OIR

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives

NOVA
Northern Virginia Community College

RESEARCH NOTE

Loss/Momentum Framework at NOVA Series: 6. SWOT Findings

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Loss/Momentum Framework at NOVA:
Action Plan – Findings from Strengths-Weakness-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) Analysis

This Research Note describes the Action Plan using findings from the Strengths-Weakness-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis.

Action Plan: Findings from SWOT Analysis

	Connection	Entry	Progress	Completion
Strengths	• Letter of Acknowledgement • Admin Packet • HSO (weekly listing) • HS Parents & Senior letters/cards • Campus Visits • Start Strong • Dual Enrollment Program • Financial Aid Sessions for parents and students • Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program: powerful recruitment tool • Presence at local military installations • CBOs • Great promotion of Cybersecurity thanks to governor	• Math/ English Redesign • Policy Mandate • Student Life and Club • GPS and Pathway advisors • Assigned faculty advising as an expectation • DE and CBO staff hel students register • Online admission application; immediate admission for most students uponsubmission	• Increased number of full time students • High percentage of students intending to transfer • Enrollment of large number of high school seniors • Various retention efforts • Emphasis on Student Success • Focus on Students • Process Improvement • Financial Aid • Extending high-demand programs to more campuses (e.g.,Engineering) • Virtual advising • Strong faculty advising in many A.A.S.programs • Clear, mandated curriculum pathway in medical and Veterinary Technology programs and few core electives in	• Guaranteed Admissions Agreements • Strong relationship with GMU • Pathway to the Baccalaureate • GPS Initiative • ATD efforts • Embedded transfer advisors from universities • Were SOC members, maintain GoArmyEd pathws

		Connection	Entry	Progress	Completion
				many A.A.S. programs • Articulation agreements and online advising sheets that guide students preparing to transfer • Availability of online courses/multiple terms	
Weaknesses		• Admit Packet, electronic format • Enrollment cancellation • Lack of differentiation of process for older students • Intention of applicants? • Image in a highly educated region; hard to reach parents and hard to convince guidance counselors that NOVA is more than a last resort • Hard to promote individual programs • Lack of specialized programs and services marketed towards adult learners	• VPT Issues • Contextualization • Lack of strong early alert system • Uneven advising for continuing students • Lack of comprehensive, user-friendly online self-advisement system • Not always easy to get personalized help • No guidance when selecting a program as part of the application process • Not good at recruiting our own Workforce students • Connecting with and advising adult learners at the beginning of their education	• Part time students • Work / Study Balance • Primary Earners • Lack of online, user-friendly degree progress auditing tools • Lack of internships • Too many students still self-advise • Far too many General Education courses, some of which don't meet university General Education requirements • Second course in a sequence may not run; major problem if students need 201-202 of a world language • Too many courses overall; this spreads us too thin and can lead to confusion about appropriate choices to fulfill electives • Too many programs with 0-5 graduates per year; many career studies certificates never have many grads and do not meet Gainful Employment requirements. Trying to keep every program of interest to	• Students transfer without degree • Lack of Career Placement of NOVA Graduates • Weak links to local businesses • Lack of alignment between some curricula and transfer or employer needs • Many advisory committees rarely meet, very few meet twice per year as required by NOVA policy, and at most advisory committee meetings faculty talk more than advisors • Composition of advisory committees good but not great so some programs don't get the best advice to prepare students for employment • Transferability of courses? • Even if courses transfer, they may not be applicable to a particular degree; some are not applicable to almost any programs • Students hate to take PED and SDV, which are required by VCCS policy but

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				faculty leads to allowing classes to run with very small enrollment, which in turn requires is to not run developmental classes as small as they should be. • More dynamic scheduling to meet the needs of working adults. • Inconsistencies in process and service by location	do not meet transfer requirements in most programs at most senior institutions • Providing students with a compelling reason to complete credential (prior to transfer)

Opportunities		• Social Media
		• Customized Admit Packets
		• Define and document a "next steps" pathway at every stage
		• Target recruitment of special populations (veterans, incumbent workers)
		• Marketing
		• Adult student population
		• Veterans
		• Credit for work experience and other prior learning (licenses, AP)
		• Publicize the CPL already available; NOVA is a leader in this area, especially for military and veteran students
			• Linked Classes
			• (English & Social Studies)
			• Technology Tools
			• Block Scheduling and recommended courses by major
			• VCCS Mathways
			   o Co-requisite model
			   o Improving VPT
			• Trends in enrollment and success for credit math courses for those college ready
			• Math VPT preparation?
			• Work with our Workforce staff to develop links between training and credit courses
			• Packaging working adult friendly programs
				• Financial Aid
				• Beyond Financial Aid
				• Flexible class hours
				• Improved Student Services
				• Target programming to better accommodate student demand
				• Increase scholarship aid available through the Foundation
				• Guided pathways
				• Stackable credentials?
				• Good time to close not-very-useful programs
				• Eliminate courses offered primarily because someone wants to teach them
				• Reduce number of courses approved to meet NOVA General Education requirements—be sure those remaining transfer well as equivalent courses that meet most universities' general education requirements
					• Reverse Transfer with area Universities
					• Process Improvement
					• Building strong links to local businesses
					• Internship Programs
					• Create job placement centers
					• Find employers willing to host interns
					• Enforce advisory committee policies (have good committees, meet at least twice annually and LISTEN to them)
					• Keep required courses to the minimum needed (don't pad with core courses to increase FTES in that discipline)

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Threats	• Improvement of Labor Market • Fulltime employment • Day Care/ Family Issues • Transportation • Cost of text books • Competition from for-profit schools with easier processes • Students unable to qualify for financial aid (SAP and other reasons) • Negative press • Other choices for education in region • Nasty articles by Jay Mathews • RBC and senior institutions offering DE in our area with lower standards (so schools happy because anyone can teach or take anything)	• Lack of alternatives (Workforce Classes) • (Adult Education Classes) • Offering services to scale and using technology to expand reach (ex. Orientation)	• Economic challenges • Lack of role models • One-time financial crisis support • Lack of specific goals • Underprepared for College Work • High opportunity cost • Much pressure to let students take any course regardless of college readiness—much press about how developmental courses are a waste of time and $$ • Some faculty perceive pressure to lower standards so more students will pass (but then this hurts us when they go to work or transfer and can't read, write or add)	• Labor Market value of Associate Degree • Universities encourage students to transfer prior to completion • Ability to track students who leave the state • Abundance of other education opportunities in the region • Virginia's universities are not part of one unified system, so their requirements for programs in a given field are remarkably different from one another, making it almost impossible to develop one curriculum that transfers equally well to even just the most common receiving institutions