Part of the FAM: Mentoring First-Generation College Students

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Prepárate™:
Educating Latinos for the Future of America
Today’s Agenda

• Welcome and introductions
• Institutional context
• FAM program overview
• Faculty and student insight
• Challenges and opportunities
• Sharing of best practices & discussion
About St. Mary’s University
Understanding Who We Are

• Catholic, Hispanic Serving Institution

• 13:1 student to faculty ratio

• Committed to hiring professors who are passionate about teaching
Fall 2010 Enrollment

- 4,105 total enrollment
- 2,437 undergraduate students
- 585 freshmen, 153 transfer students
- 70% Hispanic
- 50% Pell eligible
Fall 2010 Freshman Profile

- **Top majors**
  - Biology
  - Psychology
  - Political Science

- **SAT/ACT**
  - middle 50% range
    - 950-1120 SAT (CR+M)
    - 20-25 ACT

- **78% Hispanic**
- **88% from Texas**
- **86% live on campus**
- **90% from public high schools**
Parental education

**Fall 2010 freshmen** (95% reporting)

- 10%—neither parent finished high school
- 43%—neither parent had an associate’s or bachelor’s degree

**Fall 2010 transfers** (79% reporting)

- 14%—neither parent finished high school
- 50%—neither parent had an associate’s or bachelor’s degree
Vision 2012 Strategic Plan

Retention and graduation goals:

- Increase to 82% the retention rate from first to second year (current average 79%)
- Increase to 63% the six-year graduation rate (current average 60%)
Access is not enough.....

Admission opens the door to higher education, but persistence paves the way to graduation.
Created the Office of Student Retention

- Three student interns
- Modest operations budget
- Focus in 3 areas:
  - Student outreach
  - Data analysis
  - Campus policies and procedures
Leadership

- Retention Leadership Team:
  - Assistant VP
  - 3 Vice Presidents:
    - Enrollment Management
    - Student Development
    - Academic Affairs

- Retention Committee:
  - Faculty (4)
  - Student Government
  - Academic Advising
  - Institutional Research
  - Academic Assessment
  - Financial Assistance
  - Dean of Students
  - Marianists
University Reach

Retention Management

University Ministry

Residence Life

Student Life

Career Services

Undergraduate Admission

Financial Assistance

Business Office

University Divisions
- Academic Affairs
- Administration and Finance
- Enrollment Management
- Mission & Identity
- Student Development
FAM Program
Background

• Research has documented the positive impact faculty and student out-of-classroom interaction has on student success
• St. Mary’s is committed to a personal approach to advising and education
• Our faculty have shown an interest in this type of engagement
Goals of the program

• Increase the quantity and quality of student-faculty interaction for participants
• Provide additional support for first-generation students
• Ultimately, increase retention and graduation rates
Faculty Academic Mentor Program (FAM)

- Faculty Academic Mentor (FAM) groups
  Pilot in Fall 2009
  - 21 faculty mentors and 74 students
  - Student groups of 3-4 met with faculty mentor 3-4 per semester for a meal (costs covered by OSR)
FAM cont.

Secured funding for the 2010-11 program

- Focused on 1st generation students (FF & TR)
- Recruited 16 faculty members to mentor 66 students
- Offered a one-day training for mentors
- All participants went on an overnight retreat
- Provided a stipend to faculty; a book scholarship to students who completed the fall semester
- Commitment was for the entire academic year
FAM group profile

66 student participants

- First-time freshmen: 74%
- First time transfers: 15%
- Returning students: 11%
- Hispanic: 92%
- Male: 36%
- Female: 64%

Academic school distribution:
- Sciences: 32%
- Humanities: 55%
- Business: 14%

Pell grant eligible—84%

41% come from families where neither parent finished HS
Early outcomes

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<th>Retention</th>
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<tr>
<td>First-time freshmen</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>94% retention rate</td>
<td>(all FF at 91%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>First time transfers</td>
<td>-0</td>
<td>100% retention rate</td>
<td>(all TR at 84%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Returning students</td>
<td>-0</td>
<td>100% retention rate</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>95% retention rate</td>
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<th>GPA</th>
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<tr>
<td>First-time freshmen:</td>
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<tr>
<td>69% GPA 3.0 or above</td>
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<td>(55% for all first-time freshmen)</td>
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Faculty involvement
Faculty involvement

- Faculty coordinator
- Recruiting & training faculty members
- On-going communication with faculty mentors
- Experience as a mentor
Student Involvement
Student involvement

• Recruiting of student intern

• Application/information to eligible students

• Duties of student intern

• Experience as a mentee
Challenges and opportunities
Keys to Success

• The people involved!!!

• Institutional commitment to students’ success backed by resources (time, people, money)

• Faculty coordinator, student intern
Challenges

- More students than covered by the budget
- Difficult to monitor mentor-mentee involvement
- Scheduling and coordinating—individually and as a group
Discussion

Questions

Best Practices
Contact us!

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