

# Data Narrative Exercise

*Joint Directors Meeting 12/8/2020*

**Purpose:** Use data from 2019 CCSSE and SENSE surveys to tell a story about our students and their college experience

CCSSE: Community College Survey of Student Engagement

SENSE: Survey of Entering Student Engagement

**Focus:** Reasons for attending college, barriers to persistence, and how Helena College is addressing those barriers.

## **Exercise:**

- Small group discussion:
  - Randomly assigned to 4 groups
  - Suggest one person in each group pulls up PPT (in Teams) and shares screen
  - 3 sets of data: discuss each set together before moving on to the next one
    - Each slide has a few prompts to start, but you are welcome to build the story with other discussion points, as well
    - For set 3, I suggest you choose 2 of the 4 sets of data to focus on – there's a lot of data, but it's similar for each set
  - Prepare a short narrative to share with the group
- Large group discussion:
  - Will be recorded
  - Share narratives
  - Find similarities and differences
  - Identify what we are doing well and what we can improve
  - Brainstorm action items

# Data Narrative Exercise Large Group Discussion

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## Support Services

- Students are generally aware of services and see their importance, but are not proactive in using the services.
  - Financial aid: 60% very important, 84% of new knew about it, 35% had used at least twice
  - Advising: 68% very important, 87% of new were aware, 65% used at least twice in last academic year
  - Career counseling: 38% very important, 35% of new were aware, 11% used at least twice
  - Tutoring: 42% very important, 94% of new aware, 26% used at least twice
- Financial aid
  - May assume they are not eligible until someone encourages them to find out
  - Office also handles scholarships, grants, etc – more than just federal financial aid
  - 40% of students indicated finances as a potential barrier – our neediest group is likely those who are just above Pell-eligibility
- Many of the barriers affecting students are non-academic, external influences
  - 40% finances
  - 35% working full-time
  - 28% caring for dependents
  - Wellness is one area not covered in CCSSE.
- Nice to know that students have support from friends and family, but do they feel the college supports them?
  - More than 88% of students' friends and families were quite a bit or extremely supporting of their attending Helena College
  - 55% of students feel that the college emphasizes providing financial support
  - 34% of students feel that the college emphasizes helping them cope with non-academic responsibilities
  - 80% of students feel that the college emphasizes providing them the support they need to succeed
- Gap in people who thought advising important and satisfaction
  - Are they frustrated with the process of advising vs the actual advising they receive – eg, students are sometimes upset that they have to have an appointment overall, or they are frustrated with course availability rather than actual quality of help they are getting from advisors
  - A lot has changed, such as more flexible formats for advising, focus on case management
  - No current process for feedback about advising – has been done off and on in past
  - Will likely always be a gap in importance and use/satisfaction – human nature
- Do students know what “student services” entails? How do we help?
- **Recommendations**
  - Use this information to tailor how we communicate to new students about services available to them (Donna, Steph, Sarah working on this)

- Use case management model to educate students about services and direct students to services at point of need. Students may need advisors to make appointments for them at first, but should be encouraged to be progressively more independent
- Ensure services are streamlined and efficient to minimize barriers to usage
- Information about students' wellness will be obtained through a survey in Spring 2021.

## Careers and Job-Related Skills

- Students come to Helena College to change careers or to obtain/update job-related skills
  - 36% to change careers
  - 70% to obtain or update job-related skills
  - Specific skill sets can give employees a boost in pay or opportunity for advancement
- Barriers
  - These students are likely also working: 53% of students work more than 20 hours a week
    - Divides focus of students
    - May be difficult to schedule around
    - Would like to know if working students feel supported by employers, especially regarding schedule flexibility for attending classes, taking exams, etc.
    - More internship opportunities present an ideal way to help students manage expenses while still learning
  - Also likely to be caring for dependents (28% spend more than 20 hours a week)
- Financial support: gap in importance (60%), awareness (84% of new students) and use (35% used at least twice in last academic year).
  - Increase understanding of all services available
- Career counseling and job placement assistance: larger gap in importance and use
  - Increase understanding and awareness
  - Gap in how many students attend for career-related goals and how important they feel services are
    - 38% consider career counseling very important
    - 41% consider job placement very important
- Large population of non-degree students – why are they here?
  - 71% of students indicated self-improvement/personal enjoyment as a reason for attending
  - “Self-improvement” could mean career advancement, etc,
  - Anecdotally: these students are getting one or two courses for transfer
- **Recommendations:**
  - Prioritize consistency, sustainability, and visibility of career services.
    - Connect all students to career opportunities
    - More internships and opportunities for students to work and learn at the same time
    - Educate students on value of these services
  - Identify skills that employers want employees to learn – micro-credential model similar to UM-Western
    - Need for employers to follow-through by enrolling employees
    - Caution against designing microcredentials that may get students stuck in entry-level positions

### Questions

- Next CCSSE/SENSE is 2022 – a lot has changed since 2019, how much would COVID change these answers?
  - CCSSE: Spring 2022
  - SENSE: Fall 2022
  - Will be interested to see difference in data with GP initiatives

### Recommendations

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- Ensure services are streamlined and efficient to minimize barriers to usage
- Prioritize consistency, sustainability, and visibility of career services.
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