Student Success Coaching: Intentional Training for Professional and Program Development

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Abstract

The purpose of my research was to improve the effectiveness of the Student Success Coaching Program’s retention and outreach of students on academic probation and midterm deficiencies. The research question is: How can I professionally develop the student success coaches, or peer coaches, to better engage with their nontraditional students? Research suggests that coaching programs must first define the unique support they provide students to be fully proactive. How can diversity and inclusion training add to the effectiveness of the program and the coach’s impact on students throughout the academic semester? The significance of my research was the value of academic success coaches’ engagement with nontraditional students at the University of San Diego. Through interviews with coaches and surveys conducted for midterm deficiency outreach around training curriculum and application, my findings indicate that partnerships and identity training support student success coaches in their sessions with clients.

Keywords: academic coaching, retention, nontraditional students, academic persistence, sense of belonging
Table of Contents

Abstract .......................................................................................................................... 2
Background ...................................................................................................................... 6
Context ........................................................................................................................... 9
Methodology 1 ............................................................................................................... 12
Methodology 2 ............................................................................................................. 13
  Cycle 1: Prepare Student Coaches ............................................................... 14
    Observation and Planning ........................................................................... 15
    Critical Reflection and Findings .............................................................. 17
    Modifications and Planning ................................................................. 21
      Results of Suggested Changes to Training Curriculum ......................... 24
  Cycle 2: Training Formats and Midterm Deficiency Outreach .......................... 24
    Observation ....................................................................................................... 26
    Critical Reflection ........................................................................................... 28
    Planning .............................................................................................................. 29
    Implementation .................................................................................................... 30
  Cycle 3: Shifting Gears - Midterm Deficiency Outreach and COVID-19 .......... 31
    Observation ....................................................................................................... 31
    Participants Reflection .................................................................................. 33
    Critical Reflection and Future Planning ..................................................... 38
Summary ...................................................................................................................... 43
Recommendations ....................................................................................................... 45
Limitations .................................................................................................................. 46
Conclusion ................................................................................................................. 48
References .................................................................................................................. 49
Appendix A ............................................................................................................... 53
Appendix B ............................................................................................................... 54
Appendix C ............................................................................................................... 55
Appendix D ............................................................................................................... 56
Appendix E ............................................................................................................... 57
Appendix F ............................................................................................................... 58
Appendix G ............................................................................................................... 59
Appendix H ............................................................................................................... 60
Appendix I ............................................................................................................... 61
Appendix J ............................................................................................................... 62
Student Success Coaching: Intentional Training for Professional and Program Development

The Student Success Coaching Program at the University of San Diego (USD)’s Center for Student Success (CSS) is the only coaching program that serves as both a retention support program for students who are facing academic probation status and an experiential learning program for students interested in a career in the fields of psychology. This program provides a unique approach around student success coaching, a growing high-impact practice and program in the field of higher education. Prior to the Student Success Coaching Program’s existence, the students at the University of San Diego only received a formal email or letter to inform them of their academic status. This official communication and lack of change in the number of students on academic probation led to the partnership with the College of Arts and Sciences and the Wellness division to develop a program that serves as a confidential resource for all students on academic probation. The Student Success Coaching program serves many students each academic semester, pulling their participants through academic probation workshops held by the College of Arts and Sciences deans, a representative from the Center for Health and Wellness Promotion, and the director of the CSS.

I began working as the graduate assistant at the CSS in June 2018, and my primary role was overseeing the management, coordination, and assessment of the program. My predecessor had begun the assessment of the program through their action research study, focusing on the professional development of the student success coaches (Shivers, 2018). Through their research, assessment extended to surveys about the training experience, a midsemester check-in with the student success coaches, a satisfaction survey completed by clients after their third or fourth appointments, and an exit interview completed by the student success coaches at the end of the
semester. Tracking assessment was also done to track how many appointments each coach completed to ensure they saw a similar number of students. A specific challenge around gathering further assessments about the holistic nature of the program and the academic performance of the students was because the coaching program remains a confidential resource under the license of a clinical psychologist.

I first began questioning the effectiveness of the coaching program during my second semester working as a graduate assistant at the office. I understood the purpose of this program was to serve students who were facing academic difficulty. However, I also saw that the student leaders’ or student success coaches’ primary objective was to develop the experience working with the college-aged population in a confidential, one-on-one setting to prepare them for a career in psychology or therapy. In my years as a graduate assistant there, many of the student success coaches went on to attend psychology graduate programs and physical therapy programs. I also noticed that the student success coaches misunderstood some of the students they were serving. These students were those who did not identify as a traditional college student at the University of San Diego.

I decided to focus my research on the overall development of the program by adjusting the training curriculum and creating resources to circumnavigate the support for students who were facing academic probation. There was no way to fully understand, through action research, how effective the coaching program was in service of academic success, due to the limitations of FERPA and the confidential nature of the program. However, it was clear to me the development needed for the coaches to be effective in their sessions was the resources and knowledge around student populations such as military-connected students, international students, student-athletes, and other underrepresented students. The overall demographics of the coaches are traditional college-aged, white, female, students from various degree of socioeconomic status. The coaches
go through an extensive training process and were expected to complete a class called Current Approaches to Peer Assistance before applying to become a coach. Through my observations of the coaches, I found that additional resources were needed to develop the knowledge the coaches required in their sessions to understand their clients’ (undergraduate students) experience.

The purpose of my study was to improve our Student Success Coaching program to create a sense of belonging and persistence in academics for students who are on academic probation. Through the professional development of our student success coaches, I examined the effectiveness of the coaching program, as it pertains to students’ academic persistence and the relationship it has for getting off academic probation. Moving through the focus groups and interviews, I was able to understand the peer-to-peer interaction and how it motivates students to build their self-efficacy and achieve their goals. Through research and intentional curriculum development, I learned more about how student coaches approached their work with students, whether on academic probation or not, to better understand the students’ transition to college. Within this research, I learned more about myself as a professional staff member dedicated to undergraduate student retention.

The following questions shaped my research and interaction with my program:

- How can coaching instill resilience in students on academic probation?
- How does the training curriculum support student success coaches work with their clients/students?
- What additional information can we learn from the students to improve the Student Success Coaching (SSC) program?

**Background**

Through this action research, I hoped to understand the role of the student success coach and their impact on students’ success. Robinson and Gahagan (2010) defined academic coaching
as a “one-to-one interaction with a student focusing on strengths, goals, study skills, engagement, academic planning, and performance” (p. 27). Peer mentoring can be used as a tool to empower student’s leadership development (Moayedi, 2015). Mentors and coaches provide relevant insight, especially if they have gone through similar experiences such as academic probation or changing degrees. Han et al. (2017) explored how a positive academic mindset can help students persist with their schoolwork. Students’ self-efficacy, motivation, and sense of belonging can all impact how they achieve academic success. Like Robinson and Gahagan (2010) discussed, most academic coaching programs or student success coaching programs are not based on specific theory or framework. However, the Student Success Coaching program at USD uses motivational interviewing as the primary tool in coaching clients. Motivational interviewing (MI) places the agency in the client’s hands to change behavior and engage with new goal setting tactics. Miller and Rollnick (2012) defined motivational interviewing as a conversational style “designed to strengthen personal motivation for and commitment to a specific goal by eliciting and exploring the person’s own reasons for change within an atmosphere of acceptance and compassion” (p. 160). This tactic not only adheres with a strengths-based approach toward change in behavior management (for the clients) but also to support the critical inquiry asked of both the student success coaches and the clients.

Student success requires multiple conditions to be effective (Kuh et al., 2011), one of which is the collaboration and the shared vision of student success between the student affairs and academic affairs departments. This partnership and the work the CSS has done can be seen through the action research project of Kaila Shivers (2018). There was an interdepartmental relationship between the Division of Student Affairs, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Center for Health and Wellness Promotion in the culmination of the Student Success Coaching program at USD. Claire Robinson and Jimmie Gahagan (2010) described this collaboration and
discuss how academic coaching improved students’ success at the University of South Carolina. Through the practice of reflection and goal setting, these academic coaching programs provided students with the opportunity to “engage in the process of integrative learning” (Robinson et al., 2010, p. 160).

Han et al. (2017) studied academic mindset and its impact on student success in college, looking specifically at self-efficacy, sense of belonging, and academic motivation. They suggested that if advisors were aware of when students are having low self-efficacy, they may attempt to motivate the student to believe in their goals and abilities. In my research, this was an example of coaching as an intervention method that allowed students to continue developing self-efficacy and a grit academic mindset to persist through challenges. Training the advisors, mentors, and coaches in identity development would benefit the sense of belonging in the undergraduate students that they serve in retention programs, especially if these student leaders or professional staff members looked like them or came from a similar background. Han et al. (2017) found these statistics to be overrepresented, but the pattern to be significant and comparable to other research. The research so far has suggested a combination of both academic skills set, counseling needs, and diversity initiatives to be the forefront of program development from the student and academic affairs collaboration.

The student success coaches helped me understand how effective peer-to-peer interactions were needed to support their peers and to enhance their professional development. I focused on equity and inclusion in our training, so the student coaches felt more prepared to provide relevant resources to our nontraditional college students, such as international students and military-connected students. Further, the Student Success Coaching program has a long history of interventions and processes that support the coach’s professional development. My research focused on understanding the nuances of students’ interactions with each other and how
their ideas around academic persistence, student success, and sense of belonging changes. “When Bandura (1997) theorized the concept, learning persistence was considered one of three primary behavioral outcomes influenced by self-efficacy beliefs” (Han et al., 2017, p. 1121). This understanding of learning persistence connected to self-efficacy showcased student endurance through challenges, specifically academic concerns such as academic probation. “Students’ sense of belonging is closely related to their academic achievement, retention, engagement, satisfaction with student life, mental health, and overall well-being” (Samura, 2016, p. 135). These finding are supported by a history of similar research (Astin, 1993; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Bowman, 2010; Hausmann, Schofield, & Woods, 2007; Hurtado & Carter, 2007; Johnson et al., 2007). The model of student success, as defined, closely relates to sense of belonging defined by the participants of the study.

The various peer-to-peer roles are defined as mentors, coaches, tutors, and advisors and exhibit similar impact on students’ success and retention. The Student Success Coaching program at USD refers to their student leaders as student success coaches, focused on the holistic support of their clients (who are their peers) to overcome academic challenges. When developing academic coaching programs and the curriculum, there must be a balance of intentional mentorship, academic focus, and understanding of the institutional resources available to support student’s goal development and academic success.

**Context**

During my first semester as the graduate assistant in the CSS at the University of San Diego, I worked with the Associate Director, in training and implementing the Student Success Program. Discussions in planning for the program focused on how to bolster the skills of the coaches within the initiatives of the University and the Division of Strategic Initiatives and Planning. I worked with them to secure permission and information about the professional
development of the coaches, as well as my authorization of implementing midsemester check-ins and supervising the student success coaches.

My role as a supervisor to the student coaches allowed me to have one-on-one conversations with all coaches midway through their coaching experience. A general theme that stemmed from this check-in was a question on “What do we provide for our clients?” This was about the struggles of providing solutions or relevant resources for nontraditional students. These questions informed my research question on how effective the program was at supporting students who fit the category of nontraditional.

A study on the effectiveness of academic coaching for students who were academically at risk by Madeline Kyle Capstick (2018), found students were more likely to be retained if they underwent coaching. This study investigated the changes in GPA, course credit persistence, and academic success and performance. Capstick (2018) recommended a counseling focus to aid at-risk students toward academic success, which USD’s program already does. Through my cycles, I saw the effectiveness of this facet in our program in supporting students in achieving their academic goals.

I managed the logistics of the coaching program by advising student success coaches, co-develop coaching training, and participated as a coach. With the help of the supervising clinical psychologist, associate director of the CSS, and the practicum intern from the Center of Health and Wellness Promotion, we focused on developing a program that assists the professional development needs of our coaches and the support of the students on academic probation. Specifically, the associate director and I created training sessions that prepared students to be a coach and how to work with our diverse student populations. My impact as a coach and a graduate assistant was through the support and development of the counseling staff.
The University of San Diego had implemented a strategic plan called StrideTo2024 (University of San Diego, 2020), where its first goal stated the desire to enhance student learning and success. Under the CSS, the Student Success Coaching program became a relevant program in the completion of this goal by focusing on strategic initiatives of student success. As a graduate assistant, there was a desire to understand what students needed to promote success, sense of belonging, well-being and satisfaction. Historically, however, the Student Success Coaching program had yet to implement a system to measure and assess the significance of the program in relation to these initiatives. Generally, we provided satisfaction surveys that combine both Likert-scale and open-ended questions. The implementation of these findings was seen through training curriculum development and structure of the management of the program.

Student retention was the focus of the Student Success Coaching program. The program provides a transitory measure for students who are not used to the culture of college and the resources available for them to succeed academically. The challenges I faced during the research and my time as a graduate assistant were the organizational changes when the director of the CSS had left. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic caused the university to move to remote learning, and I was told that the coaching program was canceled. During this time, I moved forward and supported midterm deficiency outreach to students who received one or more D’s or F’s in the midterm grades. The additional responsibility of midterm deficiency (MTD) outreach management developed my supervisory skills, advising philosophy, and my understanding of the student experience and what may be needed to change retention tactics in our office. Another challenge was working with other departments, such as academic affairs and the registrar’s office. The CSS was notified belatedly when dates to specific policies around leave of absence and withdrawal, pass/fail policies, or the deadline to drop a course with a “W” were being decided.
Methodology 1

The nature of the Student Success Coaching Program, where our coaches meet with their clients in a confidential setting, makes it challenging to engage with students. However, the process in which I managed the program focused on critical reflection around the barriers that students face succeeding in higher education and persisting through difficulties or challenges. Therefore, I chose O’Leary’s cycles of action research, with their four main stages that lead into a downward spiral as seen in Figure 1, O’Leary’s Cycles of Research.

Figure 1

O’Leary’s Cycles of Research

Note. From O’Leary’s cycles of research (2014, 141).

With my three cycles, I felt that O’Leary’s cycles of research gave me the appropriate amount of time to observe the implementation of my ideas critically and see what came forward from the results of changes into the training curriculum. The reflection stage utilized critical
reflexivity, which is defined as the focus on emancipation, transformation, and deconstruction of processes. Critical reflexivity comes from the background of social work and social constructivist epistemologies. I felt that this was necessary for changing the trajectory of how retention was framed in the Student Success Coaching Program. This came forward more clearly when the COVID-19 pandemic effectively canceled coaching; however, my role in serving students was uplifted through midterm deficiency management.

I used quantitative and qualitative measures such as Likert scales and short- and long-form responses to questions that were dedicated to the foundational themes of the coaching program: student success, academic persistence, and sense of belonging. As a holistic retention program that supports students’ ongoing academic success at the university, it was difficult to pinpoint these learning outcomes as there were no clear descriptions outside of the ones I had developed in my time as a graduate assistant. This was why my last cycle focused on observing my experience with a new professional staff member who would become the only main historian of the program when the Fall 2020 academic year began. Each cycle was informed by an experience around surveys, program development, or an interview. Each cycle focused on defining those three foundational themes and how research participants’ experience coaching, advising, and mentoring through our programs at the CSS impacted those definitions.

**Methodology 2**

The focus of the cycles was to observe, critically reflect, plan, and implement suggested updates to the overall training curriculum for the retention program, the Student Success Coaching Program. This process had participants who were undergraduate students who participated as student coaches in the Student Success Coaching program; professional staff members within the Center for Student Success, and graduate assistants from the School of
Leadership and Education Sciences and Student Affairs Collaborative. The action research cycles were conducted from August 2019 till May of 2020.

Cycle 1: Prepare Student Coaches

The first cycle was set in the first 2 weeks of August 2019 to observe the onboarding and training of the new peer coaches. The purpose of this cycle was to understand the professional development of the coaches and the development of the coaching program. The focus was on how training impacted the rest of the semester and prepared the coaches for their sessions with students. To prepare for this, I created training during the Spring 2019 and discussed this with my supervisor and the supervising clinical psychologist gathering their observations and updates on the training curriculum. After this meeting, I developed a breakdown of tasks to be sent to the new Fall 2019 coaches, as I had a summer assistantship as a Hall Director. The focus of these tasks was to email the new coaches the new training agenda, the student coaching manual, and to request the updated academic schedules. During the summertime, I had time to develop these materials further. My supervisor created the fall coaching schedule because I was away. This semester was where we adjusted to an online system of scheduling appointments to allow for easy access to scheduling sessions with coaches. During the previous semester, I spent a great deal of clerical management time, setting up appointments on the phone that took time away from supervising the coaches.

A month prior to the August 2019 training, my supervisor requested for the Office of International Students and Scholars to present to the coaches during training (see Appendix A for training module breakdown). This was an intentional workshop as the feedback from the previous coaches indicated a need for specific populations of students such as veterans, nontraditional aged students, and international students. Halfway through the semester, during the months of October and November, I met with the coaches individually for a midsemester
check-in and to prepare them for clients who received midterm deficiency grades. We also discussed their professional development, their understanding of academic persistence, and sense of belonging. This helped me understand how their interactions with different student populations impacted them as professionals as well as students. This check-in was also a way to understand what parts of training beneficial or most impactful halfway through the semester were.

**Observation and Planning**

Training began before meeting with coaches by sending them various materials and PowerPoint presentations to prepare for their training in August 2019. We sent them the Student Success Coaching Handbook, an over 20-page document that listed out in detail the various resources that were available on campus, the general campus policies, and as well as the breakdown of the coaching program. We also sent a walkthrough checklist (see Appendix B) to highlight what a day would be like in a coaching session. Lastly, we sent them a PowerPoint presentation on metacognition by Dr. Saundra Yancy McGuire, Ph.D., Retired Asst. Vice-Chancellor and Professor of Chemistry and Director Emerita, Center for Academic Success. Dr. McGuire’s presentation was given to me in my training for my graduate assistantship and has been used historically for the coaching program. The presentation highlighted study and learning strategies and discussed the need to promote metacognition in our interactions with students.

On the day of training, we began with a values activity that allowed the five student success coaches to understand each other and how they perceive their roles as coaches. During this conversation, there was a common consensus that as coaches, they needed to balance the value of responsibility and the value of compassion when working with students. Highlighting that their role was complex, multilayered, and required them to be more reflective of themselves than of their students. As we moved on to the rest of the training, the director of the Office of
International Students and Scholars gave a presentation on the international student experience. This presentation highlighted that international students were just like all students but are seeking an experience to understand the host country further. The director highlighted that international students come to USD with the qualifications for Math and English but speaking can be challenging for them. I observed that after the presentation, the coaches were more engaged and more interested in understanding students who were different than them. We ended the first day of training by practicing role-play scenarios, which focused on assessing the students’ technical knowledge of the materials in their case files. We did role plays through a fishbowl activity, with the pretend student (a professional staff member) and a coach, using typical examples of students who come into coaching.

The second day of training focused on students’ understanding of themselves through identity development and learning about first-generation college students. The coaches were also introduced to the office formally, running through the walkthrough checklist (see Appendix B) and reviewing the various resource documents that would be available to them and their students during the semester. During the identity development, privilege checklist, and breakdown of the first-generation college student experience sessions, I felt that the student success coaches, although majority white identifying and from a higher socioeconomic status, began to recognize and engage with their privilege and understanding the lived realities of others not like them. Following this session, we introduced metacognition and the various resources available to them. Using scenarios that represented a variety of student experiences, the coaches were to select what resources they would use in their session with these students. They were also tasked to develop questions to understand the students’ experience further. This provided the scaffolding to prepare them for the last round of role-play scenarios, where we developed significantly more complicated cases of students testing their learning from the two days’ worth of training. Some
examples of these types of students were ones who were resistant to the change of their habits suggested in coaching, testing the coach’s ability to roll with resistance, and students who express multiple concerns at once and may need a referral to counseling resources. From my observation of this experience, the coaches developed in their skills of holding space and sitting in silence with students and used multiple resources to assist students’ comfort with change.

**Critical Reflection and Findings**

Two months within the semester, I met with the coaches for a midsemester evaluation/check-in (see Appendix C). These meetings were held before the midterm deficiency grade submission deadline, which was an academic marker to identify students who require further outreach to retain them at the university to the end of the semester. The focus of this time was to engage the student coaches in critical reflection of their experience in the coaching program thus far, and how it has impacted their trajectory in understanding their roles as coaches in developing an understanding of student success. This meeting was also a time to discuss the impact the training had on each of their sessions, including the ways the workshops or sessions during training supported the development of their skills as coaches in the coaching sessions. These were individualized meetings within the coaching rooms to allow the coaches to critically think back on their experience. The first question posed to each of the participants was: “What has been the most essential session from training you’ve used in coaching? Why?” Three or four of the coaches mentioned sessions with the Office of International Students and Scholars.

Christina stated:

I would say definitely doing the role plays. Although it’s super uncomfortable. Doing the informed consent practicing that going into it oh there’s so much to do, but having that down was really calming. Having the international lady come, because it gets you thinking about all the different kinds of students. Because that’s completely different
from me. I’m from San Diego, I’m a white person, and that’s what USD basically is. And I’ve had experiences in coaching where I realize that I had to be more open-minded about a student. There was a kid who seemed like he didn’t care, but, in the end, he asked for the counseling center at the end. Having things like that remind you that you don’t know everything.

Similarly, Brenda, a student success coach who was a junior and a psychology major, had this to say:

Bringing in the International Center. Cause I think the majority, there are only two students that I’ve seen who aren’t international. The things that the Director said really stuck with me cause right away, I had international students. So, I’ve been able to practice that and reflect on it. I never really thought of the fact that someone coming here, and English isn’t their first language, but you’re still taking engineering classes. There are things I never would’ve thought of. [That session] was important to me.

Both Brenda and Christina’s insight on their own experience with their international student clients revealed the reflection we asked the coaches to do during large group supervision and small group supervision. Their experience also highlighted that having both sessions, working with different students and bringing in the Office of International Students and Scholars, was helpful in their professional development as student success coaches. Recognizing their own identity development played a key factor in their roles. Christina’s reflection touched upon what the perceived experience of what a USD student looks like, including the general demographic of the institution, and what other students experience may look like, especially for international student populations. Nicole, who had completed their first semester of coaching during Spring 2019 and returned as a coach in Fall 2019, had this to say:
The most beneficial part was the international student training. My first semester, when I first started coaching, it was not as much talked about international students or if it was limited in scope. I think having someone who is coming and speaking really helped a lot and spoke volumes. For first-semester students, there are a lot of international students coming in, so they might not know about the program or don’t know about the university. A lot of us don’t have that perspective and really know how to talk to international students. I’ve had a couple of international students this semester already. I think the most important part is to expand that knowledge and for future training have more international training with the students so we can better understand how to help them.

The coaching program continues to struggle with maintaining consistency over the academic year, with very few returners being available to coach. Nicole’s observation emphasized the need for additional support around working with specific populations of students. The midterm check-ins with the coaches I had with the Fall 2019 semester coaches were crucial in my development of advising style.

A piece that was missing in the assessment of the coaching program was the impact the coaching experience has on the academic success of the undergraduate students we served. This was something I was consistently exposed to as a coach. I was able to see the true experience of USD undergraduate students. However, with the confidentiality of the program, it was difficult to get a true understanding of the students’ experience throughout the semester. I was still able to ask a variety of questions during the midsemester evaluation with the coaches that described the impact of the program on themselves. The questions asked were: “Has academic coaching allowed you to reflect on your academics?” and a follow-up, “In what ways has coaching allowed you to question your academic study habits?” Tanya, a student-athlete and a student success coach, stated:
When I start struggling in school, I’m able to reflect on what I’m doing and not doing. I’m not as biased to my own actions as I was before. I hold myself accountable a bit more, and I’m aware of more resources. I’ve always heard of the writing center, and I never knew it was something I would need. I found myself two weeks into the semester, setting up an appointment. It’s allowed me to find out what is helpful and what isn’t helpful for me.

Tanya’s experience supported what we hoped would be reflective of the experience of our clients in the coaching program. This expression of critical thinking of how one was learning was reflective of metacognition and learning strategies we introduced in training. The resources and referral practice were also expressed in this statement, and that it was used. This was reflective of the various students’ experience in coaching with me, understanding that they had to be accountable for their learning. However, I wanted to understand the idea of academic persistence around the stamina of a student to persist through their education. I asked the coaches further, “What does academic persistence mean to you?” Heather, who was also a student-athlete and the only student success coach who wanted to be a physical therapist, had this to say about this question:

I think it’s impressive, it’s reflective of the students that come here. Although they don’t realize at first that this is voluntary. I make sure to say it. They’ve failed in the past, at least if they’re not changing their study habits, they’re coming here to somehow change something that they’re doing. They hear the information, and it’s in the brain. Persistence is even that if they’re facing failure, they’re doing something to change.

This was a unique reflection separate from those that came up for the other coaches. It spoke directly to placing agency in the clients rather than on the coach. I feel that this answer was reflective of not only the character of Heather, but the overall coaching values expressed during
training. When asked the question, “What does student success mean to you?” Heather continued to provide great insight into the experience and reflected all the student’s answers.

I would say it is a balance between an academic style you’re comfortable with. It doesn’t have to be all A’s, and if you’re comfortable getting C’s, that’s successful to you.

Balancing the social aspect and a healthy lifestyle. So, making sure you’re getting as much sleep as you can. Shouldn’t be in the library all day and not eating anything because you have a midterm the next day. Taking time to be away from academics and gather some life experiences, doing something stupid with your friends.

The last question asked to the students was “What does sense of belonging mean to you?” and Heather’s response provided great insight and growth:

I read a quote about this the other day, and I liked it, belonging means you have a seat at the table, and you have a voice that’s listened too. That’s really interesting. I think that this can be applied in different situations. Being comfortable in a space and being able to state your opinions, and even if people don’t agree to them, at least listen to them.

Christina also said,

Having a community around you or friends where you feel welcomed and comfortable. I definitely feel that here. [My coach] said during training that she’s excited to do this because she feels like she has a sense of purpose. I feel that, too, also having a purpose.

**Modifications and Planning**

In this stage of the cycle, I reflected and observed data about the coaching program and its impact on the students we serve. I created a proposal, using these data, and presented it to my supervisors. However, this proposal and the suggestions did not follow through. None of the suggestions could not be implemented due to capacity of the professional staff and priorities of the office. As I looked at training from Fall 2018-2019, there was a question about the way
programs might reinforce learning around cultural competence and tools to support students’ academic persistence. This became the focus after reflecting on the responses the student coaches provided during the midsemester evaluations. The coaches themselves expressed that they had benefited from the resources that were available in the office to support their academic and social experiences. Through this observation and critical reflection, I had proposed to my supervisor a plan to develop the coach’s cultural competencies and academic resource knowledge by adding a day of training. However, this proposal for a programmatic change was not approved by stakeholders. Thus, the planning and development of this additional day was not fully approved or implemented but was part of the overall cycle. Significant feedback was that professional staff members might not have the capacity to support additional days of training, as summer required them to support other training for student leaders on campus. We decided to move forward with keeping training the same and adding visits to partnering offices during the first few weeks of the semester. I compiled the data from the Spring 2019 Client Survey students completed after their 4th session with a coach, the Midterm evaluation in Spring 2019, and the Fall 2019 Training evaluation. The following paragraphs will describe the proposed training curriculum development suggestions to my supervisor, the Associate Director of the Center for Student Success, to review before presenting it to our partners at the Center for Health and Wellness Promotion that were not applied to the Fall 2019.

The proposed additional training day would have added a total of four hours to the eight hours required for the coaches to begin coaching during their designated semester. The proposed changes to the training curriculum (see Appendix E) and the additional day of training included adding more time to the workshops around cultural competency and academic resources. Each workshop would require creating more activities for the student success coaches to review the resources available for them as they see clients during their coaching sessions. When thinking
about the process for student success coaches, the learning would have to be scaffolded through the support of the mental health professionals who were supervisors and also the resources that could be created by the graduate assistant and the professional staff at the Center for Student Success. First, a resource review and application would separate the metacognition and teaching strategies. This would allow coaches to review academic resources available at the Center and become familiar with them. Adding additional time would allow a more concrete conversation around metacognition and finding resources to support learning how one learns. This workshop would have included going over more the use of Degree Works and the GPA Calculator as tools to use in session with students. In my conversations with students in coaching sessions, the main issue we came across was time management strategies and how to use the time effectively to focus on academics. I created a worksheet “Time Frames for Sensible Study Strategies,” (see Appendix D) to allow students to identify long-term and short-term strategies for effective studying for exams and tests. Lastly, this enhancement of the workshops provided time to go over the Student Success Coaching Manual, before the first day of training, as well as the Semester Calendar Overview, which lists all academic dates such as deadlines to withdraw from courses with a “W.” A workshop titled “Intersectionality” would be hosted by the Rainbow Educators program from the University of San Diego’s United Front Multicultural Commons was added as a suggestion. Following the workshop from the Office of International Students and Scholars and additional role-play scenarios that would assess their learning. Lastly, the last workshop of this extra day of training would be one on Intercultural Communication, which would be similar to the one provided to Scholastic Assistants and Resident Advisors during their 2-week long training during the summer. Unfortunately, none of this occurred and reasons will be described in the following paragraph.
Results of Suggested Changes to Training Curriculum

Implementing the developed plan was not as easy as I had hoped. At the time, improving the coaching program was not the top priority within the office, as we had a new program coordinator who was working on developing connections with key offices throughout campus. This initiative was to bring together the various mentor or mentor-like programs together for a one to two-day training. This training took ideas from the Student Leadership Training that was two weeks long, the Student Success Coaching Program training curriculum, and highlighted key workshops that would be beneficial for all the student mentors. However, there was pushback because I did not take into consideration the curriculum of the prerequisite course that provided the foundation for students to be a part of the coaching program. This was partly true, as I had always asked for the syllabus for the course. Moving forward, we decided that it would be beneficial to introduce the coaches to partnering offices that represented populations of students we saw in coaching. These offices were the Military and Veterans Program and the Office of International Students and Scholars. The only changes to the training curriculum were developed were the partnerships and visits to these offices.

Cycle 2: Training Formats and Midterm Deficiency Outreach

Following my disappointment with Cycle 1 prepared for Cycle 2. However, this cycle also did not go as planned for a variety of reasons. I had hoped to send a survey to students who participated in the coaching program and ask them to attend a focus group about their experience. However, I was unable to do this due to the responsibilities of supporting a new the Spring 2020 cycle of student success coaches. I also was preparing for graduation and had started my new assistantship at UC San Diego’s Student Promoted Access Center for Education and Service. I felt that this gave me new confidence in my abilities around situational advising and as a future professional in the field of higher education. However, this semester had begun with
more organizational changes at USD and added difficulties that impacted the cycle. The month before the semester began, the Associate Director told me that they had accepted a new job. I was now the most tenured person in the office but only held some positional power because of this. The learning here was dedicated to how to become a professional and develop a new relationship with my coworker and my new supervisor, who was an associate vice president in charge of our division. Unlike previous semesters, I was not present in the program because of my other job and additional responsibilities. All these organizational and career changes impacted my ability to go through cycle as planned. Neither the focus group or survey was sent out to students.

This held many implications for the research. The Assistant Director who oversaw the workshops on students from different backgrounds, was our connection to the Office of International Students and Scholars, and supported the initiatives of the coaching program overall, would no longer be at the Center for Student Success. The training was also set to be done in a spread of eight hours across a week. This observation of the training curriculum development was closely tied to the availability of the coaches before the start of the semester. The overall learning outcomes from the coaching programs curriculum (from Cycle 1) was focused on motivational interviewing strategies, understanding the role of confidential resources, promoting skills with cultural competencies to have dialogue, and engaging with referral resources that would be supportive to their role as a peer coach.

Cycle 2, which would have included the student survey and the focus group and was cut short and had to change due to the onset of COVID-19, resulting in the cancelation of the coaching program. My primary responsibility as the graduate assistant in the office was now to manage and develop the midterm deficiency outreach by recruiting graduate assistants in the SOLES-Student Affairs Collaborative to meet with students.
**Observation**

The Spring 2020 cohort of student success coaches and the program came with many areas of growth in program development and organization. First, most of the cohort were graduating seniors. Second, they were unable to attend any dates suggested to have training before the first week of courses of the Spring 2020 semester. This was because many students were either taking intersession courses or were abroad. For the first time in my graduate assistantship, we had coaching training during the first week of school in February 2020. We concentrated training workshops to fit the two hours the students had of supervision during the first week of classes, the breakdown of the new training module can be found in Appendix F. We then held an 8-hour training on Saturday (not the one with modified curriculum that I was working on) to allow coaches time to practice role-playing coaching sessions. What I observed in this group was that unlike the previous group of coaches, this group of students had engaged with identity development and acknowledged their understanding of their white identity more thoroughly. What came up for the coaches during the session on working with different students was the guilt they sometimes feel and how it was highlighted in sessions with students that they would be coaching. I found that the benefit of having two White identifying professionals assist with this section of the training was helpful. Our supervising clinical psychologist was able to speak about their experience, that it was possible to mention how difficult it may be if they are faced with an instance when a person of color expresses their challenges. By not only validating their experience, the unsaid tension in the room was mentioned and acknowledged. This feedback provided the coaches with better insight that despite wanting to help, that someone’s lived experience may greatly differ and impact their lives more drastically than the coaches own experiences.
The week following training was the first week of coaching and I, unfortunately, was not able to be present for many of the coaches’ first days of coaching. However, large group supervision during the week was cut in half to allow coaches to visit various offices. The first office to visit was the Military and Veterans Programs office. I was surprised to see all the coaches present before I came, already sitting comfortably in the community and speaking with the students. This population of students were majority retired veterans, much older, and presented a student demographic very different from the traditional-aged student. I observed that the students were engaged with the presentation from the Director of the Military and Veterans Center, who identified as a woman veteran. We ended this session back in our large group meeting space, and some of the coaches expressed that it was their first time in the Veteran’s Center or even having conversations with military-connected students on this campus. This exposure was met with positivity and they felt more confident meeting with students in coaching and referring this resource.

Two weeks later, coaches visited the Office of International Students and Scholars, a primary resource for many of the students we serve in the program. This meeting was held halfway through the first month of coaching, although students were engaged, there were not as many questions or comments during this session. However, the presentation from the staff members mentioned how closely connected and supported they felt by the coaches and the program. Again, the same sentiment came forward that although they’ve been in the study abroad office for the second-year experience or to find a course for study abroad, they’ve never interacted with the international student population while at USD.

A question that came up from this process is how this new training format would impact students’ comprehension of their training experience and application to skills taught in the sessions with their clients. However, these coaches expressed their care and compassion for their
STUDENT SUCCESS COACHING

students and presented more countertransference than previous groups. There were additional questions about how to support their own self-care in recognizing the guilt or shame they may feel.

Critical Reflection

Reflecting on this experience, I felt that I was not as present in the coaching program in ways I was previously. I felt that missing two days during the week kept me from seeing more than half of the coaches during their shifts. It was difficult to reflect clearly on this experience as I was also involved with the hiring committee for my previous supervisors’ position. Then in March 2019, the university decided to evacuate students due to the spread of COVID-19. This caused our clinical psychologist, a partner in the program, to tell me that the coaching and all appointments would cease operation. There was no option to provide support over Zoom due to the confidentiality of the program. I found that there was little time to reflect, but a question that came up was that many of the students who relied on the support of coaching no longer had this resource. I was left with managing midterm deficiency meetings, also known as MTDs.

Prior to the evacuation of students, I developed a training curriculum to prepare graduate assistants in the SOLES-Student Affairs Collaborative (SASC) to participate in midterm deficiency meetings (MTDs) with students who received one or more D or F’s after midterm grades were posted. These meetings are 15 minutes long and are a streamlined advising model that focuses on students’ midterm grades and was a space for referral to other resources across campus such as their faculty advisor, the learning centers, or counseling versus goal development like in student success coaching. This had been a long-standing program in our office to outreach to these students and was used as one way to encourage students to participate in the coaching program. However, in the past, this had been done by professional staff members and the graduate assistant. With the program coordinator, midterm deficiency meetings were developed
further in Fall 2019 by using an online platform for students to sign up for MTD check-in appointments. With the Director of CSS gone, we were now under the supervision of the Associate Vice President of Strategic Initiatives and Planning. We continued to move forward with MTD’s remotely. This will be explained further in the Cycle 3 section.

**Planning**

My input in supporting the coaching program also ceased as a graduate assistant during COVID-19, and this made me feel conflicted about my role at the CSS. Before this, I had been assigned additional tasks to support the transition of our Director leaving to ensure the continuation of our outreach programs. At this point, my research felt pointless if the coaches were unable to see students. I knew that once we moved remote, all assessments conducted about the coaching program were no longer going to happen. However, I decided to switch gears, and I moved forward as my role still required me to support the office initiatives such as MTD’s. This was done in part by the order from the president that all student employment would pause as we transitioned to remote learning. Planning began with researching online models of learning and academic resources that would be accessible for most socioeconomic groups to have access to tools such as a laptop or internet. I developed a newsletter (see Appendix J) that was sent to all students, including current coaching clients, to receive additional resources despite not having coaching. This intentional research was the basis of all program development for the MTD outreach.

At this point, the Center for Student Success (CSS) was just an office of two staff members, a program coordinator and a graduate assistant. MTD’s during this cycle was done by using learning outcomes established by the NASPA and ACPA for student affairs practitioners that replicated what was developed for student success coaches. I oversaw the development of the training curriculum and the management of appointments prior to COVID-19. I did this first
by recruiting graduate assistants to support the office as we transitioned to find a new director. After communicating with my new supervisor, the Associate Vice President of Strategic Initiatives and planning, we moved forward to onboard and train SASC graduate assistants to support MTD outreach. To adjust, I quickly developed a training model and asked the SASC supervisors to provide this professional development opportunity for their graduate assistants for their paid hours. I created a 4-hour training that would highlight what the graduate assistants already knew or had been trained on as professionals in their respective offices. I developed learning outcomes, compiled information on academic policies and highlighting the wellness piece by presenting the option to attend the trauma informed practices training by the Associate Vice President of Wellness and QPR (Question, Persuade, and Refer) - Practical and Proven Suicide Prevention training. The overview of the training curriculum can be found in Appendix G. This will be explained more in Cycle 3.

**Implementation**

As we moved to remote learning due to COVID-19, implementing online models of outreach and student support involved social media content calendars and a newsletter format. We were able to keep one federal work-study student who could assist with content development. We began by providing a list of resources for the students to categorize and use in creating content for the social media platforms. I supported this effort by researching and compiling all those resources. Communication was conducted through email. We established virtual CSS Media meetings where the Program Coordinator, myself, and the student staff worked together to develop the media calendar and organize the content. This process created a streamlined production of content and allowed us to schedule days to post on media channels. The first content that we created was around frequently asked questions or challenges students
were facing as they moved to online learning. After looking at the results of this change, these posts had the most engagement on social media than any other posts done before.

**Cycle 3: Shifting Gears - Midterm Deficiency Outreach and COVID-19**

As the coaching sessions were canceled, moving on to supporting the development and implementation of MTD outreach was fundamental in my professional development. Through MTD’s, I was able to work with and advise a group of graduate assistants who were at different years within the Master of Higher Education Leadership program. This cycle highlighted the impact of COVID-19 on not only the resources the CSS could provide to targeted student populations but also the ability to engage with professional development for graduate students. My research now was focused on how the fundamental frameworks of the coaching program, and the definitions of student success, academic persistence, and sense of belonging inform the development of MTD outreach as a new program for the office. Additional questions were, how did the definitions of student success, academic persistence, and sense of belonging change for our students? And, how did the new way to work through MTD’s support the professional development of SASC graduate assistants? These were implemented into a survey provided to the 11 graduate assistants who completed midterm deficiency meetings and training. A conversation with our program coordinator, Sister Maria, also informed the development of this program. I also asked in what ways could these changes be applied to the coaching program as we end the semester’s outreach and retention efforts?

**Observation**

The training curriculum of midterm deficiency outreach was developed using the professional competencies of NASPA/ACPA. I provided this as a professional development opportunity for SASC graduate assistants while also working in an office of two professional staff members at the Center for Student Success with an over 1000 student caseload. The training
was 2 hours long and took place for the Spring 2020 spring break. I observed that graduate
assistants were looking for a professional development opportunity geared toward academic
advising. My role was still the graduate assistant of the Student Success Coaching Program,
using coaching/counseling/advising skills to support students’ academic and holistic success at
the institution. I brought this lens to the new training curriculum and observed what could be
taught. There were many questions about the scenarios of academic policies that may be
applicable during the 15-minute sessions with students who received a midterm grade and how to
address them. One question highlighted the lack of understanding of the international students’
experience and how a midterm deficiency would impact their status. Sister Maria and I
developed a protocol list, resource list, and a drive of all the resources that were easily accessible
and provided a foundation of support that allowed for remote work to be done without
supervision.

In the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, there had to be an adjustment to how we were to
outreach and meet these students. Previously, these 15-minute sessions were held in person at the
Center for Student Success. Also, the revised policies around Pass/Fail for courses, deadlines for
taking a Leave of Absence and Withdrawal, and the deadline for taking a “W” for withdrawing
from a course created a challenge to ensure the graduate assistants were prepared to meet their
students. Sister Maria and I held a quick meeting to debrief updates regarding these new policy
changes, updated the referral documents, and provided a breakdown as to how they can virtually
advise students via Zoom. After a few days of successful meetings, we were told by our
supervisor to begin outreaching to students via phone. This required a new set of protocols,
including a script and a pathway to refer students to Sister Maria and me if the graduate assistant
was unprepared for a question. After each session with a student, we asked graduate assistants to
write an advising note, a brief overview as to what had happened during their session with a
student. These sessions were held from April 6th till the 17th, including phone calls to students. Following this week, I asked the graduate assistants to fill out a brief survey to reflect on their experience with students.

**Participants Reflection**

The survey consisted of five Likert scale questions to understand the graduate assistants understanding of the learning outcomes of training, one short answer on the overall training, the three questions asking them to define student success, academic persistence, and sense of belonging, two Likert scale questions about their own understanding of academics and sense of belonging at USD, and lastly two short answer questions about their experience working MTD meetings (see Appendix H). The graduate assistants were able to provide concrete feedback on how the learning outcomes of training were helpful to their own understanding of their role in MTD’s. The definitions of “academic persistence,” “sense of belonging,” and “student success” were similar to each other despite the variations between years in the program and experience serving students. When asked to define “academic persistence”:

“Academic persistence is the willingness to succeed in academics despite challenges in or out of the classroom.”

“I am familiar with two definitions for academic persistence - one relating to retention and whether a student returns to their studies, and the other being about consistent academic practices throughout course studies (completing assignments, attending classes and office hours, etc.). I prefer the second.”

“The ability to retain and thrive in an academic setting despite setbacks.”

When asked to define “student success”:

“It is dependent on each student, but overall I think that student success is a student being able to achieve academic and personal goals, to be able to learn new skills and
information and to be able to create and nurture relationships with peers and potentially mentors.”

“The ability to feel fulfilled in all aspects of being a student: belonging, mental health, academics, etc.”

“I believe student success is when a student is provided with the right tools, resources, knowledge, and support to complete their academic studies and are able to move forward either professionally or academically upon completing their degree.”

“Student success, I believe, is ultimately graduating from the institution by taking into consideration each student’s experiences in and outside campus. Some days student success is getting out of bed, and other days it’s getting a good grade on an exam, it is a wide range and must be wide in a holistic lens.”

What I learned from this compilation of definitions was that students desire to have tools to manage the multitude of experiences they face while transitioning and experiencing college. However, what was most impactful from these descriptions was this understanding of viewing each person as the entire person, that not one aspect of their experiences must be focused on when support in advising or coaching.

When asked to define the phrase “sense of belonging.”

“At USD sense of belonging needs to be provided by USD, and that is inclusion on resources for all types of students in efforts to support them in the way that they need.”

“Feeling that you have a place, that you are accepted, that you matter, that you are able to be into a group/environment that as your most authentic self, a space to grow and learn.”

“My idea of sense of belonging is when an individual feels comfortable, welcome, and supported within their community or external environment. I believe this often comes
from feeling there are likeminded individuals in your space and feeling connected to your
peers mentally, emotionally, and physically.”

What was impactful from these responses was the shared understanding of the impact of
community. Belonging required community of people to facilitate the understanding of being a
part of something. However, the community was defined either as USD or a space that is
welcoming or supportive.

Table 1 showcased the number of responses to Likert-scale questions around specific
learning outcomes addressed at the beginning of training.

**Table 1**

*Midterm Deficiency Outreach Graduate Assistant Participants Survey Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The training helped me find my advising style</td>
<td>3 out of 7 participants agreed or strongly agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The training modeled and promoted equitable and inclusive practices by ensuring that I had access to and used the necessary tools for success.</td>
<td>6 out of 7 participants agreed or strongly agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The training supported my understanding of confidential and private resources.</td>
<td>6 out of 7 participants agreed or strongly agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident in my facilitation in goal setting and decision making.</td>
<td>6 out of 7 participants agreed or strongly agreed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unlike in the student success coaching program training evaluation, the MTD training had
crunch concrete learning outcomes that were presented to the graduate assistants at the beginning of
training. The training curriculum was based loosely on the objectives of the coaching program,
but I focused specifically on the NASPA/ACPA learning outcomes for professionals around
advising students. Seeing that more than half of the graduate assistants were able to identify two
out of the three main learning outcomes clarified the development of coaching and advising
strategies/roles that the coaching program develops and supports. The first outcome around advising style identification was explained through the short answer section. In response to the question about training; a graduate assistant participant, who identified as the cohort for the class of 2021, stated:

“I felt the training went well, and we learned a lot of important information. I had to review the provided sheets a number of times to feel truly comfortable with all of the content. Even then, I felt I wasn’t actually confident until I had experienced one session with a student, but I also have a hands-on learning style. It may have been helpful for me to have one “role-playing” peer session in which we are paired up with a peer, and we each practice once and give each other feedback. Although having a group discussion was nice, this would have made me feel more confident.”

Unfortunately, there was not enough time to do role-play activities during the training session before COVID-19. However, the reflection on their learning style helped determine what changes the MTD program can add. Further, connecting their learning in training to reflecting upon it as new professionals. I asked the participant: How has advising/coaching shaped your perspective of the student experience here at USD?

“I was surprised to hear from each of the students I spoke to that they are generally happy with their experience at USD and the support they were being provided. This is because, in my own experience in undergrad, when I was struggling academically, I often felt a disconnect to my institution at the same time. Because this was my only experience, I thought it was likely these students might feel the same way, but that was not the case. It mostly seemed to me that students in the sciences were struggling because of the formatting of assignments and grades in those courses. This is something I commonly
understand about those kinds of programs, but I feel it could be possible for the university
to do more to support these students at the beginning of the semester.

I also spoke with one student who was heavily involved on campus - working on campus,
academically involved, and in Greek Life. Speaking to this student reinforced a belief I
have about some students who may overcommit themselves on campus. I wonder if USD
could do more to academically support students who are very active within the campus
community as these students may not always feel they have time, motivation, or the
ability to focus on their academics.”

This was by far the longest response to this question of the seven participants, and it spoke to
their experience with a student during MTD’s. This response reflected the culture shock
described by the student success coaches highlighting how working with students with different
social identities and experiences can shape their advising philosophy further. Another Graduate
Assistant who spoke with one of our students reported during the MTD process said:

“There are plenty of resources here at USD. It’s just a matter of how these resources
collaborate and communicate with each other, as well as how comfortable the student is
in seeking that resource. There needs to be intentional outreach regarding some of these
resources, and it would be great to have all of these resources in one place that is easily
accessible on a USD webpage.”

These responses reflected what I had felt in my experience within the Center for Student Success.
I felt that there was a desire to provide more for students, but as one person with multiple offices
providing multiple resources. This overall culture of success permeated USD students’
experience and impacted academic persistence or retention throughout the academic year.

Following this survey, the program coordinator and I met over Zoom to go over MTD outreach. I
also scheduled a meeting with the program coordinator to discuss our experience throughout
COVID-19 and the vacancy of the Director position and moving to remote working environments during the Spring 2020 semester. In the next section I discuss the dialogue between me and the coordinator. I decided to have some specific questions to ask her to help frame our conversation. The questions and her responses are reviewed in the sections below.

**Critical Reflection and Future Planning**

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted many of the growth areas for the *Center for Student Success* and suggested directions for progress toward better retention initiatives to support students at USD. For example, one of the policy changes made at USD, because of the COVID-19 crisis, was extending the deadline for students to seek the pass/fail option. The Midterm Deficiency Outreach (MTD) highlighted that the changing policies around pass/fail gave students hope that they could still pass their courses. However, this policy states that students must receive a C- or above to receive a passing grade. Many students came to discuss the pass/fail policy despite receiving F’s or D’s in their Midterm deficiency grades. This led to students making poor decisions for they were assuming that a pass/fail selection would allow them to pass course that they were failing.

In total, the graduate assistants and the *Center for Student Success* served 98 students virtually through phone calls or Zoom meetings with students. This number includes students who did not show up for their appointment or were left a voicemail to schedule one. We found was that many students did not show up after the “Last Day to Withdraw from a course with a ‘W’ deadline. We think this is because students were already receiving updates to academic policies and had moved on to speak with their advisors to withdraw from courses. On our calls we hoped to motivate students to meet with professors and their faculty advisors to talk about their academic progress before this. However, our office doesn’t receive the number of students who withdraw from courses. In the future, to better understand some of these learnings, my
conversation with the program coordinator circulated around the results of MTD outreach and in what ways did we think the outreach could be enhanced. The following paragraphs discuss the various improvements or suggestions to the overall MTD outreach program.

Moving forward, we discussed that the graduate assistants could still support MTD meetings during Fall 2020 and how to improve the training of the GA’s who participated in the MTD program. I shared the results of the survey and highlighted that extending the 2-hour limit to 4 hours of training would support graduate assistants’ overall performance, and therefore support our students more effectively. We discussed despite training being lecture-style, the SOLES-Student Affairs Collaborative graduate assistants also came with experience either supervising, advising, or mentoring students, as well as additional training they get in their SASC curriculum. Both first year and returning GA’s would be eligible to support and participate in the outreach for MTD’s. The additional training should not be repeat what we taught this year, but what would be necessary for MTD outreach. We found that GAs needed information about academic policies, especially regarding the constant change. We saw many questions about this throughout their advising notes and recognized the need for additional training.

In our dialogue, we reflected on a specific graduate assistant, a 1st year student in the SASC cohort, who exhibited intentionality and care for students they served. Although it was stated that the graduate assistants didn’t need to follow up with students and that the CSS would do it if needed, this graduate assistant still chose to follow up with their students. This felt significant not only to the graduate assistants’ advising philosophy and it was something also that the program coordinator was adamant about adding to the protocol outline for MTD’s. The result of the data and the conversation with the Program Coordinator was the update of the process of MTD outreach was the logistical enhancement, such as set timeframes for meeting with students
and adding a 15-minute buffer in between each appointment. This is because back to back appointments did not allow for enough time to prepare for their next student. This buffer also allowed for the graduate assistant to fill out their advising notes. The program coordinator and I did not agree on whether to double book appointments by having two graduate assistants working the same shift. I had felt that this would maximize the number of students we can service in each 15-minute time frame. We found that despite how effective it was to outreach to students through coaching, it was not necessary for MTD’s. Students who come for MTD meetings already have and understanding of where they are in their goals. This outreach is an opportunity to learn more resources or creating space to develop a better sense of where they’re moving toward their academic goals. Overall, I learned a lot from the survey responses from the GA’s. For the future, MTD reports should include specific student populations and what information would be helpful to the stakeholders and the graduate assistants who use it to meet with students. Now my coordinator and I consider what aspects of the information would be most helpful to the stakeholders and future graduate assistants who would use it to meet with students in the future.

To reflect on this overall experience, I decided to have a two-way dialogue with the program coordinator. This continual conversation with my colleague and we reflected on the impact of the Center for Student Success and the retention and outreach initiatives it focused on which helped me think about programming and use of data. I developed a set of 10 questions (see Appendix I), that we both could respond to together, I begin each of the next sections with the question, followed by my response, and then the coordinators. At the end of the questions, I reflect to better understand how the impact of using the framework of the coaching program can impact other retention programs, such as the MTD outreach, and the overall vision and trajectory
of the Center for Student Success. The first question I posed to the coordinator was, “What has your experience been like supporting the student success coaching program?”

In my reflection I stated that “Engagement around seeing the Coaching program develops more as a proactive outreach, partly through workshops. Fall Semester – we were creating things we wanted to do. We have a program coordinator who is dedicated to supporting facets of the program that we can develop. I wish we had a full-time person to develop this work, and the office itself runs very collaboratively. I didn’t see that as much when I started. The coaching program is one facet of the Center, but it’s the foundation of the Center.”

“How has the staff structure change impacted your work in the Center for Student Success.”

I felt that to work at the CSS, you have to be a strong self-starter and have to be innovative in a different way and understand the cultural and political nuances of USD. There’s so much that we can do with the data that we have – no Associate Director and Director to do this. The work that CSS did before stopped, and we don’t know why. We were more student-facing. CSS has shifted.”

The next question we answered was: “Imagine it is 5-10 years in the future, and you are a journalist reporting on your organization. What would you want the headlines to say? The Program Coordinators responded with, “I would hope it reads, ‘The CSS helped improve student retention for these four student demographics by X%. We could be the bridge between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs.’”

In my reflection, I had agreed to what the program coordinator stated. There was a handful of times in my role as the Graduate Assistant that staff and faculty asked us how we improved retention or a statistic on the success of the coaching program. This made me recognize the lack of understanding of our own impact on the students at the University of San
Diego or how others saw how we impacted the students. However, we acknowledged that colleagues across the division had no idea about the work that we did. If they did know anything about our office, it was just the Student Success Coaching program. However, the assessment from both the Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 shows we play an integral part in connecting academic resources to students and provide the connection between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs through the partnerships we have in each division.

The final question that we discussed was: Are there misalignments between now and the future? In which areas do the misalignments occur? My response to this question:

““We used to be a student-facing center. What happened? What was the transition/reorganization like? Academic probation - there seems to be the same number of students every semester, the same number of students who attend coaching, no follow-up as to how these students are moving forward in their programs (i.e., how many have graduated? How many people got off academic probation?) why do we not have access to that data to make better-informed decisions about the office and the program as a whole?”

We recognized early in this conversation that the reason why we didn’t have access to this data or that these questions continually went unanswered due to the role of the Director, and now we had none. Many of these questions and dreams were questions I had initially in the research, hoping to get a better sense of where the program was and in what ways we could continue to improve. We left this conversation feeling slightly unmotivated, as much of the planning in terms of developing a better reputation on campus was occurring through mentor-like initiatives, partnering with surrounding offices to do workshops around student success, and developing a training curriculum that could leave room to discuss nonconfidential modes of coaching. However, a lot of this became a discussion around what we could do as a graduate
assistant and as a new employee. We hoped that in the future, that the coaching program could be more of a proactive resource to retaining students, in partnership with Academic Affairs.

**Summary**

I began this research attempting to understand the development of the student clients that we serve and exploring the ways we could enhance their academic success at USD. However, because of certain limitations, I focused on the development of the curriculum of coaching, how that impacted the student success coaches’ experience with the students that they serve, and when coaching was canceled how to use the coaching framework to support students facing additional academic challenges. Yet there was learning. The three major takeaways were: 1) the development of student coaches and graduate assistants perspectives of the USD student experience, 2) the shared definitions on the phrases’ sense of belonging’, ‘student success,’ and ‘academic persistence,’ by the two groups of participants, and 3) the impact of the organizational structure and direction of the Center for Student Success (CSS).

Graduate Assistants who worked with students facing academic challenges based on midterm grades and the student success coaches who worked with students who were facing academic challenges and academic probation status, were given the same words to define. The coaches were able to develop these new definitions and connections because they continued to see the students throughout the semester, while graduate assistants only saw the student once for 15 minutes. The differences in their responses are informative. Reflecting on both the coaching program responses in Cycle 1 and the MTD’s in Cycle 2 and 3, I found that the Coaches and the Graduate Assistants definitions around academic persistence and sense of belonging were similar and may have reflected how we described the purpose of the retention programs during training. Specifically, both the Graduate Assistants and the Student Success Coaches noted that students defined student success as finding a balance between academics and life experiences. Sense of
belonging was also a term that the undergraduate students that they were working with either during coaching or during MTD outreach had similar definitions for, one that focused on safety, acceptance, and growth. Lastly, the definitions of academic persistence were a willingness or a focus on “succeeding academically” despite challenges.

A major takeaway was how the graduate assistants and the student success coaches reflected on their experience, either coaching or advising, changed their perception of the student experience at USD. Many of the Graduate Assistants and the Student Success Coaches spoke to the shock of hearing that students experienced USD differently than them, and how that impacted their academic success. Where the student success coaches focused on their experience working with international students, the graduate assistants focused on resources available to students that they were serving and how the USD students experience may have differed from their own undergraduate experience. Both participant groups made recommendations about how to change either the support from the university and the office for the students that they met.

The last major takeaway was the impact of the organizational structure with the different stakeholders who oversaw or used the coaching program especially when the Director of the CSS left. The first cycle showcased that more intentional conversations were required to change the program itself. My work in fall 2019 gave me the ability to understand the partnerships across campus to better serve students from various backgrounds such as the Office of International Students and Scholars and the Military & Veterans Program. However, Spring 2020 saw significant changes in the structure with the loss of the Director. Still, the developed partnerships with the offices mentioned continued by taking the participants into the centers to learn more about their client demographic. Of major importance was that the stability of myself, and the graduate assistant, to stay consistent with holding stakeholders accountable for the partnerships.
Recommendations

A primary recommendation is the continued partnerships with the offices such as the Office of International Students and Scholars and the Military & Veterans Program. The coaches indicated they were useful in supporting their understanding of the student experience. This can be done through inter-office projects such as the Joint Mentor Training developed and organized by the CSS Program Coordinator. Implementing these offices into a training curriculum, and bringing student coaches physically into these spaces, gave a sense of comfort to refer to these resources more readily in their sessions. This was evident in the coach’s responses to their midsemester evaluations when asked what the most essential facet of training was. This feedback was valuable within Cycle 2 when we piloted bringing student success coaches to these offices.

Resources and partnerships were the general themes that required me as the manager and coordinator of the coaching program to develop and to teach the coaches during training. Creating resources such as worksheets on time management (see Appendix D) introduced a cycle of content creation that proved necessary as COVID-19 moved our office remote and online. Thus, all USD students became nontraditional students who focused on online models, stuck at home due to quarantine.

The Student Success Coaching Program as a model of peer mentorship and retention of undergraduate students was used to develop training for midterm deficiency advising meetings held by graduate assistants. Another recommendation is to be more intentional about naming learning outcomes for the coaching program and doing so with stakeholders who assist with the management of the program itself. The consistency of the coaching model and the curriculum behind its training still supported students who were not interested in receiving coaching. Despite this, the coaching program should adapt to serving larger populations of students, but to do so would bring into question the model of being a confidential resource, because it provides the
clinical internship experience for the student success coaches but hinders the ability to serve more students. However, MTD’s provided an example of what a private resource may look like using the model of coaching. The significant learning here was that graduate assistants have additional frameworks that support their paraprofessional role versus undergraduate students who complete a course and 8-hour training. Key fundamental changes that impacted the development of both programs was the focus on social media outreach to students and key campus partners. Consistent media and content development, whether that was introducing the programs or developing resources, ensured a steady stream of students accessing both of those programs.

Together these themes, interventions, and concerns addressed various facets of the management and development of the Student Success Coaching Program as a whole. Choosing O’Leary’s cycles of action research allowed me the flexibility to place myself into the research, especially as the graduate assistant who was one of the fundamental constants in the program’s existence. I also felt that the critical reflection and tying it to social justice principles paired beautifully with the student success coaches and the nontraditional students of the program. Planning and implementing provided the space for interventions to be part of the program’s progress through the end of the 2 years I was the graduate assistant. Within the research, there was room to think and plan while still focused on the mission of serving students strategically. The themes that emerged, and the subsequent ideas that were implemented, contributed to our thinking about how the program could further change and develop as a new director moves into the office and takes hold of the various programs I had supported or began while there.

Limitations

The Student Success Coaching Program is unique as it provides professional development opportunities for undergraduate students interested in the field of psychology. The
STUDENT SUCCESS COACHING

47

student success coaches are given confidentiality responsibilities under the supervision of the clinical psychologist in the Center for Health and Wellness promotion. This was difficult in engaging with data gathered at the end of each semester from clients who go through three or more sessions in the coaching program due to the informed consent documents signed at the beginning of their appointment with our coaches. Thus, all research conducted was through the coach’s perspective of the student experience and their experiences with students within the program. It would be pertinent to have a conversation around the parameters of confidentiality to get long-term data on the impact the coaching program has on the students that we serve and if they meet their goals academically.

During my last cycle, and my last semester in my graduate program, the COVID-19 pandemic and the shelter-in-place order effectively caused the Student Success Coaching program to pause. This was an unfortunate setback in attaining two academic years’ worth of assessment for both the office and for this research. However, I was able to still serve students through midterm deficiency meetings that were hosted over Zoom or through phone calls to students who received more than one D or F during the midterms. I found that COVID-19 highlighted the issues around confidentiality and the desire to explore and enhance the coaching program to serve more students broadly.

Despite these immediate changes and the implementation of a new program, my role as the graduate assistant was overwhelming, and at times felt like a full-time job. The most significant implication or theme was the lack of direct support from the Director in the office. There was inconsistent staffing of the office and the support of the program. Management of these programs took the support of the graduate assistant at 20 hours a week, the program coordinator when available, and more than half of the Director’s job description, which was highlighted amid the search process for the new Director. At the peak of the coaching program, I
worked at most 30 hours a week to support the needs of the program, assessment cycle development, and closing the loop, media content creation, and management to market the program to departments and students at USD. This inconsistency was highlighted the most in Cycle 3, when the coaching program itself was canceled due to COVID-19 and focused on the academic course requirements of Pass/Fail.

**Conclusion**

The Center for Student Success and the Student Success Coaching program provides holistic support and retention of students facing academic challenges. This research became a culmination of my work as a graduate assistant in seeing how to best leave a foundation of partnerships, development of learning outcomes, and reapplying the assessment framework that Kaila Shivers (2018) started. What came from this research is the need for clear learning outcomes to be developed, as the students that we are serving have learned more about themselves and made them better changemakers in the world. I was able to see in my research that the questions around confidentiality impacted the growth of the program despite the small curriculum changes applied during my time. The Student Success Coaching program serves participants, partners, and clients who are interested in achieving their definition of success and have showcased persistence despite challenges.
References


O’Leary, Z. (2014). *The essential guide to doing your research project* (2nd ed.). SAGE.


https://digital.sandiego.edu/soles-mahel-action/13


https://www.sandiego.edu/envisioning-2024/goals/


http://doi.org/10.1080/10790195.2018.1472940

Contemporary Educational Psychology, 25(1), 68–81.

https://doi.org/10.1006/ceps.1999.1015
Appendix A

Fall 2019 Training Agenda

Peer Coach Training Agenda
Fall 2019

Before training begins:
- Read Peer Coach Manual and Syllabus
- Watch Webinar "Metacognition is Key"

Tuesday, August 27, 2019
9:30am-3:30pm in Mother Rosalie Hall 131

9:30 AM  Snacks and Introductions (Drea)
10:00 AM  Ice Breaker (Drea)
10:10 AM  Overview and Goals of Training (Adan)
10:15 AM  Values Activity (Adan)
10:35 AM  Review Student Success Coach Expectations and Requirements (Drea)
11:10 AM  The Role of the Student Success Coach Conversation (Annie and Drea)
11:25 AM  Boundaries and Ethics (Annie)
11:40 AM  Self-Disclosure (Annie)
11:55 AM  The Role of Small and Large Group (Annie)
12:10 AM  Lunch
12:40 PM  International Center Presentation by Chia-Yen Lin [NEW]
1:00 PM  Motivational Interviewing (Annie)
1:30 PM  Informed Consent--Annie
Info Sheet and Personal Assessment: Explanation/Demonstration--Drea
2:00 PM  Role Plays
3:00 PM  Debrief
3:15 PM  End

Thursday, August 29, 2019
9:30am-3:30pm in Mother Rosalie Hall 131

9:30 AM  Walkthroughs (UC 114) (Drea)
10:00 AM  Welcome & Check-In
10:15 AM  Making Referrals (Annie)
10:30 AM  Student Success Plan and Questions (Drea)
11:15 AM  Working with Different Types of Students (Adan)
12:15 PM  Lunch
12:30 PM  Knowing and “Teaching” Study Strategies and Metacognition (Drea)
1:10 PM  Case Notes Overview & Practice (Annie)
1:40 PM  Roleplays
2:45 PM  Debrief & Closing Questions
3:00 PM  Self-compassion (Annie)
3:15 PM  End
Appendix B

Walk Through Checklist

Preparing for your appointment
- Check Appointment plus each day for cancellations or additions to your schedule
- Arrive 5-10 minutes early to set up the room
- Get the client file from the storage room and your flash drive
  - If no file, grab an empty folder and ask Drea or Maria for a label (do not hand-write directly on the folders)
- Plug-in flash drive to the computer in the coaching room
- Open webcam: select Quicktime from the toolbar – a window won’t pop up
  - Select “New movie” under “File” at the top of the screen

Client Check-in
- Client will check in with student staff at front desk
- Greet the client after they check-in and walk them to the coaching room
  - Make sure client is sitting out of view of the webcam and the door is closed
- Briefly explain the paperwork with the student and leave the room as they fill it out
  - Be sure to close the door on your way out and ask them to get you when done
- Come back into the coaching room when client is done (or check-in after 15 minutes)
  - Review the paperwork to ensure it is complete (especially consent form) before recording
  - Click red button in Quicktime to start recording (same button to turn off)
  - If you need to stop the video, you will need to open a new video file to start it again
  - Ensure the camera is only on the coach, minimize the Quicktime window to avoid distraction

Reviewing resources (in desk drawer, bookmarked on the computer, and on Team Drive)
- You will need to spend some time to look these over on your own so you know what is available to you – give yourself about half an hour to do this
- You are free to use the computer to look up resources online
  - YouAreUSD has a ton of great resources that you are welcome to print; other USD websites, blogs, and Pinterest, etc. may also be helpful depending on the client issue!

Updated 08/2019
Appendix C

Midsemester Evaluation Check-In Questions

1. What does the principal investigator's general interaction with the participants mean to you?
2. What does your individual growth mean to you?
3. What does your group growth mean to you?
4. What does the principal investigator's general interaction with the principal investigator mean to you?
5. What does your individual growth mean to you?
6. What does your group growth mean to you?
7. What does the principal investigator's general interaction with the principal investigator mean to you?
8. What does your individual growth mean to you?
9. What does your group growth mean to you?
10. What does academic persistence mean to you?
11. What does sense of belonging mean to you?
Appendix D

Time Frames for Sensible Study Strategies Worksheet

Time Frames for Sensible Study Strategies

Goal
To identify long-term and short-term strategies for effective studying for exams and tests.

SESSION TASKS
☐ Reflect on your academic history and identify your strengths and weaknesses.
☐ Determine your educational goals and aspirations and identify strategies for moving toward these goals.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER
☐ How have you studied for exams or tests in the past?
  ☐ What strategies had worked in the past? Which ones did not?
☐ How long did you prepare for the exam? What was your study schedule like?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Study Strategies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After each assignment</td>
<td>Write a summary paragraph of what you learned and how it relates to the course objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After each class</td>
<td>Review your notes to consolidate your learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>During the last class before the test</td>
<td>Find out about the test:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ What will be and won’t be on the test</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ The format of the test (i.e. multiple choice, short answer, or essay, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Percentage of the test towards your overall grade (can be found in your syllabus)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clarify any questions or areas of confusion from past classes. This can be done on your own, during office hours, with classmates, your student success coach, or a tutor!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the last class before the test</td>
<td>Plan your final review session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The night before the test</td>
<td>Organize your notes for systematic review.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Study the test material exclusively to reduce interference (it might be best to do this last).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practice the kind of thinking the test will require:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Rehearsal and recital for objective tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Critical analysis for subjective tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify any fuzzy areas and confer with classmates to clarify.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The day of the test</td>
<td>Organize your supplies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eat a good breakfast/lunch/dinner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review your notes, chapter summaries, and course glossary, especially material that is most challenging for you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hour before the test</td>
<td>Review your notes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Go to the classroom early and get settled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practice relaxing and positive thinking - You’ve got this!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Peer Coach Training Agenda
January Spring 2020

Before training begins:
- Meet with Drea to log-in to Appointment-Plus
- Read the Student Success Coaching Manual
- Watch Youtube Videos:
  - Bloom's Taxonomy: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVecgN8PgM
  - The Study Cycle: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YlZMBsMZnol
  - Metacognition: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P_b44JuBQ-Q

Small Groups (1/28 and 1/30):
- Metacognition Strategies (moved to Saturday)
- Informed Consent, Student Profile Summary Forms, and Tracking Sheet (Client Folders)
- Walkthrough Check-list and Video Recording

Large Group:
- Role as a coach
- Boundaries and Self Disclosure
- Making Referrals

Saturday, February 1st - 930am - 330pm - KIPJ 223

9:30 am - Introductions and Overview of Agenda (Drea)
9:40 am - Values Activity (Adan)
10:00 am - Working with Different Students (Adan)
11:00 am - Motivational Interviewing
12:00pm - Lunch - Urbane
12:30 pm - Student Success Coaching Manual Review & Quiz (Drea)
1:00 pm - Metacognition Strategies and Scenarios (Drea)
1:35 pm - Student Success Plan (Lily)
2:10 pm - Casenotes (Lily)
2:30 pm - Roleplay
3:30 pm - Self Compassion (Annie)
4:00 pm - Questions & Debrief
Appendix F

Professional Development

Professional Development for Student Success Coaching Program Suggestions

Based on the assessment from the last academic semester, a general question was on how to utilize the resources efficiently, more roleplay scenarios, and identity/privilege training in relation to the coaches’ position of authority. Below are some of the answers and questions from the year’s assessment.

Spring 2019 End of the Semester Assessment:

What might you recommend be done differently next year to improve the experience of future student success coaches and clients? Anything logistical? Supervision?

Coaches expressed more roleplays/exercises/practice, what works for coaches to help students’ study, go over resources and how to use them.

Mid-Term Check-In Spring 2019:

What has been the most essential facet of training you’ve used in coaching?

Roleplays – would like a resource on motivation and accountability
Specific study strategies to model with students
Identity and First-Generation students

What are some questions or topics you have now after completing half a semester of coaching?

Questioning clients and how to give them resources for academics. What exactly do we teach or help them with?

Privilege and Identity – role on authority and working with students with different life experiences than yours.

Fall 2019 Training Evaluation:

Please share any additional suggestions and comments on the overall Student Success Coaching Training.

I thought this training was awesome overall! The only suggestion I have is maybe finding a way that we can teach metacognition to our clients. I think an additional quick activity may help us recognize how we, as coaches, can advise clients to use metacognition.

Adding an Additional Day to Training

This additional day can allow for more time to flush out suggested sessions listed below.

Sessions would include:
  - Resource Review and Application
Appendix G

MTD Training Curriculum

Mid-Term Deficiency Training

Training Dates (anticipated): Week of March 9th - (3/9-3/13)
   - Max. 2 hours

Relevant Dates:
Mid-term Grades Due - 3/18

Mid-term Deficiency Meetings Dates & Times
*These dates must be flexible as we have to wait for the report from the Director of Student Affairs Assessment, reach out to students, and format the excel sheets for MTD check-in's*
   - 3/23 - 4/8
   - 10am-5pm Mon-Friday

Mid-Term Deficiency Volunteer Experience

At the Center for Student Success, we collaborate with the College of Arts & Sciences and the Director of Student Affairs Assessment to outreach to students who have one or more mid-term deficiency grades. These students are triaged to multiple partners in the Student Success team to ensure they are supported and reached out to.

During this outreach, we ask students to sign up for a 15-minute meeting to discuss how the semester is going, be referred to relevant resources to support their academic success and recommend student success coaching as a means of continued support to finish off the semester strong.

As a volunteer, these meetings require you to be aware of certain academic resources and policies on campus. You will have a conversation to understand their needs and advise them on steps to get their grades up. After each meeting with a student, you will note in our outreach google sheet your interaction and relevant resources you’ve referred to this student too.

History and Data:
- 50 student MTD check-ins (6 no shows)
- 25 students in the second week (5 no shows/canceled)
- 75 out of ~150 students

Role Qualifications:
   - 2-hour time commitment to training
Appendix H

MTD Survey Questions

Survey:

1. How would you describe your overall experience with the counseling services provided by the university?
2. Have you received any formal training or education in counseling or mental health?
3. How do you feel about the accessibility of counseling services on campus?
4. Have you ever communicated with a counselor about a personal or academic issue?
5. How satisfied are you with the confidentiality of your counseling sessions?
6. How do you rate the effectiveness of the counseling services in helping you?
7. How helpful have been the resources provided by the counseling center?
8. How would you rate the overall quality of the counseling services provided by the university?
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28. How would you rate the overall quality of the counseling services provided by the university?
29. How would you rate the overall quality of the counseling services provided by the university?
30. How would you rate the overall quality of the counseling services provided by the university?

Questions:
Appendix I

Program Coordinator Questions

Survey:

- The principal investigator's general interaction with the participants will be sending a recruitment email asking for participation in the one on one interview.
- The participant will review the informed consent information, sign and provide for the principal investigator, and proceed with selecting questions and developing questions for the interview.
- This interview will be conducted over Zoom (internet). The participant will have presented the informed consent document that was emailed prior to meeting the principal investigator.
- The principal investigator will begin by going over informed consent and that the call will be audio recorded for purposes of the study.
- The participant will be referred to using a pseudonym from the start of the recording onward.

Questions:

1. What has your experience been like as the graduate assistant at the Center for Student Success?
2. What has your experience been like supporting the Student Success Coaching Program?
3. How has the staff structure change impacted your work in the Center for Student Success?
4. How has COVID-19 impacted your work at the Center for Student Success?
5. How do you define student success?
6. How do you define academic persistence?
7. How do you define sense of belonging?
8. Questions to inform mission of Center for Student Success:
   a. What do we do?
   b. How do we do it?
   c. Whom do we do it for?
   d. What value are we bringing?
   e. What unique programs and services the organization provide?
   f. What are we known for?
   g. What are we good at?
9. Questions to inform the vision statement of the Center for Student Success
   a. succinctly describe the organization as it is right now.
   b. characterize your organization’s mission or role, people, stakeholders, services, organization, resources, and culture.
   c. Imagine it is 5-10 years in the future and you are a journalist reporting on your organization. What do you see in the above areas? What would you want the headlines to say?
## Appendix J

### Newsletter Format

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Assigned to</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 30th, 2020 Newsletter</td>
<td></td>
<td>Drea</td>
<td>Zoom etiquette! Minimize the only embarrassment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Mute your computer! (If you aren’t speaking, mute your microphone to minimize unnecessary or distracting background noises.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Test your audio/camera ahead of time to make sure everything works</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- Set aside a workspace, even if it’s a table (i.e. a room in your house where no one can bother you or communicate with family members ahead of time to avoid possible interruptions)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>- Use Zoom backgrounds!</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- For folks who can’t find a neutral background use in their home, Zoom has options so you can cover a messy kitchen with people walking by!</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Wearing earbuds or headphones will reduce the amount of noise that your computer will pick up during your call, which will make it easier for people to hear you.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Remember in an online course using Zoom, there’s no back row! Meaning – everyone, including the professor, can see what you’re doing.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Kelly</td>
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<th>Content</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 30th, 2020 Newsletter</td>
<td></td>
<td>Drea</td>
<td>Create a schedule! (canva)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Poster: Drea</td>
<td></td>
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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Assigned to</th>
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<tr>
<td>March 30th, 2020 Newsletter</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sr. Marla</td>
<td></td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 30th, 2020 Newsletter</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Chicken Tortilla Soup - for Instant Pot or not!</td>
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</tbody>
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### Fun Corner:

- Library Resource
- Writing Center
- Math Center

### Virtual Events/Resources on campus (if applicable)

- First Day of Online Classes - Top 3 tips on starting first week of online classes on the right foot!
  - Creating your new class/study space:
    - Get some peace, quiet, and sunlight if possible!
    - Make sure you select a space that is without distractions from things family, roommates, or TV
  - Turn your phone on silent!
    - Some cool apps such as Forest-Stay Focused
    - A visual of you creating something as you gradually not use your phone during class time. Animal Crossing, anyone?
  - Only focus on class while online
    - It may be tempting to surf the internet or get sucked into Reddit on how to succeed in an online class, but the best thing for you to do is to actually be present in class!
- Google Calendar, Passion Planner, Just make a schedule!
  - While stuck at home it be really tough to manage your time, especially when taking a break from studying can mean taking a nap