Summary Report
13th Annual Undergraduate Experiences Symposium, October 20, 2017

The symposium agenda provides an outline of the activities summarized below.

Goals of this Symposium
To build shared purpose, direction, and community among faculty and staff to help more of our students succeed. To consider how to do this by improving the academic quality of our pedagogy and curriculum, the quality of our student support services, and the integration of the two. To do this with equity mindedness. To learn from national best practices in higher-education reform that serve these purposes, as well as from the current work of our colleagues. To learn about the Education Advisory Board (EAB) research, services, and software and how we can use them for these purposes.

Quick Summary Data
- Total who registered for the symposium: 210
- Total verified attendees: 170
- Number who completed the Exit Survey: 76 (45% of 170)
- Percentage who rated the whole day as “very much worth” or “worth” the time/effort: 90%

Keynote Address
Why is the pace of progress often so slow in higher education? After a decade of intense investment, national graduation rates have increased just two points. Yet some institutions are improving much faster than others. What sets them apart? Dr. Ed Venit, Managing Director from EAB, shared new research, numerous examples from other universities, and specific data-driven practices that separate the highest-performing and most progressive institutions from the rest. Taken together, these practices represent the emergence of a new discipline: Student Success Management.

Exit Survey: “The keynote speaker, Ed Venit, provided relevant, useful information and inspiration”:

To see the exit survey and the raw responses, click Exit Survey questions and the raw survey responses.

Exit Survey: “What is your biggest take-away or suggestion concerning EAB and the SSC Campus software?”. Based on a qualitative analysis, these are the general types of responses that occurred most frequently, in order of frequency:

1. Generally support the EAB partnership and the capabilities they offer but have concerns about implementation, breadth of access, training, and integration, e.g., “In theory seems great. ‘Full integration’ necessary to make useful.” Or, “It is a useful tool and we’ll need access to use it.” Or, “We need to train faculty in how to use this.” Or, “Looks cool. I hope we take advantage of that.”
2. **Simply excited** about it, e.g., “Finally! As a campus, we need to be more forward thinking and ready to learn from the ‘big kids’.” Or, “Great to see multiple real examples of institutional initiatives and data.” Or, “That the amount of data I've visualized empowers me to take actionable steps for student success.”

3. **More concerned** with the limitations and caveats, e.g., “We need to realize as a campus that adoption of a new piece of software will ‘help’ our process, but it won’t be the silver bullet for retention and completion that it is being sold as.” Or, “Not sure what my role would be in the program.” Or, “Coordinating and integrating more with current technology especially canvas and degree audit” is needed.

Five mini “TED Talks”

**Talk #1, One Recipe for Student Success, Jeff Franklin:**
What if we could increase our 4-year graduation rate by 26% overall and 51% for URM students in five years? The Tennessee Board of Regents has done just that, statewide. This talk will summarize how they did it through a combination of these reforms: 1. requiring “purposeful program choice,” including Meta-Majors and Math Pathways; 2. engendering a “productive academic mindset”; 3. guiding students to take 9 credit hours in their meta-major/major in the first 30 hours; 4. guiding students to take Core Comp and Math in the first 30 hours; and, 5. incentivizing students to complete 30 hours per year.

**Talk #2, The Heart of the Matter: Great Teaching and Student Success, Margaret C. Wood:**
This talk will assert that great teaching is at the heart of student success. It will highlight a variety of evidence-based best practices used by faculty across campus that help to promote student success. If these strategies are not already part of your current teaching practice, take heart. You can implement any of these ideas not just someday, but Monday.

**Talk #3, Academic Advising for Student Success, Nimol Hen & Angela Vandijk:**
This talk will address the role and importance of academic advising for student success, the various advising structures that exist across the country and the model deployed at CU Denver, the range of efforts currently being enacted on our campus concerning advising, the potential for advising on campus, and the partnerships of advisors with faculty and with other staff on campus to support student success.

**Talk #4, Collaborating for Inclusive Excellence in Science, Richard Allen:**
How do we address equity gaps in the sciences? Together! CU Denver just received a $1m Inclusive Excellence grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) to reduce equity gaps in Biology and remove institutional barriers to student success. This talk will describe how a large group of faculty, staff, administrators, and offices are collaborating to address this complex problem with a breadth of supports and reforms that no one unit could deliver alone.

**Talk #5, Inclusive Excellence and Student Success, Brenda J. Allen:**
This talk will provide an overview of Inclusive Excellence (IE), a conceptual framework for integrating diversity and quality initiatives to help ALL students achieve excellence. The talk will provide an overview of research and theory on which IE is based. It also will describe key tenets of inclusive excellence, explain why they are crucial for student success, and explore how to enact them.
Exit Survey: “Of the five ‘tED talks,’ which one did you find most interesting and valuable?”

Working-Table Notes: Recommendations that Stand Out
Attendees worked together on the one of the five “tED Talk” topics that they chose. Multiple tables worked on each topic. They were guided by the presenters’ Working Table Questions and Instructions. The selected recommendations below nearly all appeared in the notes of more than one table.

**Talk #1 Tables:**
1) Implement **Math Pathways**, including Math placement that considers non-cognitive factors, corequisite instruction with “student-adaptive pedagogy,” and more Math tutoring.
2) Implement **Meta Majors** and assist students in choosing a guided pathway.

**Talk #2 Tables:**
1) **Prioritize teaching** as a student-success strategy.
2) “Be the ‘right’ kind of memorable.”
3) More and earlier learning of “hands-on,” “real world relevant,” and “hire-able skill sets.”
4) “Generate personal connection,” more faculty availability and approachability.
5) **Incentivize development** of better teaching and “reward the emotional labor teachers put into their craft, and value excellent teaching (versus research) as it correlates to student success.”
6) Teach **metacognitive skills**.
7) **Train faculty** in all student resources across campus.

**Talk #3 Tables:**
1) **Automate** routine advising to allow advisors to **build relationships**.
2) **Centralize uniform** advisor training.
3) **Better communicate** advising services to students.
4) **Reduce advisor-to-student ratio**.
5) Maintain **same advisor** for entire student career.
6) Conduct advisor workload analysis and **redistribute tasks** not central to the advising mission.

**Talk #4 Tables:**
1) **Cohort** target students in “learning communities” or a “yearlong FYE course.”
2) “**Knowing our students** more,” their “academic preparation,” in order to place them in co-requirement or tutoring.
3) Tailor “**STEM advising**” “interactive and engaged advising.”
4) Build “**quality of instruction**,” “professor development and cultural competency.”
5) Provide “Early research experience,” consider the equity issue of unpaid work, and collaborate with Anschutz.

**Talk #5 Tables:**

The table notes for topic #5 were the most extensive and detailed and so are provided [here](#).

1) **Focus on the students**, the “whole student,” serving, supporting, celebrating, employing, training, teaching them “holistically” with diversity mindedness.

2) **Focus on the faculty and staff** in hiring, training, and holding accountable for inclusive-excellence competency.

3) **Build inclusive excellence** into goal statements, merit criteria, performance plans, review process, etc.

4) **Strengthen leadership and “campus commitment”** to inclusive excellence with regular, explicit communication.

**Exit Survey:** “What is your biggest take-away from the symposium as a whole?”:

1. **“Work together.”** “Student success depends on campus wide collaboration of faculty, staff and students.” “Great community of people eager to make a difference.”

2. **“Be the reason** somebody stays.”

3. **Venit presentation:** “Data from Ed’s presentation.” “Ideas from other institutions.”

4. “I loved the Ted Talks.”

**Exit Survey:** “Which higher-education reform(s) mentioned at today’s symposium is most important for CU Denver?”:

1. **Advising:** “Advisor to student ratio.” “More advances in advising.” “Faculty and advisors working together.”

2. **Inclusive excellence** as a foundational principle. “Close the “achievement gaps.” Make “inclusivity a desirable thing (rather than a necessity).”

3. **Meta majors,” “guided pathways,” “clearer pathways for students,” and “Math pathways.”**

4. **Focus on teaching:** “Place teaching excellence at the center of student success.” “Professor development to serve our students.” “Hold faculty accountable.”

**Exit Survey:** “Please rate the symposium day as a whole.”: