Why Seniors Leave and How to Help Them Graduate

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Come Back to Mānoa Program at the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa

21 July 2017, CAA Conference

For Interactive Polls: PollEv.com/WhySeniorsLeave or text WhySeniorsLeave to 37607
Presentation Objectives

As a result of this presentation, participants will be able to

- Examine and discuss why undergraduate seniors “stop out” when they are so close to finishing
- Identify various degree completion programs
- Understand how one program attempts to help seniors who stopped out to return and graduate
- Be better able to develop advising strategies to reduce senior attrition and help with persistence to degree

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Presentation Agenda

• Literature Review
• Overview of Come Back to Mānoa (CBM) Program
• Data Collection Methods
• Why Seniors Left
• Why Seniors Return
• Major Impact of CBM Program
• Advising Strategies
• Next Steps / Future Thoughts
• Q&A

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Literature Review

Retention and Persistence

- Mostly focuses on first year students and sophomores
- Three critical elements of persistence:
  - Early connection to learning support systems
  - First-year programming
  - Solid academic advising (Drake, 2011)
Senior Attrition

• Limited research

• Different predictors for early vs. late dropout (Ma & Cragg, 2012-2013; Neumann & Finaly-Neumann, 1989)

• Predictors of Attrition:
  • Demanding learning conditions without adequate support (Neumann & Finaly-Neumann, 1989)
  • Dissatisfaction with academic experience, access to information, and quality of education (Mohr et al., 1998)
  • Significant competing priorities for students’ energy, time, and attention (Hunt et al., 2012)
  • Male*, in-state, high school GPA ≤ 2.5, science majors, nursing students, students without merit aid in the first year (Ma & Cragg, 2012-2013)

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Literature Review – cont’d

Degree Completion Initiatives

• Project Win-Win
• Adult College Completion Network
• College Completion Agenda
• National Coalition for College Completion
Come Back to Mānoa Program

Nov 2013
900 Seniors left/year → Proposal for CBM

• Program established June 2014 – one coordinator hired
• Housed administratively in Outreach College
• Inspired by The Graduation Project at the University of New Mexico
• Incorporated components of Project Win-Win
Come Back to Mānoa Overview

The Come Back to Mānoa program supports undergraduate seniors who left UH Mānoa to return and graduate

- Senior standing with 90+ credits and 2.0+ GPA
- Not enrolled in last two semesters

Major Strategies

- Reaching out to former students
- Work with referrals and students who found website
- Building personal connections
- Personalized guidance and assistance from admission to graduation
- Ongoing communication and accessibility
- Advocate on behalf of students
- Supplement major/college advisors – NOT replace them
Come Back to Mānoa Process

1. Define Targeted Groups
2. Identify Candidates in Targeted Groups
3. Reduce Candidate Set
4. Eligibles
   - Contact and Award Degrees
5. Potentials
   - Contact and Reenroll
6. Assessment
## Why Didn’t Eligibles Graduate?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons Students Eligible for Degree Did Not Graduate</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>(out of 41 Eligible students as of 17 July 2017)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t apply for graduation</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible under new requirements</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t resubmit graduation paperwork</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petition granted</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finish last course at another school</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decided not to double major</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Error – failed to award degree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer courses not evaluated</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade withheld by Study Abroad for Financial Obligation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fall 2014 → pulled 2274, outreach to 1072 students (Potentials)

Fall 2015 → pulled 2530, outreach to 493 new students

Fall 2016 → pulled 2973, 1517 Potentials, no outreach but 257 new students

Spring 2017 → pulled 2998, outreach to 1551 Potentials (397 new)

“Great way to help those that want to finish degrees but do not know where to start. Thank you!”
“It made it a lot easier for someone in my situation to return to school to finish. It's a different situation than a freshmen [sic] or transfer student, so it was really nice to have a program dedicated to helping people like me finish our degree.”
Data Collection Methods

Banner
(Outreach Data Sets)

2012
Leavers’ Survey
(UH Mānoa)

Intake Interview

2016 CBM Survey
# CBM Basic Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2014 Outreach Data Set</th>
<th>Fall 2015 New Outreach Data Set</th>
<th>2016 Survey Data Set</th>
<th>Spring 2017 Outreach Data Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>50.1%</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
<td>49.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>50.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Avail/No Answer</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average (Mean)</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>20-86</td>
<td>21-72</td>
<td>21-73</td>
<td>21-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cumulative GPA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average (Mean)</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>2.69</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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## Why Seniors Left

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Senior Respondents</th>
<th>2012 Leavers' Survey</th>
<th>CBM Intake</th>
<th>2016 CBM Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PERSONAL Reasons</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINANCIAL Reasons</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACADEMIC Reasons</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient SUPPORT SERVICES</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why Seniors Left

PERSONAL Reasons

• Health concerns (2012 Survey, CBM Intake)
• Family circumstances/responsibilities changed (CBM Intake, 2016 Survey)
• Accepted a full-time job (2016 Survey)
• Wanted to be closer to home (2012 Survey)

FINANCIAL Reasons

• Cost of living too high in Honolulu (2012 Survey, 2016 Survey)
• Need to earn money to take care of self/family (CBM Intake, 2016 Survey)
• Tuition and fees not affordable (2012 Survey, 2016 Survey)
• My/parent/family loans were too high (2012 Survey)
Why Seniors Left

ACADEMIC Reasons

• Earned poor grades (CBM Intake, 2016 Survey)
• Did not feel like I could get a job with a UHM degree (2012 Survey)
• Was unprepared for college-level work (2012 Survey)
• Classes were not convenient (CBM Intake)
• Did not take enough responsibility for learning (2016 Survey)

Insufficient SUPPORT SERVICES

• Inadequate academic advising – “thought graduated” (2012 Survey, 2016 Survey, CBM Intake)
• Faculty unhelpful (2012 Survey)
• Felt uncared about – like a “number” (2016 Survey)
• Bureaucratic administrative processes (CBM Intake)
Why Seniors Return

“*This has been one of my biggest regrets in life.*”

“I am a FIRST generation College Graduate... I come from [a] very poor family... I hope to set a good example to the future generations.”
Barriers to Graduation

- Affordability
  - Not eligible for financial aid
  - Scholarships based on merit or full-time enrollment
    - Lack of funds, 60.8%
    - Insufficient time due to working full time, 56.7%

- Academic
  - Need online, evening, or weekend courses
    - Needed courses only offered during day, 35.5%
    - Needed courses only offered on campus, 35.5%
  - Hawaiian/Second Language requirement

- Administrative
  - Paper-laden, duplicative, inconsistent, and face-to-face processes
  - Later registration for readmitted students
Impact of CBM Program in 2.5 Years

142
Re-engaged (Enrolled & Eligibles)

11
Anticipated to Graduate in August

88
Graduated
# CBM Running Synopsis (as of 13 July 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AY</th>
<th>Fall 2014</th>
<th>Spring 2015</th>
<th>Summer 2015</th>
<th>Eligibles Awarded Degrees</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1072</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AY</th>
<th>Fall 2015</th>
<th>Spring 2016</th>
<th>Summer 2016</th>
<th>Eligibles Awarded Degrees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>493</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>69</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AY</th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
<th>Spring 2017</th>
<th>Summer 2017</th>
<th>Eligibles Awarded Degrees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1639</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RUNNING TOTALS:**

- Total Contacts: 3204
- Total Eligibles Awarded Degrees: 339
- Anticipated Graduating: 173
- Actually Graduated: 88

**Unique # of Students Enrolled through CBM:**

- 101

**Re-engaged (Potentials enrolled and Eligibles):**

- 142

**Total UHM Credits Registered For:**

- 988

**Total UHM Tuition Brought In:**

- $448,888
“This program was exactly what I needed in my time of need. I doubted myself and was ashamed of the financial burden of student loans I had accrued with nothing to show for it. I feared one calculus course would keep me from graduating, from realizing my goals. The program helped me. I can only imagine it would help others.”
Advising Strategies

- Proactive Advising
- Appreciative Advising
- Motivational Interviewing
- Prescriptive Advising

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Next Steps / Future Thoughts

- Funding for students
- More intensive outreach
- Online forms (e.g., graduation, change of major)
- Ongoing research
  - Continue collecting and analyzing data
  - First-generation Seniors who stopped out
- Mentoring program / peer advisors
- Introductory online course
“Although I have not Come Back to Manoa yet, I know my current academic status and what is needed to achieve a BA when I return. I am very happy to see this new program exists!”

“Thank you for all your hard work and motivation in helping me complete my degree.”

“I now have my degree...from UH after 7 years of absence! The advisor never judged me for taking such a long break and she helped make sure that all the hard work I did was worth it.”
“Thank you SO MUCH! I am in deep gratitude for ALL of the assistance you have provided. I would have given up on completing my degree...You have renewed my interests in furthering my goals! I cannot THANK YOU ENOUGH!!!!”

“Put it this way....if it wasn't for this program, I would not have my degree right now.”
Questions?

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www.outreach.hawaii.edu/credit/come_back
https://cbm_shannon.youcanbook.me

Mahalo!
References

The Graduation Project at UNM – http://advisement.unm.edu/graduation-initiatives/
Project Win-Win - http://www.ihep.org/research/initiatives/project-win-win
National College Completion Initiatives – http://www.aacc.nche.edu/About/completionchallenge/Pages/national_initiatives.aspx


References – cont’d


