Questions for Dr. Timothy Renick from the University of Alaska

Question: For students taking any math course other than MATH 101, the placement test for Mathematics at GSU is proctored. Do you consider proctoring this test to be an important part of student success?
Answer: The Math faculty determine the appropriate measures for proctoring exams. Since our MILE courses are truly hybrid, the exams can be and have been offered face to face.

Question: Dr. Renick, I'd be curious to hear your impressions and thoughts about the cultural transformation of Georgia State that has accompanied these administrative steps. Was a fundamental shift to a more learner-centered approach required? If this is the case, I'd love to hear about that transformation.
Answer: I believe this question was asked during the webinar. I pointed out that, since many of the changes that I had outlined in the webinar were to administrative rather than academic functions, I would call our approach student-centered rather than leanrer-centered. A critical part of our move to student-centered approaches was the change in administrative structures that I described during the Q and A.

Question: The adaptive learning model sounds very similar to the Flipped Classroom model used in some engineering courses here at UAF. Can you cover the differences between these two models and has Georgia State seen a difference in the success rate between these two models?
Answer: The MILE model we use for our math course is indeed a flipped classroom model, as are the modified versions of social sciences courses. I think the additional distinctive feature of our approach is that we use adaptive-learning platforms and technologies for our out-of-the-classroom experiences within the flipped courses.

Question: Do you think a small university like University of Alaska Southeast could benefit from freshman learning community (meta majors)?
Answer: Incoming college students, especially those from modest economic backgrounds, need help in exploring academic fields and career paths. If we do not help students think through these choices, then low-income students are the ones who suffer the most since they are vulnerable to running out of eligibility before completing programs. Meta-major-based learning communities are one inexpensive and scalable model for enabling students to do some of this exploration. We have implemented them on some of our smaller campuses with total enrollments under 3,000.

Question: What increase has there been in staff to address the increase in interventions?
Answer: we have greatly expanded staff, especially in advising. Over an eight-year period, we have grown from 50 advisors to 120 on our main campus.

Question: How long does GA State retain student early alerts data or records, whether the triggering event led to an advisor intervention or not?
Answer: When alerts are triggered, they remain a permanent part of the student's record in EAB, whether or not the alert led to an intervention.

Question: You mentioned the huge ROI (in dollars) from higher retention rates, but how much of that money and how was that money spent to further support retention?
Answer: The Division has been given 10% of the additional revenues to re-invest in student success staff, programs and technologies. Since we simultaneously introduced classroom analytics to more efficiently schedule classes, the number of new faculty that have had to be hired constitutes another 40%-50% of the additional revenues.

Question: How does Georgia State generate data and review data? Do they have a centralized institutional research office that does it all, or do they have data specialists in a variety of areas? How much of their budget is dedicated to supporting institutional research?
Answer: We have a centralized office of IR that runs our data warehouse, IPORT, and employs 3.5 FTE for student data. We also have partnerships with data vendors such as EAB, Steepingblocks and Ad Astra.

Question: Please tell us more about the development of the success apps and tools. Did you outsource development and implementation of these tools? Did your IT departments create and implement them? Did you hire more staff to create and monitor the tools?
Answer: Almost all our major tools—chatbot (Admit Hub), e-portfolios (Portfolium), advising dashboards and alerts (EAB), Math adaptive tools (Pearson, McGraw Hill, Knewton)—were outsourced. Our in-house data team creates a number of novel reports that support these platforms.

Question: How do we help our students make a smooth transition back onto campus when things return back to normal?

Answer: The same approaches I described—designed for low-income and first-generation students with jobs and busy lives—are important in the current crisis since they allow you to communicate in more personal fashion and identify problems students are facing without the students having to raise their hands. Communicate often and through multiple platforms.

Question: Website link/s referenced during the presentation?

Answer: success.gsu.edu