



Top 8 Challenges and Opportunities with Student Success Technology

Ohio SSLI Meeting, September 14, 2018

Context for Today's Presentation



Higher Education Technology and Process Support

- Founded on the belief that technology is not a silver bullet to any problem, but with the right planning and implementation, software can play an important role in advancing student success
- Supports national initiatives such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Achieving the Dream, the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program, AACC Pathways, developing open-access resources for the field.
- Work directly with colleges and state systems in need of technology evaluation, implementation, and integration support, typically through a cohort model.

Meet The Ada Center's Namesake



Ada Lovelace

Founder of Scientific Computing

Learn more at theadacenter.org

An All-Too-Real Student Success Tech Dichotomy

Vision

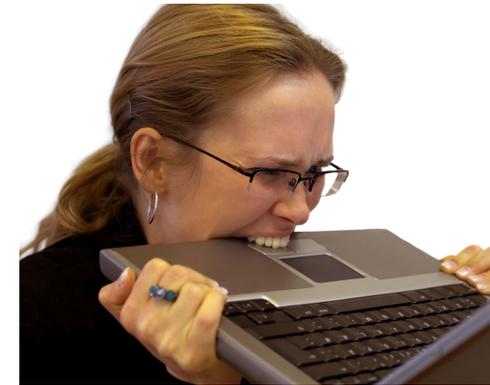


“Everything integrates perfectly with our student information system!”

“Our degree audit has no errors”

“All of our advisors and faculty say the new software made their lives so much easier”

Reality



“Our analytics tools are all yielding different conclusions, so staff don’t trust them”

“Advisors say the degree planning software is displaying course information from 1999”

“Some faculty members assign every student an ‘alert’ and other faculty haven’t signed in yet”

Introducing a Student Success Technology Framework



**Engage and Prepare
Prospective Students**



**Clarify the Path to
Student End Goals**



**Help Students Choose
and Get on a Path**



**Help Students
Stay on their Path**



**Support Student
Learning**



**Continually Improve
the Student Experience**

How Technology Can Help

What Technology Can't Do

Required Information Inputs

Human Resource Needs

Considerations for Adoption

Technology Mapping Example



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Help Students Stay on their Path



Support Student Learning

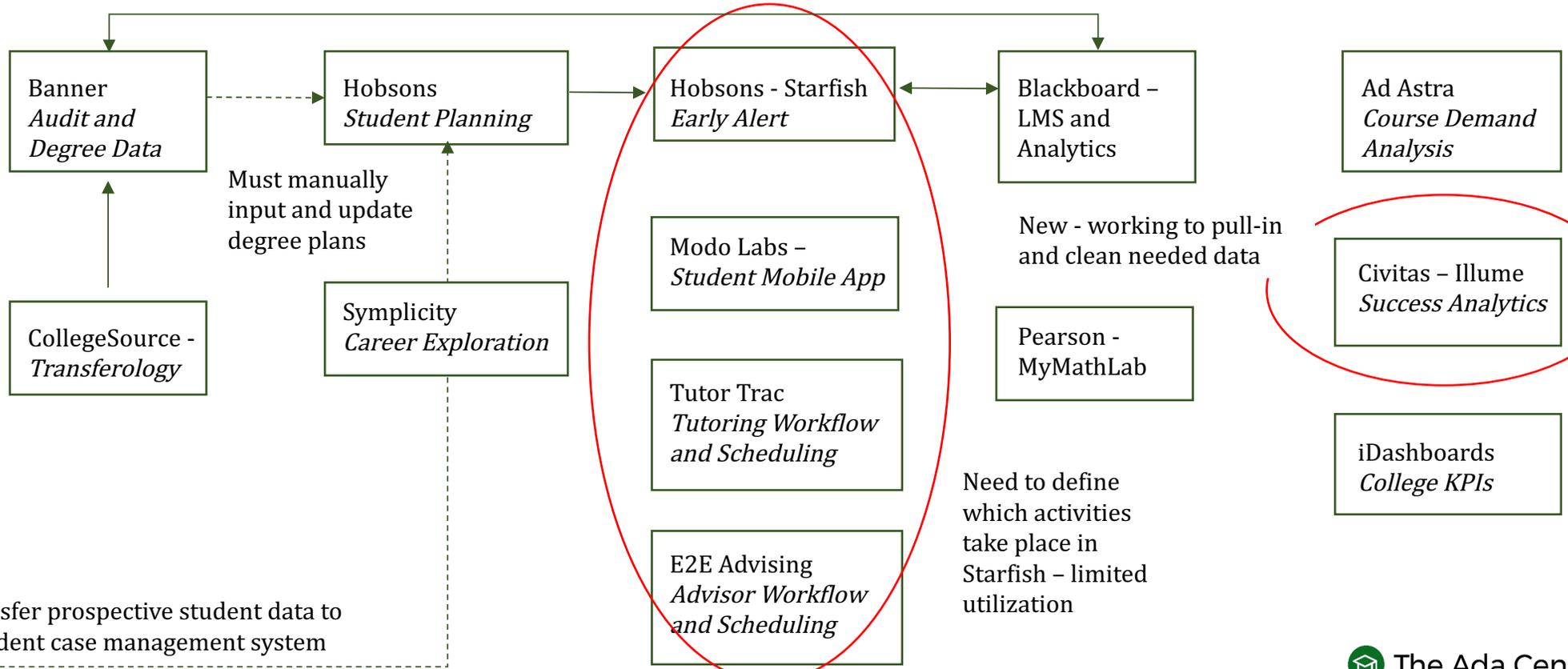


Continually Improve the Student Experience

Pen and Paper Data Collection on Prospects!

Big gap!

Need to transfer prospective student data to enrolled student case management system



Top Questions With Student Success Tech



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Continually Improve the
Student Experience

Leveraging prospective student data (CRM) to encourage enrollment *and* student success

Implementing academic planning tools with semester-by-semester course recommendations

Linking career and transfer planning tools with student program selection

Encouraging faculty and staff adoption of early alert and case management tools

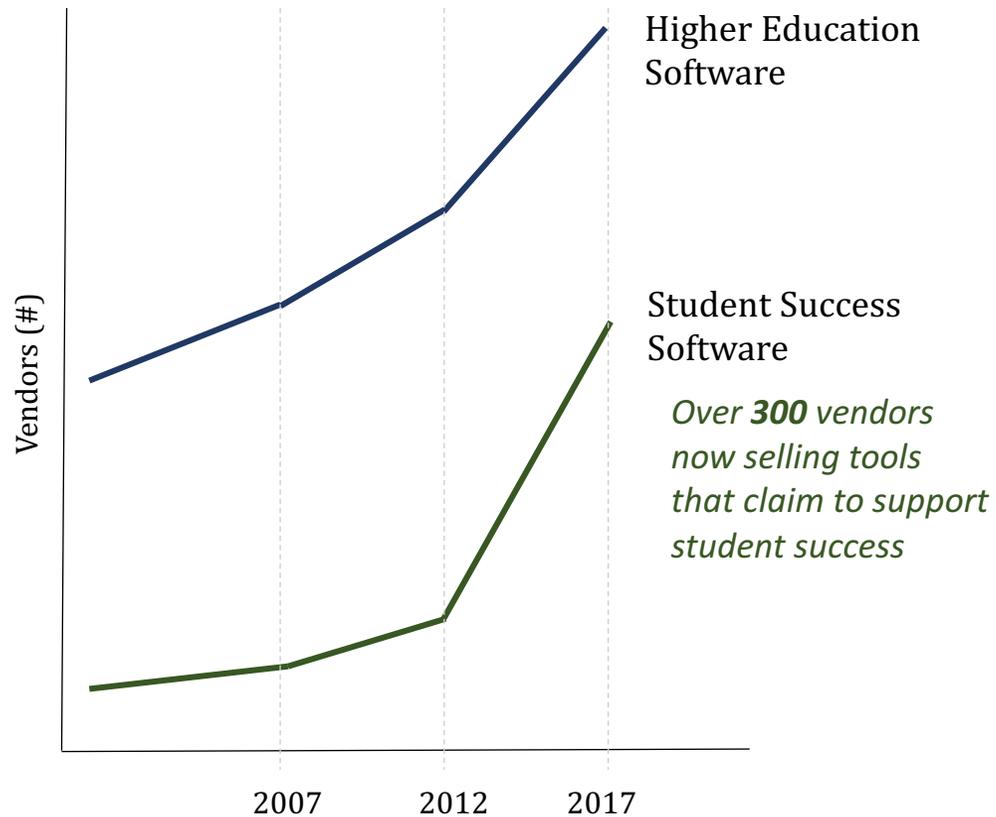
Linking academic and classroom data (LMS) with student services data

Reconciling analytics that use the same data, but produce different outcomes

- Choosing the right vendor – how to separate fact from fiction and negotiate a strong contract
- Setting an implementation up for success

Choosing the Right Software

No Shortage of Student Success Tech



The Typical College Has or Is Considering A...

- Student Information System
- Customer Relationship Management System
- Degree Audit
- Curriculum Management System
- Degree Planning Tool
- Case Management Tool/s
- Early Alert Tool
- Student Mobile Application
- Student Scheduling Application
- Student Success Analytics
- Student Onboarding and Orientation Technology
- Learner Management Systems
- Learner Management Analytics
- Digital Learning Technologies*
- Career Planning Tools
- Transfer Credit Planning System
- Course Demand Forecasting
- Student Success Analytics

Accounting for the Real Price of Software

- Two types of costs from software vendors – implementation fee and recurring annual fee

\$40,000 Average recurring cost of 'point solution' software such as an Early Alert tool	\$60,000 Average one-time implementation cost for 'multi-solution' software	\$120,000 Average recurring cost of 'multi-solution' student success software
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- Depending on the vendor, the following fees may not be included in the quoted price:
 - Necessary integration with your existing data systems and/or the cost of manually loading paper information into an electronic database
 - Change management support to align college business processes with technology process requirements
 - Training of key end users
- The sticker price never includes the cost of redeploying leadership, staff, and faculty time to implement and integrate the new technology



*Implementation activities likely include guided pathways reform work such as updating academic plans or improving student onboarding

Deep Insight from the China Club Restaurant



Major Guided Pathway Vendors Offer Similar Technical Capabilities, with Differences in Approach



Four Leading Vendors

- Hobsons – Starfish
- Aviso Retention
- EAB-Navigate
- Civitas



Key Differences

- Implementation Approach
- Package Structure
- User Interface and Workflow
- Configuration
- Company Portfolio and Culture

Separating Fact from Fiction and Getting the Best Deal

Define Your Terms

Account for the Full Price

Negotiate, Negotiate

Dig Into the Demo

Vet the Product Roadmap

Create an Evaluation Rubric

Ask: What will the specific implementation phases look like in terms of (a) demands on and the responsibilities of college staff? (b) when will different features be live and at what scale? (c) the biggest challenges that other colleges have experienced during implementation?

Ask: Which capabilities in your demo are currently 'live' at multiple colleges and which are still in development?

Ask: Can you give me an example of how feedback from one of your customers helped guide the direction of the software?

Formalizing IT Decision-Making Key as Software and Innovation Efforts Grow

Recommended IT Decision-Making Process from High-Performing Institutions

- 1** College leadership sets college strategic focus areas and targets, some of which require enhanced technology capabilities.
- 2** Functional area leaders aggregate feedback on greatest need software capabilities, presenting a business case on the 'why', 'what', and 'how' on a quarterly basis.
- 3** College leadership reviews software business case, and, in consult with IT, prioritizes software investment (and disinvestment) areas, creating a 1-2 year software plan that's continually reviewed.
- 4** A non-technical and technical lead is assigned to each focus area. They are tasked with recommending a product to college leadership and will also be responsible for overseeing implementation.
- 5** Leads form a recommendation after consulting with faculty and staff, learning from other college experiences, and getting demos and quotes from vendors.
- 6** President, along with the technical and non-technical leads, initiates contracting conversations with the vendor of choice.

**As you embark on this process, ensure leadership has a current college technology map*

Top Challenges With Student Success Tech



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Continually Improve the
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Leveraging prospective student data (CRM) to encourage enrollment *and* student success

Implementing academic planning tools with semester-by-semester course recommendations

Linking career and transfer planning tools with student program selection

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Leveraging Prospective Student Data to Encourage Enrollment and Success

Challenge

- Increasingly, colleges are collecting critical information about prospective students in a CRM, such as demographics, career goals, and possible financial barriers
- Due to lack of CRM integration with other college technologies (e.g., case management systems), that information is not being transitioned to the next stage of the student experience, missing an opportunity to better set students up for success



Strategies to Mitigate:

Assemble a working group across enrollment, advising, IT, and IR to **determine which CRM data are most critical to ongoing student advising**. By using the SIS as a connector, it's often possible to transfer key data from the CRM to a Case Management tool

The top barrier to transferring CRM data into a case management system involves how prospective student interactions are tracked. **Look into assigning prospective students a proxy for an enrolled student ID number**

Implementing Academic Planning Tools

Challenge

- Many colleges are adopting technologies to help students create semester-by-semester academic plans, moving students away from selecting courses ad hoc from a clunky registration system
- But academic planning technologies require complex integration with a college's registration and degree audit system, and even more complex human inputs. Often these systems display inaccurate information to students and require a major ongoing implementation lift from faculty and advisors



Strategies to Mitigate:

Before purchasing an academic planning technology, **clean up your degree audit** and ensure you have recommended course sequences articulated in excel or another widely used electronic format



Ensure you have a **bi-annual process for reviewing suggested course sequences and student course-taking patterns**. This a major college-wide initiative, involving faculty across departments, advisors, IR, and scheduling.

Linking Transfer and Career Planning Tools with Course Selection

Challenge

- While most colleges have purchased at least one career exploration tool, these resources typically sit in career services, unused by the vast majority of students
- Due to the realities of the vendor market, historic transfer and career planning tools are not integrated with course selection and registration systems. Students often pick a major without ever accessing the amazing career planning technologies available at the college.



Strategies to Mitigate:

Embed career planning technologies in your new student orientation and/or in kiosks around new student enrollment and advising offices.



Consider the merits of technically linking career planning and academic planning tools. A new category of technology merges these previously isolated technologies.

Encouraging Faculty and Staff Adoption of Case Management and Early Alert Tools

Challenge

- Today's early alert and case management tools depend on faculty and staff engagement and input.
- Without faculty reporting on student challenges in the classroom and without note-taking across advising and student services functions, these care networks cease to provide a holistic view of student needs and intervention opportunities



Strategies to Mitigate:

Prepare to launch (or re-launch) a **major communication campaign** with faculty and staff on the merits of early alert and case management systems. Successful campaigns often include:

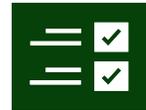
- Explanation of the 'why' behind the reform and how college infrastructure is being set up to effectively respond to information captured in the system
- Data on the effectiveness of these interventions, especially data on how technology-aided interventions can help close achievement gaps
- Examples of how coordination across student services and faculty helped a specific student at the college
- Strategies for closing the loop with faculty and staff, and ongoing evidence that these systems are eliminating inequities rather than deepening them

Linking Academic and Classroom Data with Student Services Data

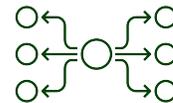
Challenge

- Tools to support classroom learning and curriculum are often kept separate from all other college technologies, making it difficult to link data across different types of student learning and experiences. This poses a challenge to understanding the holistic student experience

Strategies to Mitigate:



Determine **key student experience measures for the college to track**, and discuss the integration and process change requirements to achieve that holistic information.



Determine how the college can **organize to ensure that academic technologies and other types of student data collection are discussed in tandem on a regular basis.**



Determine **which faculty activities will be reported in the 'LMS' versus other technologies.**

Reconciling Analytics that Use the Same Data But Produce Different Outcomes

Challenge

- Due to an abundance of new student success analytics tools and the prevalence of in-house analytics, many colleges are told different stories with their data. This can lead to data distrust among faculty and staff
- Further, many technologies leverage these analytics to fuel conversations with students and make resource allocation decisions

Strategies to Mitigate:



Arrange **meetings with vendors** to discuss **data discrepancies** and ask for further information on the vendor methodology.



Look into **differences in data definitions** (e.g., how is part-time student calculated) and ensure data coding is clear



Bring analytics in-house. Most student success analytics can be performed by a recent undergraduate with a degree in data science or statistics.

Setting an Implementation Up for Success

- Clean-up source data (e.g., degree audit) before implementing a new technology initiative that requires that data
- Set measurable and attainable goals for each stage of the software implementation
- Ensure there is a clear training and communication plan for all end users of the technology – this will likely be a multi-year endeavor
- Be prepared to commit a member of your senior leadership team to oversee the initiative
- Ensure your CIO is fully brought into the ‘why’ and ‘how’ behind your student success strategy

Be prepared for the greatest gains in student success software to come from accompanying process changes.

Examples include:



Building new and meaningful communication channels among advising, tutoring, career services, financial aid, registration, and faculty



Creating a clear communication plan for when and how different types of students are contacted



Embedding a constructive attitude to data into everyday conversations across the college



Creating a student-focused course scheduling and program planning process

Following-up from Today



- Resources to support your efforts:
 - ✓ Navigating Student Success Technology Framework
 - ✓ Technology Mapping Workbook
 - ✓ Software Purchasing Guides
- Get in touch with additional questions, requests for resources, or thoughts. Sarah Zauner can be reached at sarah@theadacenter.org, or through the Ohio Student Success Center.