



Welcome to the A.M. Edition

Turning Student Data Into Safety Nets

January 22, 2019

If there's a college-bound young adult in your household, you're probably already aware of the special curricula, testing strategies, and tutoring their school may offer to help them get into their chosen college. But preparation for non-academic challenges — homesickness, budgeting and timely bill payments, second-guessing majors, and feeling welcome and accepted on campus — isn't as common. Considering [one-third of college students drop out](#) during or immediately after freshman year, many schools are searching for ways to ease this difficult transition.

One encouraging solution for improving student engagement is the growth of actionable data. Technology is everywhere on campus. Online classes, digital IDs, near-field communication payments and building access, and mobile apps create terabytes of payment, transaction, and check-in data. Administrators are starting to use this data to identify students who need a little extra help making the transition to college life. By identifying potential problems early, schools can help students make adjustments that improve their ability to transition and ultimately graduate.

Since digital student IDs can be programmed to provide access to dining and residence halls, labs, gyms, and other campus locations, the students who aren't using these facilities are easy to spot. Schools can check in with students who miss meals or come home late regularly to see if their behavior is symptomatic of a bigger issue. Once administrators understand the problem, they can recommend solutions, such as alternate campus meal options or assistance with class schedule planning.

The biggest benefit to the abundance of student data is the assistance it provides in resource allocation. For example, do recreation center check-ins peak late on Thursdays? Keep the facility open an hour later. Has cafeteria traffic has already doubled near a planned residence hall? Consider that additional traffic in expansion plans. Better access to campus services and amenities makes [students feel welcome and recognized as individuals](#), according to Associate Professor and Freshman Seminar Director Joe Cuseo. According to Cuseo, such positive feelings play an important role in "launching the quest for student success in an accurate direction."

Data alone doesn't improve student experience. But used effectively, it can help institutions make better decisions and intercede in a more timely manner to make that difficult first year a little easier.

Thanks for reading,

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