each year. The college reviewed its *SENSE* data in order to better understand factors that may be impacting entering students' fall to spring semester persistence. According to Lisa Azure, Vice President of Academic Affairs, and Leah Woodke, Institutional Research Director, the data indicated students were not exhibiting behaviors that reflected what the survey called "high expectations" to the degree that their peers at other TCUs or the 2017 cohort colleges were exhibiting.

Behavior	% Indicating Occurrence of Two or More Times		
	UTTC	Tribal Colleges	2017 Cohort
19c. Turn in assignment late	30.3%	21.7%	9.6%
19d. Not turn in an assignment	21.1%	13.2%	8.7%
19f. Come to class without completing readings/assignments	13.4%	20.0%	15.2%
19s. Skip class	26.9%	13.6%	7.4%

Once UTTC reviewed the data, the college initiated a campus-wide effort to promote messages of high expectations. Faculty were asked to brainstorm strategies for promoting high expectations in the classroom. For example, faculty identified and implemented practices for accepting late/missing work that were shared with the students and used in all classes so the expectations were consistent. In addition, the web-based retention system was reconfigured to begin attendance and academic performance alerts to students that included messages conveying high expectations and identifying available resources. Although the system had been in use for some time, messages only were sent to faculty and staff. Including the students in the conversation has resulted in an increase in effort on their part to remedy the issues that caused the alert. The college anticipates that promoting high expectations will help to increase persistence rates for entering students and build strong academic habits for all students.

*Adair, K., Azure, L., Friskics, S., Lopez, C., and Roessel, C. (2019, March 21). *Survey data from students spurs tribal colleges and universities to action*. Retrieved from https://www.achievingthedream.org/news/17659/survey-data-from-students-spurs-tribal-colleges-and-universities-to-action.