

University of Northern Colorado

Scholarship & Creative Works @ Digital UNC

2020 Teaching and Learning Symposium Poster Presentations

Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning

9-11-2020

Proactive Academic Coaching: A Study on Why Students Leave College and How to Support Them

Samantha Black

Darren Ilett
darren.ilet@unco.edu

Jake Henderson

Follow this and additional works at: https://digscholarship.unco.edu/posters_2020



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Black, Samantha; Ilett, Darren; and Henderson, Jake, "Proactive Academic Coaching: A Study on Why Students Leave College and How to Support Them" (2020). *2020 Teaching and Learning Symposium Poster Presentations*. 2.

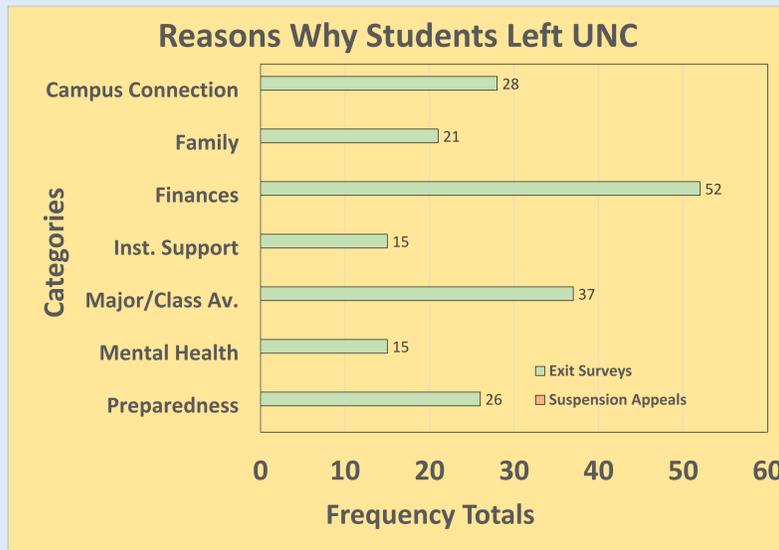
https://digscholarship.unco.edu/posters_2020/2

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning at Scholarship & Creative Works @ Digital UNC. It has been accepted for inclusion in 2020 Teaching and Learning Symposium Poster Presentations by an authorized administrator of Scholarship & Creative Works @ Digital UNC. For more information, please contact Jane.Monson@unco.edu.

Proactive Academic Coaching: A Study on Why Students Leave College after Their First Year and How to Support Them

Samantha Black, Darren Illet, and Jake Henderson

Exit Forms & Suspension Appeals



Background

Bears First is a program designed to help students in their first year of college by providing personalized coaching and advising, facilitating the development of individual academic success plans, and formalizing connections to campus resources and support systems. Bears First participants are identified through the Office of Admissions and many of the students classify as first generation. Participation in Bears First establishes a foundation for success at UNC through a structured approach to personalized proactive coaching and advising in an inclusive and caring environment.

Methods

Student suspension appeals and exit surveys were qualitatively analyzed for common themes through NVivo. Frequency totals were compiled that represent the most commonly cited reasons students either chose to leave UNC or were suspended from UNC. One focus group was conducted that facilitated discussion of student first semester experiences. Lastly, a survey based on questions similar to those in the focus group was sent to all Bears first students. Representative quotes and frequency totals from student responses were used to inform and synthesize findings from previous data.

"(Bears First) is really good to help with life circumstances, school stuff, and getting to connect."

"Having Bears First has been nice – having someone is really nice and very helpful."

Students Said...

"They (UNC generally) assume we come in knowing so much. Coming in they don't support us. We were confused on what we were supposed to do and the information we need to be successful."

Overview:

- Most commonly cited reasons for students leaving UNC were finances and major and class availability
- The most frequent circumstances leading to suspension were financial issues, mental/physical health struggles, not feeling prepared, homesickness, and being in the wrong major
- Bears first survey suggests positive experience with Bears first program

Bears First Survey

Survey Response Summary (Satisfaction, Struggles, and Resources)		
Student Satisfaction with Bears First Program	Somewhat or Very Satisfied	71.88%
	Very Satisfied	53.13%
	Somewhat Satisfied	18.75%
Biggest Struggles Mentioned by Students	Mental Health	17.75%
	Financial Issues	16.61%
	Time Management	13.61%
Most Frequently Used Resources	University Libraries	23.68%
	Office of Financial Aid	18.42%
	Counseling Center	16.67%

Student Quotes from Survey:

"I was nervous about the transition from high school to college and I figured this was an opportunity that would at the least make sure I had the classes I needed. But it turned out that it helped me in more ways than I thought it would."

"I know lots of kids on campus are shy and instead of asking questions they struggle to find answers. Being vulnerable is something that everyone struggles with in their life. Bears First allowed me to be vulnerable and ask questions."

Moving Forward

Improvements to UNC's support system, particularly in the domains of financial assistance and increased scaffolding for students transitioning to college, are highly recommended based on these findings. Likewise, expansion of the Bears First program to include other student populations may prove beneficial for promoting student success.