SMALL INVESTMENT, BIG RESULTS: THE IMPACT OF COMPLETION GRANTS ON STUDENT SUCCESS

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NASPA

CSU Graduation Initiative Symposium
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AGENDA

- About NASPA
- About Amelia
- Why Do Students Drop Out?
- Emergency Aid
- Completion Grants
  - In the News
  - National Trends
- Future Considerations
- Pair and Share Activity
- Questions
NASPA is the leading association for the advancement, health, and sustainability of the student affairs profession.

NASPA addresses common functional areas within student affairs (housing, advising, conduct, assessment) as well as broad higher education themes (access, persistence, and degree completion).

Our work provides high-quality professional development, advocacy, and research for 15,000 members in all 50 states, 25 countries, and 8 U.S. territories.
ABOUT AMELIA

- Connector (of people and ideas)
- Mix of generation X and millennial
- Not afraid to try and fail
- Fraternal twin
- Received an emergency loan in college
- First-generation college graduate
“Why do students drop out of college? Do you happen to have any data on this? I’m doing research on the Internet but thought I would ask you as well.”
IT IS TYPICALLY A CHALLENGE (OR MIX OF CHALLENGES) IN ONE OF THREE PRIMARY AREAS

- Financial
- Academic
- Social
COMMON INSTITUTION RESPONSES

Invest in new technology or consulting
- Predictive analytics; early alert systems

Start a new program or initiative
- Emergency aid; completion scholarships
- Intrusive advising; peer mentoring
- Additional on-campus work opportunities

Discuss return on investment
- What does it cost to retain a student?
- Are students prepared for the workforce?
Quick Spotlight on Emergency Aid
Audience Poll:
Does your institution have an emergency aid program?
How are institutions addressing complex financial needs such as food insecurity, homelessness, as well as unexpected emergencies such as a flat tire?

What functional units are involved in delivering timely aid to students?

What resources do institutions need to scale these efforts and measure the impact of these investments on student success?
NASPA’S LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS FOUND 500+ INSTITUTIONS WHO ARE DELIVERING EMERGENCY AID

Campus Interviews

*October – December 2015*

- 20+ institutions interviewed
- **Multiple perspectives**: financial aid, student affairs, development

National Survey

*January – March 2016*

- 695 institutions responded
- 523 have an existing emergency aid program
Emergency aid includes one-time grants, loans, and completion scholarships of less than $1,500 provided to students facing unexpected financial crisis, as well as food pantries, housing assistance, and transportation assistance.
### SIX TYPES OF EMERGENCY AID

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergency Aid Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Campus vouchers</strong></td>
<td>Cover materials from the bookstore or meals from the dining hall; few barriers to distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Completion scholarships</strong></td>
<td>Cover outstanding balances for students poised to graduate or continue to the next semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emergency loans</strong></td>
<td>Address hardship related to the timing of a student’s financial aid disbursement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food pantries</strong></td>
<td>Address food insecurity on campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Restricted grants</strong></td>
<td>Support students who experience unexpected hardship; typically require that students meet certain academic or other requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unrestricted grants</strong></td>
<td>Support students who experience unexpected hardship; typically awarded without restrictions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EMERGENCY AID IS NOT A NEW STUDENT SUCCESS STRATEGY

Survey Question: Approximately how long has your institution’s emergency aid program been established?

- Less than 1 year: 5%
- 1-2 years: 7%
- 3-5 years: 18%
- More than 5 years: 64%
- I don't know: 6%

Over 80% of colleges that have an emergency aid program have had it for 3 or more years.

Source: NASPA Landscape Analysis of Emergency Aid Programs
80% (n = 45) of participating institutions in California have an emergency aid program.

These institutions represent approximately 425,000 students.
ALL TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS ARE DELIVERING EMERGENCY AID

Survey Question: Does your institution have an emergency aid program?

SECTOR BREAKDOWN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>I don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public, 2-year</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private for-profit, 4-year or above</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private not-for-profit, 4-year or above</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public, 4-year or above</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey Question: Does your institution have an emergency aid program?

SIZE BREAKDOWN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size Category</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>I don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20,000 and above</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000 - 19,999</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000 - 9,999</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 - 4,999</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 1,000</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NASPA Landscape Analysis of Emergency Aid Programs
CALIFORNIA PARTICIPATION IN EMERGENCY AID LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

- 56 institutions in California representing approximately 452,000 students

Source: NASPA Landscape Analysis of Emergency Aid Programs
EMERGENCY LOANS ARE OFFERED MOST BY CAMPUSES

Survey Question: Which types of aid are offered at your institution?

Completion Scholarships: 33%
Emergency Loans: 67%
Restricted Small Grants: 47%
Unrestricted Small Grants: 54%
Vouchers: 47%
Food Pantry: 45%

Source: NASPA Landscape Analysis of Emergency Aid Programs
Types of Emergency Aid Programs (California)

Completion scholarships: 30%
Emergency loans: 78%
Restricted small grants: 40%
Unrestricted small grants: 53%
Vouchers: 58%
Food pantry: 35%

Source: NASPA Landscape Analysis of Emergency Aid Programs
MOST INSTITUTIONS DO **NOT** USE DATA TO PROACTIVELY IDENTIFY STUDENTS WHO MAY NEED AID

**Survey Question:** What prevents your institution from using data to proactively identify students who may benefit from emergency aid.

- Concerns about students’ privacy: 16%
- Not comfortable using data to target students: 19%
- Do not have capacity to analyze data: 30%
- Do not collect the data that is needed: 30%
- Too many students qualify: 42%
- Not clear what data is relevant: 40%

Only **23%** of institutions use data to proactively identify students.

Source: NASPA Landscape Analysis of Emergency Aid Programs
Spotlight on Completion Grants
Georgia State University – Panther Retention Grant

- Students are offered micro grants if they agree to participate in activities such as meeting with a financial counselor.
- 2,000 grants offered last year

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities – Research on Completion Grants

- Report: Foiling the Drop-out Trap

University Innovation Alliance

- New completion grant program for 11 institutions
**How are completion grants administered?**

Department primarily responsible for administering completion grants

(n = 127)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic affairs</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni relations</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President/Chancellor's office</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student affairs</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NASPA Landscape Analysis of Emergency Aid Programs
WHAT IS THE CURRENT LEVEL OF SCALE?

Number of students served annually (n = 104)

- 73% served in 500-999
- 25% served in 50-499
- 2% served in less than 50

Source: NASPA Landscape Analysis of Emergency Aid Programs
WHAT IS THE AVERAGE AWARD AMOUNT?

Average aid amount distributed annually (n = 82)

- Less than $100: 1%
- $100-$499: 6%
- $500-$999: 16%
- $1,000 or more: 77%

Source: NASPA Landscape Analysis of Emergency Aid Programs
WHAT IS THE ANNUAL BUDGET?

Annual budget (n = 80)

- Less than $10,000: 18%
- $10,000-$99,999: 61%
- $100,000-$499,999: 15%
- $500,000-$999,999: 5%
- $1,000,000 or more: 1%

Source: NASPA Landscape Analysis of Emergency Aid Programs
WHAT ARE THE FUNDING SOURCES?

Primary source of funding for completion grants (n = 125)

- University foundation/individual donors: 44%
- Operating budget: 26%
- Other: 8%
- Vendors: 0%
- Don’t know: 8%
- Federal or state government assistance programs: 3%
- Student senate: 0%
- External funders: 6%
- Campus fundraisers: 3%
- Alumni association: 2%

Source: NASPA Landscape Analysis of Emergency Aid Programs
WHAT ARE THE PRIMARY COMMUNICATION CHANNELS?

Primary communication channel(s) to inform students about completion grants (n = 125)

- Direct communication to certain student populations: 24%
- E-mail or other mass communication to all students: 6%
- Institution newspaper: 2%
- Institution website: 9%
- Student orientation meetings: 2%
- Word of Mouth: 25%
- Other: 26%
- Don't know: 6%

Source: NASPA Landscape Analysis of Emergency Aid Programs
WHAT ABOUT DATA PRIVACY?

- Several institutions are using early alerts and other proactive approaches to identify students
- **Predictive models** include data that identify students who might have financial challenges (high school GPA; free or reduced lunch recipient)
Campus Examples: Reclamation and Last-Dollar Models
University of Memphis – Finish Line Program
- Operated by Division of Academic Innovation and Support Services
- Students must have earned 90+ hours and stopped out
- Support includes grant funds, waived financial holds
- 100+ students served so far

Morgan State University – Reclamation Initiative
- The university offers aid to any student who has earned 90+ credits, at least a 2.0 GPA, and has stopped out for a semester
- Institution invites students to return to the university by applying for the grant
- 56 students have returned to the university since the start of the program

University of Central Florida

- Knight Success Grant covers tuition and fees
- Students must be in their final semester or within less than 18 hours of degree completion
- All other financial aid options must have been exhausted
- Students with a 2.75 GPA get first consideration

Virginia Commonwealth University

- Graduation Funds program identifies students who have a 3.0 GPA or less, 103+ credits, and an unpaid balance of $5,000 or less.
- Program will fund half of the money owed, up to a maximum of $2,500
- Program supports about 100 students per year

Future Considerations
# READINESS RUBRIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forming</td>
<td>The institution is identifying a course of action for the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Decisions have been made and/or implementation has started</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functioning</td>
<td>The most critical pieces are in place to execute the work needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exemplar</td>
<td>Well-positioned to scale and sustain efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>Considerations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Clear office/department/individual responsible for the program’s implementation and success; organization of resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Securing Resources</td>
<td>Allocating and leveraging multiple sources to secure enough funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Implications</td>
<td>Adherence to relevant state and federal guidelines for distributing financial aid; clear requirements and application processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Use of technology to administer aid efficiently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing Awareness</td>
<td>Methods for informing students, faculty, administrators, and external stakeholders about the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measuring Success</td>
<td>Use of data to identify students who could benefit from the program; assess the impact of the program</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
10-minute pair and share (with handout)
Which capacity areas need more attention to scale your program?
IT’S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS!

- **Institutional Research**: early-alert/proactive identification of students
- **Financial Aid**: disbursement of funds
- **Academic Affairs**: budget authority for the program
- **Student Affairs**: financial literacy programs; management of interventions

Example: Boise State University’s Final Mile Program

- Institution allocates $27,000 to help meet the financial needs of students who do not register when they are close to graduation
- Joint effort between the offices of the provost, advising, institutional research, and information technology

IN CLOSING: 5 INSTITUTION NEEDS

- A **common language** to describe and discuss the resources
- **Procedures** to guide the development of new and existing programs
- Better **use of data** to identify students who need aid and assess effect of programs on student success
- Increased **leveraging of technology** to deliver resources efficiently
- More communication and **sharing of resources** across institutions and networks
Questions?
THANK YOU!

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