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October 2012

Success Leaves Clues: Predictive Modeling in Higher Education

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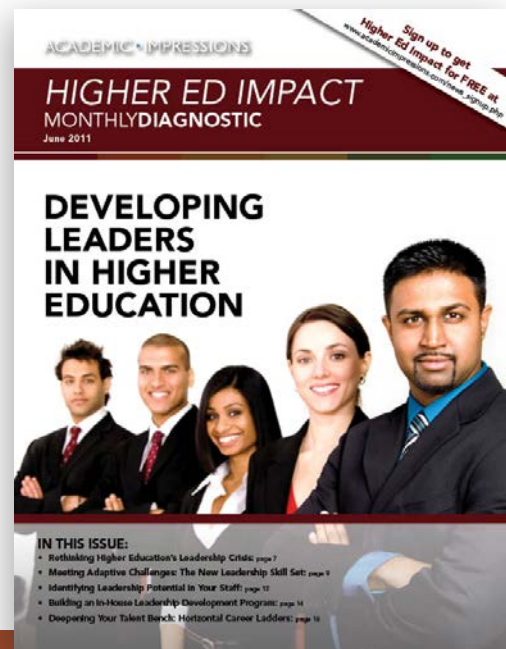
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HIGHER ED IMPACT
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June 2011

DEVELOPING LEADERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABOUT ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS

We are an organization that exclusively serves higher education professionals. We offer focused and intentionally crafted learning experiences to help you address your most pressing challenges.

Our work addresses a range of issues related to student recruitment and retention, faculty support and development, alumni engagement and development, and increasing organizational productivity.

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A LETTER FROM AMIT MRIG
PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS

Given increasing competition, shifts in student enrollment, and reduced resource levels, it's critical that colleges and universities recruit and retain the students who are most likely to succeed at their institutions.

By reviewing data on current and past students and alumni, and engaging in predictive modeling, you can identify not only the factors that impede desired outcomes such as yield, student retention, and alumni engagement and giving rates, but also the positive factors that contribute to those outcomes.

In this edition, we have turned to institutional researchers, enrollment managers, and advancement professionals to highlight examples of predictive indicators and data-informed tactics for enrolling and supporting the right students and helping them transition into engaged, committed alumni. We hope their advice will be helpful.

MONTHLY DIAGNOSTIC ONLINE

Download this PDF and read this issue's articles online:
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UPCOMING EVENTS

DATA-DRIVEN RECRUITMENT STRATEGY INSTITUTE

JANUARY 23 - 25, 2013 :: ST. LOUIS, MO

IMPROVING YOUR EARLY ALERT PROGRAM

FEBRUARY 11 - 13, 2013 :: DALLAS, TX

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Success Leaves Clues: Predictive Modeling in Higher Education

REVIEWING YOUR DATA: WHAT YOU MIGHT FIND

With scarce resources, it's time to become increasingly savvy about the students you recruit and enroll, how you support them in ways that make a difference in their academic success and persistence, and how you approach the student-to-alumni transition.

SUCCESS LEAVES CLUES

Look at your past and current students and your current donors to identify indicators of retention, academic success, giving, and engagement. This entails identifying the shared characteristics of those students and alumni who are most successful and have the most pronounced affinity for your institution.

Success leaves clues, and locating those clues can help you make better decisions at each stage of the student lifecycle, from recruitment, to retention, to graduation and transition to alumni. Predictive modeling based on current student and alumni data can inform your investments in recruiting, student support, as well as student philanthropy and young alumni engagement.

> Predictive modeling is a powerful statistical tool because it isolates those statistically significant variables that really drive the behavior of students— to find out of all the students who inquire, who will apply; or of admits, who will enroll; or of those enrolled, who will stay or who will leave.
>
> **Jim Scannell, President, Scannell & Kurz Inc**

events during the enrollment process. He treats this data as one key predictive indicator of future affinity, and he is interested in determining if these engaged students later become the most engaged alumni, as well.

RETENTION

While GPA is the giant in the room when it comes to predicting academic performance, there are many factors—financial, academic, and personal—that impact retention. For example, a student's degree of resilience to stress and a student's level of commitment to their educational goals (as measured in an assessment of non-cognitive skills) can be key predictors of their likelihood of seeing their degree through to the end.

Other factors worth testing for correlations with student retention might include geographical distance from campus, degree of financial literacy, and academic preparedness in specific subjects.

GIVING & ENGAGEMENT

It is well-known that though the bulk of development dollars are invested in cultivation of fundraising prospects long after graduation, affinity is established while your future alumni are still students at your institution, not afterward. Mine your data on past students and current alumni for correlations between giving or engagement and student behaviors.

For example, suppose that your institution has had a program in place for a number of years in which alumni can serve as mentors for students. Now that some of those students have graduated and become young alumni, are they more engaged than other alumni? What about students who were interviewed by alumni during the admissions process or had other opportunities to interact with alumni and donors during their experience as students? What about young alumni who were active in student clubs and organizations while on campus—how are they behaving when compared to alumni who were not?

RECRUITMENT

Beyond high school GPA and other standard measures of which students are likely to be well-prepared academically, look at your current student data to determine what factors correlate to a student's academic success, persistence, engagement, and affinity with your institution. You will want to test whether factors such as non-cognitive skills, distance from campus, level of academic preparedness in certain courses, and early signs of engagement with your institution are predictive of desired student (and alum) behavior.

For example, Rob Durkle, Dayton University's assistant vice president of enrollment management, is currently testing a hypothesis (and has anecdotal evidence to confirm it) that those students who are most engaged with the university throughout the admissions process also become the most engaged students during their four years at the institution.

Durkle is looking at which students do more than just click 'submit' on an online application: such as which students attend campus visits and other

GETTING STARTED

The other articles in this edition will review sample predictive indicators as well as sample tactics for acting on the data you find—in the recruitment phase, the retention phase, and the transition-to-alumni phase of the student lifecycle.

Of course, what serves as a good predictive indicator of student engagement at the University of Dayton or a predictive indicator of future giving at Dalhousie University may not be a good predictive indicator for students at your institution.

If you are very new to this process, start with univariate analysis, or what Jim Scannell calls "collecting descriptive knowledge." Identify some likely cohorts—alumni who participated in varsity sports versus alumni who did not, alumni who participated in greek organizations versus those who didn't, alumni who have attended at least one reunion versus those who haven't, etc. Pull the data.

See which student demographics, behaviors, or other factors correlate with yield, retention, academic performance, or future giving. That will tell you what hypotheses you want to test with a predictive model.

You can't wait until you can do something sophisticated. You need to start where you are and where your institution is. Even if you are starting small, show what data you can, tell the story, and help educate your peers on how to use that data to inform actionable decisions.

Loralyn Taylor, Director of Institutional Research, Paul Smith's College

DATA-INFORMED RECRUITMENT & ENROLLMENT

Moving beyond high school GPA and standardized test scores, you will want to look for predictors of student success and affinity for your institution by analyzing data on your past and current students at each stage of their relationship with your institution. Identify shared characteristics of those students who model behaviors you want to encourage.

Look for shared characteristics among:

- Prospects who apply (versus prospects who don't)
- Admits who enroll
- Students who take leadership roles
- Students who perform high academically
- Students who persist into the second year
- Students who graduate within a certain time range
- Students who stay engaged with the institution after graduation and take leadership roles in the alumni community

Once you know the characteristics of your current, most successful students, these characteristics become additional attributes that you can identify in your recruiting process.

Suppose that your data indicates that a significant percentage of the students who show high academic performance and persistence in your engineering program took calculus prior to entering it—and you find that many of these are transfer students who completed calculus while enrolled at a local community college. With this knowledge, you can look to your applicant pool and identify applicants who have taken college calculus.

"Give this target population special attention," Jim Scannell, president of Scannell & Kurz Inc, suggests. "Reach out with a campus visit day for future engineering majors, or visit that calculus class at the community college and speak with the students."

> But this is *change by addition*, not change by subtraction. You don't focus your entire recruitment process on applicants with those attributes, but you are going to feature those people, approach them with special communications and with a more personal touch, and offer them more reason to consider you as their institution of choice.
>
> **Jim Scannell, Scannell & Kurz**

Let's look at two indicators in particular, and at sample tactics for acting on them:

- Distance from campus
- Early engagement during the enrollment process

DISTANCE FROM CAMPUS

Typically, institutions take the past history of applicants and admits from given geographical areas into account when recruiting. You may, for example, prioritize recruiting students from Region West rather than Region East if you have seen a higher yield rate from Region West in the past. Also, it's common to consider which feeder schools yield students with predictors of success. But in prioritizing areas from which to recruit, have you looked for correlations between student retention and distance from campus?

Here's an example. Loralyn Taylor, the director of institutional research at Paul Smith's College, set out to answer that question about students at her institution. She found that:

- Students whose families lived within a two-hour drive of campus had a high retention rate;
- Students whose families lived further away from campus had a lower retention rate; *but*
- Students whose families lived *more* than an eight-hour drive away had a higher retention rate.

After surveying and interviewing these students, Taylor concluded (with reservations) that what is likely occurring is that the students who live close to their families may "go home" to see them but remain fairly engaged in the campus community. Those who live three or four hours away often drive home every weekend and develop less of a sense of place and an affinity with the campus. In fact, missing their family and friends, they are less engaged in their classes and often schedule their courses so that they can end the week early.

By contrast, those whose families live more than eight hours away only go home for the holidays and remain very engaged in the campus, forming new friendships on campus and devoting more of the weekends to their studies.

If these were the results at your institution, then based on your enrollment strategy, you could respond to this data in a number of ways. For example:

- You could place a higher priority during the recruiting phase on outreach to the other demographics—the local students and/or the out-of-state students
- If you are primarily an open-enrollment institution, you could invest in student affairs programming to reach out to that middle population and their parents, to advise them that returning home on multiple consecutive weekends may impair their academic performance

Here is another question to look at. Beyond the simple fact of persistence, is there any correlation between those geographical demographics and:

- Involvement in student activities and organizations
- Student volunteerism
- Engagement as young alumni

In other words, which demographics are most likely to connect with your institution in meaningful ways and are most likely to stay connected with your institution?

EARLY ENGAGEMENT DURING THE ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Here's another example.

The University of Dayton is trying to identify signs of affinity with the institution among applicants and admits, with the goal of admitting and enrolling a more engaged class that will be enriched with potential student leaders, volunteers, and long-term ambassadors for the institution. Dayton is only in its second year of using its predictive model (developed in partnership with a third-party vendor) to drive specific investments in the enrollment process, but Rob Durkle, Dayton's assistant vice president of enrollment management, notes that faculty members have already shared with him, anecdotally, that this is the most engaged class they can recall.

Durkle is testing the hypothesis that affinity and student engagement can be correlated to level of engagement with the institution during the enrollment process. "Look at what your students do between the application and the admit date," he suggests.

For example:

- Which students connect with the institution through additional communications (email, phone, text)?
- Which students come to a campus visit?
- Which students engage in programming such as a reception for admits?

"We are looking for indicators of engagement beyond just clicking 'Submit' on an application," Durkle explains.

Durkle has actually included this in the criteria for selection. If the school has one spot left to give and two applicants, then all else being equal, if one student's only communication with the institution was to click 'Submit' on the online application, and if the other student has visited the campus 1–2 times during the enrollment process, then Durkle theorizes that the second student is more likely to invest in their time at the institution.

Use predictive modeling to dig deeper and find out which specific interactions during the admissions cycle show the strongest correlation with later engagement:

- What about students who not only did a campus tour but also did an overnight stay or attended a campus day for applicants?
- What about students who also met with a faculty member?

"Look at the propensity to be engaged and thrive," Durkle remarks, "and identify the right opportunities and programs to engage admits."

If your data indicates that these students not only were more likely to enroll but also performed better in the first term and persisted to sophomore year at a higher rate (because they came in with right-sized expectations about the campus experience), try boosting both your yield and persistence by investing in getting more applicants to visit your campus and participate in specific activities during the admissions cycle.

Also, model your current alumni leaders and alumni volunteers, your regular givers to the annual fund—starting with your engaged young alumni, if you have a paucity of data from years further back. What did your young alumni do during the admissions process? What did they do as first-year students? What were those earliest signs of affinity?

STUDENTS

&

PARENTS

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CUSTOMER SERVICE

ARE YOUR FRONTLINE STAFF UP TO THE TASK?

AI CAN HELP WITH
ON-CAMPUS **&** *Out Of The Box*
TRAINING

ALL COLLABORATIONS START **WITH AN INITIAL CONVERSATION**

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A DATA-INFORMED APPROACH TO STUDENT RETENTION

Few institutions are performing sophisticated predictive modeling on factors affecting student retention, and given how many factors there are (both within and outside the institution's control), predictive modeling can appear quite daunting. But you don't have to go from A to Z all at once.

"Typically," Jim Scannell, president of Scannell & Kurz Inc, advises, "we encourage institutions not to leap into predictive modeling immediately. Start by doing univariate analysis, collecting descriptive knowledge."

For example, out of an entire class, you could set out to describe:

- How many men retain versus women?
- How many men versus women achieved higher than a 3.0 GPA?
- How did your transfer students from two-year institutions perform versus your transfer students from four-year institutions?

- Students from public versus private high schools?
- Student cohorts based on race?

Suppose you find that men in that class are, on average, achieving a lower GPA than women. Can you dig deeper? For example, if you have strong athletics, compare both the academic preparation of entering athletes versus non-athletes and the academic success of those two groups during the first year. Do you have a lower GPA for male students because you enrolled 100 football players who were less academically prepared than the rest of their class? Or, if there is no significant correlation, are there other likely factors you can check?

Descriptive analysis will help you understand what hypotheses you want to test using a predictive model.

Jim Scannell, Scannell & Kurz

The key is to get started.

MOVING THE NEEDLE

Let's look at one example of predictive analysis—assessment of students' non-cognitive skills—and sample tactics informed by that analysis.

NON-COGNITIVE ASSESSMENT

> Scores and high school GPA only account for about 20 percent of the variability we see in student outcomes. Some students with a respectable GPA and high scores underperform academically in college and drop out, while other students who appear academically under-prepared then proceed to perform highly. This means that some of the students you are losing are in good academic standing. They don't appear to be "at-risk students." We need better predictors of student success.

Paul Gore, University of Utah

Citing a 2004 meta-analysis, Paul Gore, the student success special projects coordinator at the University of Utah and the past director of the Career Transitions Research Department at ACT, notes six non-cognitive variables that appear to have the greatest impact on an institution's ability to identify those students who are likely to succeed. These are not the only non-cognitive variables that impact student success (for example, communication skills are also important), but these are the six variables that, when assessed together with other traditional, cognitive variables, offered an incremental increase in predictive accuracy.

These included:

- Indicators of academic performance, such as academic engagement (the student's diligence in their studies) and academic efficacy (the student's confidence in their ability to complete academic milestones)
- Indicators of academic persistence, such as educational commitment (the student's motivation for achieving a degree) and educational engagement in extra-curricular activities
- Indicators of emotional development and maturity, such as resilience in response to stress and comfort level in social settings

Gore recommends employing a non-cognitive assessment (of which there are many currently on the market) during the admissions process, to help predict which students possess those non-cognitive skills that drive student success.

If yours is a selective institution, this assessment can inform recruiting, by empowering you to make better decisions about which students to enroll based on which students are likeliest to persist and succeed at your institution.

If yours is an open-enrollment institution, this assessment can help you:

- Identify which students in a traditionally "at-risk" cohort are most and least likely to need support and intervention (allowing you to devote limited resources more effectively)
- Identify cohorts of students who would benefit from a summer bridge or first-year program focused on building non-cognitive skills, or from other student services

LEARN MORE

Here are two resources for digging further:

Read our article "**Predicting Student Success: When SAT and GPA Are Not Enough**" (http://www.academicimpressions.com/news/predicting-student-success-when-sat-and-gpa-are-not-enough)

Get our October 2012 recorded webcast "**Developing Academic Stamina in First-Year Students**" (http://www.academicimpressions.com/webcast/developing-academic-stamina-first-year-students)

IMPROVING YOUR EARLY ALERT PROGRAM

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MINING YOUR DATA: FROM STUDENTS TO ALUMNI

Your institution has enrolled a strong class of students, and a high percentage of them have persisted and are thriving academically. Now it is the senior year. In a few months, these students will graduate, and, if you do not engage them proactively now, you will lose your best opportunity to invite them to engage with you and give back to the institution as alumni.

A few figures to consider:

- According to Eduventures' 2008 study *Transitioning Donors to Higher Gift Levels*, almost half of all donors make their first gift to the institution more than 20 years before making a contribution at the major gift level.
- According to the 2011 Capgemini and Merrill Lynch World Wealth Report, 32%—nearly a third—of high net-worth individuals (HNWIs) in North America are under age 55, an increase in the number of the young wealthy over previous annual reports.

These data speak to the importance of cultivating donors as early as possible. And as affinity with your institution develops while alumni are still students, managing the student-to-alumni transition is especially critical.

KEY INDICATORS OF GIVING AND ENGAGEMENT

What can you learn about preparing students to become engaged alumni, based on the data you have (or could collect) on your current alumni? Kevin MacDonell, business analyst for the Office of External Relations at Dalhousie University and author of the CoolData blog **(http://cooldata.wordpress.com)**, lists a number of indicators that his research has shown to be predictive of future giving or alumni engagement at Dalhousie:

- A student's involvement in activities such as varsity sports, the debate club, student government, or a fraternity or sorority
- Whether the student lived on or off campus
- How long an alum kept their university web login active post-graduation
- Whether the student has given the institution an email address other than an "email for life" address provided to them
- Number of terms spent studying at the institution
- Number of degrees they hold
- The region the student came from

STUDENT ACTIVITIES AS A PREDICTOR OF FUTURE GIVING

For example, MacDonell undertook a project recently to identify the predictive indicators of planned giving at Dalhousie University.

MacDonell found that, among alumni age 50 or older:

- Of donors with planned giving expectancy, 91.3% had engaged in at least one student activity during their time on campus (participation in varsity sports, campus clubs, and student government had all been coded in the database)
- Of donors without planned giving expectancy, only 57.4% had engaged in at least one student activity

You can find the data here: **http://cooldata.wordpress.com/category/planned-giving/**

Note that further research could tell you which student activities are most clearly correlated with planned giving expectancy. Varsity sports are almost a given, but of other activities, which ones build lifetime affinity?

Besides empowering you to identify additional prospects for planned giving, this data (or findings correlating student activities with annual giving, for instance) also empowers you to identify students to focus on with a targeted student philanthropy initiative.

Suppose that rather than a traditional senior gift, you invite the student leaders on your campus to form a senior campaign committee. This approach models the interaction your institution desires with these students once they become alumni and places these students in an excellent position to model that interaction for their peers during the critical senior year.

RUNNING A SENIOR CAMPAIGN

For examples of what does and doesn't work well, read our 2010 article "**The Student–Alumni Transition: Encouraging Meaningful Giving**":
(http://www.academicimpressions.com/news/student-alumni-transition-encouraging-meaningful-giving)

STUDENT VOLUNTEERISM

Here's one more example. Advancement professionals generally take it as a given that alumni volunteers are more likely to give back to the institution than alumni who do not volunteer; in fact, a December 2009 study by the Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund and VolunteerMatch found that in the average amount given to a nonprofit by volunteers is more than ten times that given by non-volunteers. We also know that the current generation of students is especially dedicated to volunteerism.

Here are some hypotheses you could test against your own student and young alumni population:

- Are those students who volunteer in development-related activities likelier than other students to participate later as alumni volunteers?
- Are those students likelier to give back to the institution as alumni?
- If so, participation in which activities (phonathon, senior campaign, donor stewardship activities, interviewing alumni, etc.) makes the most difference?

A little research now, even if you have limited data available, might yield returns later.

KEYS TO EFFECTIVE STUDENT PHILANTHROPY

Read our November 2011 article, "**Engaging Future Donors While They Are Still Students**": (http://www.academicimpressions.com/news/engaging-future-donors-while-they-are-still-students)

AI Contributors

Amit Mrig
PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS

Amit co-founded Academic Impressions in 2002 to provide a variety of educational products and services that help higher education administrators tackle key, strategic challenges. Since 2002, AI has designed and directed hundreds of conferences and has served representatives from over 3,500 higher education institutions. Besides designing and leading events for cabinet-level officers focused on strategic planning, budgeting, and leadership development, Amit leads Academic Impressions' ongoing research into the five- and 10 year challenges facing higher education and plays a lead role in outlining each issue of *Higher Ed Impact: Monthly Diagnostic* to highlight how college and university leaders can take an institution-wide approach to answering those challenges.

Daniel Fusch
DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS,
ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS

At Academic Impressions, Daniel provides strategic direction and content for AI's electronic publication *Higher Ed Impact*, including market research and interviews with leading subject matter experts on critical issues. Since the publication's launch in 2009, Daniel has written more than 250 articles on strategic issues ranging from student recruitment and retention to development and capital planning. Daniel previously served as a conference director for Academic Impressions, developing training programs focused on issues related to campus sustainability, capital planning, and facilities management. Prior to joining Academic Impressions, Daniel served as adjunct faculty for the University of Denver. Daniel holds a Ph.D. in English.

Courtney Gulden
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Courtney is responsible for creating online and in-person conferences in the area of advancement, including needs research, program design, and subject matter expert recruitment. Her focus within advancement is targeted at alumni relations, annual giving, social media, and development communications. Courtney has been with Academic Impressions since 2008, and is currently writing her dissertation on the story of Samson and Delilah. She has taught several courses on subjects such as apocalyptic literature and translation theory and was a Teagle-Wabash Teaching and Learning Fellow at The Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA, where she honed her practical teaching skills and curriculum design capability with a mentor professor for one academic year. She is an occasional giver to her alma mater, Colgate University, and is a Federal Club Member of HRC Colorado.

Julia Nelson
ASSISTANT CONFERENCE DIRECTOR, ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS

Julia currently researches and designs online and in-person conferences in the area of enrollment management.. She completed her BS in Human and Organizational Development and a minor in Sociology as well as an M.Ed. in Higher Education Administration at Vanderbilt University's Peabody College. Before joining AI, Julia led the performance management, recruitment and professional development programs at a private bank. Previously she managed campus recruitment and onboarding programming for an IT company and began her career in regional admissions recruitment.

Marla Whipple
CONFERENCE DIRECTOR, ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS

Marla oversees and directs AI's programs and services for student affairs professionals. Her main areas of research are outcomes-based assessment, retention, leadership in student affairs, and topics related to career service offices. Previously, she worked in career services and college counseling at a variety of campuses. Marla earned an MA in clinical psychology from The University of Texas El Paso and a BA in psychology from Miami University (Ohio). Marla's favorite parts of the conference director role are building relationships with practitioners and learning about the amazing work they are doing.

Contributors

Rob Durkle
ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT, ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT, UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON
With over 30 years of experience in admissions and enrollment management, Mr. Durkle has led the University of Dayton to several enrollment achievements. He has begun many innovative uses of student and alumni data to elevate the efficiency of the admissions office, including raising the amount of undergraduate applications by 56% over the past five years while also raising ACT/SAT scores, introducing innovative interviewing programs that drive enrollment, creating strong alumni recruiting programs, and developing one of the first exclusively online application systems. Rob currently serves on the board of the National Catholic College Admission Association and has presented numerous times at regional admissions counseling association conferences.

Paul Gore
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND TRAINING DIRECTOR, SCHOOL COUNSELING AND LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING PROGRAMS, UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
Paul is the student success special projects coordinator at the University of Utah in addition to his roles as professor, training director for graduate counseling programs, and director of institutional research. Prior to coming to the University of Utah, Paul held faculty appointments at Southern Illinois University and the University of Missouri-Kansas City. He also served as the director of the Career Transitions Research Department at ACT in Iowa City. Paul currently serves as the chair of the Society for Vocational Psychology and on an advisory board to the vice president of science for the Society of Counseling Psychology. Paul's research interests focus on the motivational aspects of high school and college students' success, and on understanding and promoting effective career and life planning. He consults with institutions on the topic of non-cognitive skill testing and teaching and has written numerous articles and presented nationally on the topic of student success. He is currently journal editor for the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.

Kevin MacDonell

BUSINESS ANALYST FOR THE OFFICE OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS, DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

At Dalhousie University, Kevin undertakes data mining and predictive modeling for many advancement functions, formulates alumni engagement metrics, and works to enhance the shop's performance reporting at the enterprise, program and individual levels. During his previous work for the annual fund, Kevin ran Dalhousie's phonathon program for two years and conducted fundraising data analysis on the side. Prior to his work at Dalhousie, Kevin served as a prospect researcher for major gifts at St. Francis Xavier University for five years. Kevin is the author of the CoolData blog and is a frequent presenter on data mining and predictive modeling at industry conferences.

Jim Scannell

PRESIDENT, SCANNELL & KURZ INC

Jim's special area of expertise falls in recruitment - from mentoring admissions leaders to building new demand through data analysis and the development of strategic communications. Jim's administrative career spanned over 25 years of leadership in admissions, financial aid, and enrollment management at Boston College, Cornell University, and the University of Rochester. In addition, Jim has authored numerous publications on enrollment management including Choosing a College that is Right for You (Peterson's Guides), The Effect of Financial Aid Policies on Admission and Enrollment (The College Board), Working Together: A Cooperation between Admissions and Financial Aid Offices (The College Board), and Shaping the College Experience Outside the Classroom (University of Rochester Press). Since partnering with Kathy Kurz to start the company in 1996, Jim and Kathy have consulted at over 250 institutions nationwide on over 350 projects.

Loralyn Taylor

DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND REGISTRAR, PAUL SMITH'S COLLEGE

As director of institutional research and registrar for the past 8 years, Loralyn focuses on increasing the institutional effectiveness of Paul Smith's College. Her work has included helping design, implement, and assess the college's highly successful Comprehensive Student Support Program. Demonstrating improved student success through increases in percentage of students in good academic standing, increased graduation rates, and generating over $2 million in increased student revenue due to improved retention, the program includes both proactive and reactive strategies as well as targeted use of data analytics. Loralyn's interests include using data, innovative technologies, and change management to bridge the gap between research on best practices in student success and actual, boots-on-the-ground initiatives.