



Caring Campus: Improving Student Retention and Success

Students come where they are welcome and stay where they feel cared about. If students don't feel connected to the college they attend, they are far less likely to persist and succeed, regardless of the academic interventions and support services the college has provided.

The Institute for Evidence-Based Change (IEBC) has created *Caring Campus* based on research that shows students who feel more connected to their college are more likely to be retained, persist from semester to semester, and complete their academic goals. Increasing connectedness, therefore, can go a long way toward increasing the likelihood enrollment will be maintained.

IEBC has a proven method for creating a *Caring Campus* that ensures all students feel connected to their college. *Caring Campus* includes two initiatives: one for faculty and one for professional staff. Almost 70 colleges are implementing *Caring Campus* around the country and they are seeing improvements in course retention and success and term to term persistence. Achievement gaps are being closed dramatically.

With little to no resource commitment beyond the initial IEBC coaching, *Caring Campus* drives behavior changes that improve and enhance the many student success initiatives already being implemented at colleges around the United States. Using a unique coaching model, faculty and staff identify behaviors that are easily implemented intentionally and campus-wide. Cabinet and department leadership commit to supporting, monitoring, and celebrating these behaviors. These groups work together to institutionalize *Caring Campus* behaviors across the college. *Caring Campus* goes immediately to scale after one or two semesters of coaching.

Caring Campus's unique coaching model is implemented differently for faculty and professional staff (below). For both groups, the *Caring Campus* coach provides their contact information to leadership and coaching participants and is available throughout the process for ongoing support. Both groups also work toward a final session intended to rollout behavioral commitments campus-wide. IEBC continues to follow-up with the college long after the formal process ends to assist with institutionalization.

Caring Campus Faculty Process



For faculty, *Caring Campus* begins with a leadership orientation session. Then, IEBC works with the college's institutional research department to identify Bright Spot faculty members with consistently high rates of course retention and success.

These faculty members are interviewed by designated college leadership using an IEBC protocol to explicate their non-instructional behaviors that promote student connectedness and success. They then are invited to participate, with the college's instructional leadership, in a coaching process to develop strategies for implementing these behaviors with their colleagues intentionally and campus-wide. The team also addresses institutionalization and sustainability. The process concludes with an implementation kickoff for college rollout and institutionalization and sustainability efforts with follow-up by IEBC and coaching support throughout.

Caring Campus Professional Staff Process



For professional staff, the process begins with a leadership kickoff event to ensure cabinet and department leaders understand *Caring Campus* and the expectations for their staff. Professional staff representatives are identified by department leads to participate in a series of coaching sessions during which they identify behavioral commitments for the college. They also develop implementation, monitoring, and communication plans. The formal process proceeds with a joint session for staff to present their work and for leaders to identify how they will support, monitor, and celebrate campus-wide rollout and institutionalization. A final session, typically an all-college convocation, is held and institutionalization and sustainability efforts begin. The process is supported throughout with coaching support.

Our process leads to the college faculty and staff engaging in behaviors that also lead to culture change. *Caring Campus* colleges report improved satisfaction among faculty and staff, and improved relationships between professional staff, leadership, and faculty. Higher levels of awareness of the functions of other departments also are prevalent. Participating staff and faculty report that *Caring Campus* is immediately valuable to their students, themselves and the college.

THE INSTITUTE FOR EVIDENCE-BASED CHANGE (IEBC)

The Institute for Evidence-Based Change (IEBC) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping education stakeholders — community colleges, universities, K-12 school systems, employers and others — use coaching, collaboration and data to make informed decisions and craft solutions that improve practice and dramatically increase student success. We partner with our clients to successfully implement customized evidence-based solutions to today's most pressing issues.

Institute for Evidence-Based Change

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