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Tracking Graduate Student Degree Completion Roundtable Discussion

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GRADUATE CENTER
FOR EXCELLENCE

CSRDE – National Symposium on Student Retention 2017

Destin, FL

Overview

- Why **I** care about tracking graduate degree completion
- Why **WE** should care about tracking graduate degree completion
- How do we get **OTHERS** to care about tracking graduate degree completion



Challenges Tracking Graduate Degree Completion

- No external mandate to report thus no incentive to track
- Lack of rubric or best practices
- Fewer traditional cohort model programs
- Increased variance in degree paths
- Graduate students not priority on campus



Factors to consider for cohorts

- Start terms
- Part v. full time status
- Degree level – PhD v Masters v certificate
- Academic program
- Combined degree
- Military deployment



St. Mary's Cohort Rubric

- Paralleled IPEDS where appropriate
- Summer/fall and spring cohorts
- Part time v. full time status at time of entry
- Combined degree programs excluded
 - Bachelor/master degree students
 - certificate -> masters
 - joint law/masters
- Code as single grad cohort in EMS (Banner)
- Stop outs remain in original cohort
- New degree program = new cohort



cohort_yr	2011						
	Registered	Graduated	Retain cum	Retain %	Grad Cum	Grad %	Persist %
Year	Value	Value					
Entering	211	0	211	100.0	0		
Year 0.5	185	11	196	92.9	11	5.2	92.9
Year 1	118	45	163	77.3	56	26.5	82.5
Year 1.5	71	47	118	55.9	103	48.8	82.5
Year 2	43	23	66	31.3	126	59.7	80.1
Year 2.5	60	10	70	33.2	136	64.5	92.9
Year 3	18	6	24	11.4	142	67.3	75.8
Year 3.5	18	8	26	12.3	150	71.1	79.6
Year 4	10	4	14	6.6	154	73.0	77.7
Year 4.5	9	1	10	4.7	155	73.5	77.7
Year 5							
Year 5.5							
Year 6							
Year 6.5							
Year 7							
Year 7.5							

Key

Registered	# registered students of entering cohort of year indicated NOT inclusive of graduated number
Graduated	# of graduated students of entering cohort for that semester
Retain Cum	Cumulative # students in entering cohort enrolled that semester = Registered + Graduated
Retain %	% students in entering cohort still enrolled but not graduated
Grad Cum	Cumulative # of students in entering cohort graduated
Grad %	% students in entering cohort graduated
Persist %	% students (Registered + Grad cum)



Data Analysis

- Compare rates by
 - degree program – level and academic discipline
 - demographics – gender, race/ethnicity/citizenship, residence
 - Part v. full time status
 - Face to face v. online v. hybrid
- Examine influence of student inputs (GPA, GRE/GMAT, TOEFL/IELTS) on degree attainment
- Comparison with other institutions



Roundtable Poll

- Do you track graduate student degree completion?
- For non-cohort programs, do you provide graduate students a degree plan?
- Do you have a leave of absence policy?
- Do you have an exit survey for graduate students regarding post-grad plans?



Questions to consider

- What outcomes represent graduate student success on your campus and how do you measure them?
- What data points need to be captured to measure graduate student success?
- What subpopulations on your campus are of interest with regard to graduate student success?
- Who is responsible/accountable for graduate student success?
- Who is responsible/accountable for graduate degree completion?



Questions to consider

- Why is graduate student degree completion important on your campus?
- How do you get campus support for tracking graduate degree completion?
- What barriers to graduate degree completion exist on your campus?
- What challenges exist to tracking graduate degree completion on your campus?
- How is graduate degree completion tracked on your campus?
- How is graduate degree completion data used on your campus?



Questions to consider

- With whom do you share graduate degree completion data, whether externally or internally?
- How do/would you cohort graduate students for tracking degree completion?
- How do you determine what is an appropriate expected time to degree for graduate programs?
- How do you drive graduate students to complete degree?
- How do you address drop outs? stop outs?



Questions to consider

- How do you handle change in degree program?
- How do you capture post-grad plans for graduate students?
- Why do graduate students fail to complete their degree on your campus?
- How can your campus improve graduate student degree completion rates?



Thanks for supporting graduate students!

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