

the notebook

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College Ruled

“SUU sees a drop in
Enrollment, yet an
increase in **Retention**”



by **Stephen Allen**

The University recently released enrollment figures for fall 2011. Overall enrollment is down slightly in both headcount and FTE. As employees of SUU, you may have community members ask you for insight regarding the dip in enrollment.

Several factors contributed to the drop in enrollment. There were also some promising signs related to enrollment and retention. Below, you will find additional information and talking points.

Enrollment Facts and Talking Points

- **Drop for non-payment**

This fall, students enrolled for fall classes were dropped for non-payment

if there was a balance on their account of more than \$300 after the second Friday in August. Exceptions were made for student's that would be receiving financial aid or had agreed to a payment plan. This was done to remove students who did not have the means, or maybe the intention, of paying while still occupying seats in classrooms, lodging in our residence halls and eating in our dining facilities. The short term effect is an artificial enrollment drop. In the past, SUU did not drop students for non-payment until after the 3rd week report. As a result, previous 3rd week enrollment figures do not offer an accurate measure for comparison because we would eventually drop students after the 3rd week report for non-payment. In the

long term, the policy will open up more seats for students and help improve SUU's retention and graduation rates.

- ***Where were we up and where we were down?***

This fall SUU was down in two areas including graduate students and our freshman class. Demand for online graduation programs has declined particularly in Nevada where Clark County School District has historically taken advantage of our online graduate programs in Education. A factor contributing to a smaller freshman class was SUU's increased admission requirements. Please keep in mind that SUU reserves 40 seats for students who do not meet our admission requirements and preference is given to local students from the surrounding region. SUU did see gains in transfer students and returning students.

- ***The good news.***

SUU's fall to fall retention rates increased by two percentage points (highest in the school's history). Improved retention numbers was one motivation for SUU's increased admission standards.

- ***Future Enrollment***

As we look towards fall 2012, things look promising. The Admissions Office indicates that applications for fall 2012 are up significantly. Recruitment efforts are also being "ramped up" to help secure a healthy freshman class. In addition, retention and graduation rates continues to be a high priority and several initiatives have already been implemented.

Overview of Tinto's Theory of Student Departure



Tinto's (1993) theory of student departure is one of the most widely cited theories for explaining student departure in higher education (Berger & Braxton, 1998; Braxton, 1999; Braxton, Milem, & Sullivan, 2000; Guiffrida, 2005, 2006). Drawing from the work of Dutch anthropologist Van Gennep (1908/1960), Tinto's theory of student departure described three stages or rites of passage—separatism, transition, and incorporation—to explain how individuals socially adapt to new environments as they progress from membership in one group to another. Tinto (1988) applied these three concepts to understand the process students go through as they complete their undergraduate education.

The first stage of Tinto's (1993) theory is the separation stage. During this stage, students create the potential for college success when they are able to physically and socially separate themselves from their previous communities and integrate themselves into the college community. Tinto (1993) explained that during this stage, students adopt the norms and behaviors of the college culture and reject the norms of their past communities.

Transition is the next stage of Tinto's (1993) theory of student departure. Tinto (1988) characterized this stage as a passage "between associations with the communities of the present" (p. 444). He maintained that this period is very stressful and posited that students may employ different coping mechanisms

Industry Publication Article Excerpt

Excerpt from: Palmer, R. T., Davis, R. J., & Maramba, D. C. (2011). The impact of family support on the success of black men at a historically black university: Affirming the revision of Tinto's theory. The Journal of College Student Development, 52(5), 577-597.

to surmount this ordeal. Tinto (1993) explained that this process is facilitated by the degree to which the students began the transition process prior to formal entry into the university. He explained that, without assistance, many students limit the amount of time spent on campus, which in turn restricts interaction with members of the college community and diminishes opportunities for learning college norms. Consequently, students are prone to drop out of school.

The last stage of Tinto's (1993) theory of student departure is the incorporation stage. During this stage, Tinto (1993) explained that students seek to become socially and academically integrated within the university by establishing contact with faculty and students. More specifically, Tinto (1993) stated that students who perceive their norms, values, and ideas as congruent with the institution are more likely to become academically and socially integrated. Academic integration involves experiences that formally pertain to students' education and connect students with faculty and staff (Tinto, 1993). On the other hand, social integration entails formal and informal experiences that facilitate students' interactions with their peers, faculty and staff and that

occur primarily outside the academic purview of the institution (Tinto, 1993). He posited that fraternities, sororities, residence halls, student unions, contact with professors, accessing support services, extracurricular activities, and intramural sports all foster incorporation into the university.

Brief Commentary on the Excerpt

This excerpt provides a great summary of Vincent Tinto's theory. As described above, the transition stage presents students with unique challenges as they attempt to redefine their lives in the context of a new setting. Helping them succeed socially and academically is essential to SUU's retention efforts. One area where we may need to improve our interventions and programs is teaching students "different coping mechanisms" to manage the stress associated with re-creating their social lives on campus and meeting the academic demands of a more rigorous curriculum. Introducing students to new coping methods can expand their capacity to persist by helping them become more resilient and confident.

The Binding

Difficulty of International Student: **Culture Adaptation**



by *Mark Taylor*

With our growing population of international students, currently over 300 students from 17 countries, SUU is seeing an explosion of new cultures and accompanying challenges as we work to serve these students. However, we mustn't forget that these great students face unique challenges as they leave behind everything familiar - language, friends, family, and culture - all to pursue a degree at SUU.

I've been able to sit down and talk with many international students over the past year; learning about their experiences here and about their homes left behind. I hope that the following will provide an opportunity to gain some insight into the lives of SUU's international students. In

turn, I hope this encourages our faculty and staff to ask themselves: if I were to travel half-way around the world to live and study for four years in a new language with new expectations, what would I do? What would I hope from those around me?

When asked about their experience on-campus and in the community, students' first responses have always included, "everyone here is so kind and willing to help." One of our Saudi students shared with me an experience he had upon first arriving at the Cedar City Airport.

When he first arrived, he had no idea which way was north or south, or who to contact to get to the University, and

he spoke English when he arrived. One of the airport's employees recognized his situation and offered to drop him off for free, saying that her shift was over anyway and she would like to help him out. Once at the University, this student, along with our 300+ others, have many more obstacles to hurdle.

A typical day for our international students consists of the following: getting to class, stopping by the library, studying and finishing homework, going home, and then waiting for the weekend. In addition, some of our students will stay up until 3 or 4 in the morning translating their homework into their native language, then answering the questions, which they then have to translate back into English! In short, an assignment that may only take 45 min for a native English speaker to complete, can easily take 3-4 hours for one of our students still struggling with the language! This dedication to school work is not only affecting our international students, but our domestic students as well.

In a meeting with an RA from Cedar Hall, it was mentioned that our domestic students have noticed how much time some of our international students spend in the study room. She said that she overheard two students in conversation

state that they felt like they needed to step it up and spend more time doing the same thing.

While studies are an important aspect of university life, it is not the only aspect. Our students not only have to navigate a new classroom environment, but they also have to learn new social norms. In recent interviews, our students mentioned that some people approach international students with a sense of caution; holding back in an attempt to be respectful. They have said this has made it more difficult to make friends and to feel a part campus life. Thankfully, this has not always been the case for our students.

They have commented about how great it is that professors know their names, and that their focus is on teaching rather than research (sounds like they listened to our recruiting message). In addition to the faculty-student relationship, they have noticed how common it is for our domestic students to have a minimum of 10 "best friends," and to be VERY excited to see each other after being apart for only 50 minutes. For some of our students it would be highly unlikely for them to even cross paths with the same person over the course of a year.

While the majority of our international students enjoy the people and location of SUU, it can be a rough transition for some our students coming from cities of 5,254,560 (Riyadh), 7,000,000+ (Hong Kong) to Cedar City (pop. 20,527). Often when driving to the University from the airport I am asked, “So where is the city?” Many of these students aren’t used to the “make your own fun” approach of a small town. As a result, the weekend Vegas trip is a staple of entertainment, which raises another challenge: Social Security Numbers and credit history.

The only way for an international student to receive a Social Security Number is to work. However, due to Visa restrictions, they are only allowed to work on campus. Until they receive an SSN, they are required to pay deposits of \$400+ for cell phones, and are unable to receive financing to purchase a vehicle during their four years at SUU; cash is the only option. This inability to purchase a vehicle means that these students are dependent on others for a trip to Las Vegas, or even just to go to the local hangout on a Friday night: Wal-Mart.

Every student faces challenges when they leave home and begin a new chapter in life. For our international students, all of these challenges are compounded by a

language barrier. It would be analogous to using crutches to climb a set of stairs.

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions please send me an email or give me a call.

Mark Taylor

Coordinator of International Student Engagement

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A thought from the **past**



by Jake Johnson

During Senator Harry Reid's convocation this fall, he was asked about the current state of the Country. Although he admitted that things were tough today, he also reminded those in attendance that Americans had lived through much more difficult times in the past and that he had lost patience for the shortsighted analysis and doom saying that would suggest America's best days are behind her. I think there is something valuable to be learned from Senator Reid's astute observation about surveying the past to find strength and optimism for the future.

The last three years at the University have witnessed shrinking allocations from the State Legislature. With fewer dollars, the University has become increasingly creative in managing its personnel and programs. These creative measures have been accompanied by concerns about their future sustainability, and whether or not we will ever see the funding we

desperately need from the State. It may seem like unfamiliar territory, but as Senator Reid suggested we have lived through much more difficult times as an institution. Let me share with you one such time.

In January 1923, Utah State Governor, Charles Mabey, had just submitted his budget for the coming biennium. It included a line item to fund the Branch Agricultural College (B.A.C.) at an amount of \$24,000. Keep in mind this sum was to be distributed over the course of two years. The legislature would not meet again to appropriate money until 1925. This was devastating news to the College. In fact, the Iron County Record published the following statement in an article prefacing a visit from state legislators to evaluate the campus in light of the Governor's budget recommendation:

“The affect of these recommendations as affecting the Branch Agricultural College will at once be realized by all. As stated by the President of the Board of Trustees of the U.A.C. quoted in the Salt Lake Tribune, it will be impossible to maintain the Branch Agricultural College on the amount stipulated in the budget.”¹

The Governor’s recommendation continued a pattern of shrinking state allocations. As Ann Leavitt (1997)

writes in her centennial history of SUU:

“At each successive session of the legislature certain members from the northern counties questioned the advisability of continuing Branch Agricultural College. Most years they were successful in cutting the appropriations to the bare bones”²
(p. 90)

During the previous meeting of the legislature in 1921, Senator John W. Peters of Brigham City had introduced legislation that would have closed the B.A.C. all together (Leavitt, 1997).³

These attempts to eliminate the B.A.C. were rooted in the conviction that the B.A.C. was irrelevant to education in Utah. At that point in time, most people looked on the institution as a state-supported high school – not an institution of higher learning. Even though the B.A.C. had been given the approval to offer college-level courses in 1913, it had continued offering primarily preparatory courses. This was understandable given that many counties in Southern Utah had not established free, public high schools. Many of the B.A.C. students lacked the necessary education to succeed in a college-level curriculum. But that was changing. More counties began building





public high schools because state funding had improved. In addition to the development of public high schools, the B.A.C. had been competing with LDS Church academies in Beaver and St. George. Enrollments had stagnated and at times declined.

The future of the B.A.C. was dire. Members of the community were anxiety-ridden about what to do. To make matters worse, they had just experienced unprecedented turnover in the School's executive leadership. Roy Homer had resigned the Directorship to convalesce. P.V. Cardon had stayed less than one year and left for a more promising position at the U.A.C. Now the school was being headed by J. Howard Maughan, who had just come from the failing Murdoch Academy in Beaver. There were palpable fears that Maughan had been hired to close this school as well (Leavitt, 1997)⁴. Now the school and community were

waiting for representatives from the legislature to visit Cedar City in February to evaluate the school. In a matter of days a decision could be rendered that would jeopardize everything for which they had sacrificed.

The visit from representatives came. They were accompanied by the Governor. To the relief of many, the Governor guaranteed the people of Cedar City and the employees of the school that as long as he was the Governor the school would remain open. Other legislators agreed that the school could be of worth to the State provided they made a significant change:

Other speakers of the Legislative Committee spoke of the development of the school paralleling that of the country. It was pointed out that the B.A.C. had about filled its usefulness in the high school department. The institution is now faced with another field which is fast, being gone into, that of Junior College training. The speakers stressed their conviction that the school must enter the field of Junior College.⁵

The Iron County Record published one final summation on the visit and

confirmed the work now incumbent upon the institution:

As to the main purpose of the trip, it appeared that the committee decided that the college is rendering a service well worth while to the state, and that it should be continued, with the policy being kept in mind that it should gradually cease preparatory or high school work and become more and more, during the next few years, a junior college, giving perhaps the equivalent of the freshman and sophomore collegiate courses.⁶

The B.A.C. was being asked to alter its identity, its culture, and its purpose to fit the expectations of a modern Junior College. The change would require more and better trained faculty. It would necessitate more aggressive recruiting and better marketing in the communities of Southern Utah. It would require concerted efforts to offer a campus experience comparable to that on other college campuses. In short, the B.A.C. had to distinguish its educational product from its competitors and provide something to the people of Southern Utah that no other school could.

“SUU’s best days are just around the corner.”

Now jump back with me to the spring 2009. President Benson hosted a meeting in the Ballroom for all faculty and staff. He showed a classical work of art and asked the audience if they could identify it and its artist. The painting was Belshazzar’s Feast by Rembrandt. It depicted a scene from the Old Testament that spawned the popular phrase “read the writing on the wall.” In today’s parlance, that means being able to anticipate the future. Wise people and leaders will see what’s coming and prepare their friends and followers. In 1923, the B.A.C. had to be told what to do to remain relevant. Fortunately for us, we have visionary leadership on campus.

Today, without having to be told, the University is pursuing a path that will distinguish it from its competitors and provide something for Utahans that other schools can’t provide. Sure financial times are tough, but this go around we seem to be ahead of the curve, and SUU’s best days are just around the corner.

¹ Legislators to visit Branch A.C. (1923, February 2). Iron County Record, 29(8), 1.

² Leavitt, A. O. (1997). *Southern Utah University a heritage history: The first one hundred years*. Cedar City, UT: Southern Utah University Press.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ B.A.C. will be base for southern Utah. (1923, February 9). Iron County Record, 29(9), 1.

⁶ Legislature at half way point. (1923, February 16). Iron County Record, 29(10), 1.

Bullet Points

Announcements

- Event Services will now be scheduling the Tradition Room located in the basement of the Institutional Residence (President Benson's Home).

New to the Student Services Team

- Kate (Kathryn) Kloepper has been hired as the new Area Coordinator in University Housing. She replaces Kate Flowers. You can learn about Kate in the Highlight Section of the Notebook. In this newly defined role, Kate will mentor the community coordinators and supervise RHA.

Departmental News

- Amber Holman has become a full-time professional in Event Services with the title of Conference Coordinator
- Event Services has partnered with art students learning about art restoration to dust the portraits in the Great Hall. This is an excellent example of experiential education.
- The SUU Bookstore has launched a new website designed by Ty Jewkes and his team. Check it out at www.suu.edu/ss/bookstore/



- Admissions has entered a partnership with Royall & Co. to support recruiting efforts outside of Utah.
- Scholarships and Financial Aid will deploy a new model for awarding scholarships wherein all awards will be four-year awards.
- The Registrar's Office has launched ***DegreeWorks***. Students are now able to access their degree audit 24/7, have more substantive conversations during advising appointments, and try on different programs for size to determine their course of study.



- Caitlyn Kennedy, Director of the Center for Women and Families, will be leaving the University to pursue some exciting opportunities in Portland, Oregon. We'll miss Caitlyn and wish her the best!

Between the Lines

Milestones

- Ryan Copeland, an admissions counselor on the Wasatch Front, and his wife, Lola, welcomed a new baby boy to their family.
- As many of you know, Lynne Brown, Director of Student Support Services, was diagnosed with cancer over the summer. She has provided us with the following update:

“I would like to take a moment to thank all my colleagues and friends here at SUU that have supported, listened, and prayed for me as I underwent chemotherapy for lymphoma this past summer. I am officially cancer free according to the PET scan results of October 13th and am doing 6 weeks of radiation to make sure it never comes back! I am so grateful to my staff and everyone else who have kept my spirits buoyed up these past few months.

THANK YOU MY SUU FAMILY! YOU ARE THE BEST!!”

Highlight

Sheena Kauppila



Full Name: Sheena Ann Kauppila

Preferred Name: Sheena

Place of Birth: Calumet, MI

Where did you grow up?

Calumet, MI- it's a small town on the Keweenaw Peninsula of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Only connected by a bridge to the rest UP, which is only connected to the rest of MI by a bridge.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a band teacher. I've always considered myself a PBG (Professional Band Geek).

What is your favorite memory?

Wow, that is a tough question. Hmm, there are too many to count. I've been lucky to live all over the country and do a fair amount of traveling. Perhaps New Years in Finland last year at my cousin's, melting metal horseshoes to tell our fortunes, lighting sparklers inside the house, and then singing karaoke (I sang so well in English that I got complimented on my English speaking skills, to which I replied "Kiitos! (thank you)").

What is your favorite TV show?

Probably either Chuck or Castle, though I watch a lot of TV shows on Hulu since I don't have cable.

How about your favorite movie?

Dune, the 80's version with Sting. I grew up watching it with my mom, and I still love it!

What is your favorite book or magazine?

I don't know that I have an all-time favorite. I'm always reading- but I prefer fantasy/sci-fi books. Currently, I like the Hunger Games trilogy and anything by Mercedes Lackey.

What songs are your favorite playlist?

I currently enjoy Adele, Ingrid Michaelson, and I love music I can sing along to while I'm driving, like the Glee albums.

What are your hobbies?

Playing the tuba/piano, singing, reading, hiking, kayaking, cooking, and board games like Ticket to Ride or Settlers of Catan.

Pets?

Not yet. I'd love to get a small dog, but I'm afraid that I'm away from home too often to be a responsible owner.

What are your pet peeves?

People who don't follow/read directions and those who don't show initiative to find their own answers.

What ambitions do you have?

I aspire to someday be Dean of Students or VP at a university. I think that college is such a dynamic environment and I am looking forward to spending my career in such a stimulating workplace.

How did you get into student services/affairs?

It was one option I was considering after completing my undergrad in music education. However, I ended up pursuing other options (tech sales, arts administration, etc) before ending up at NAU to get my masters in Counseling, Student Affairs. However roundabout the path, I love working with students; teaching, creating programs, even assessing. I love that I am in a career where most people love their job and enjoy what they do, rather than complaining all the time.

Highlight

Kathryn Kloepper



Full Name: Kathryn M. Kloepper

Preferred Name: Kate

Place of Birth: Texas

Where did you grow up?

Southern Illinois

What did you want to be when you grew up?

Country Music Singer

What is your favorite memory?

Friends, Family and Work

What is your favorite TV show?

CSI: SVU

How about your favorite movie?

Action movies

What is your favorite book or magazine?

And Still We Rise – by Miles Corwin

What songs are your favorite playlist?

When it comes to favorites, I struggle. It is very much mood dependent and I enjoy numerous genres.

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy graphic design, singing, and the NHL

Pets?

I would love to have one but I can't.

What are your pet peeves?

Lying. Those who are not dependable.
Lateness/Tardiness

What ambitions do you have?

I like to do things that serve a purpose. I don't enjoy doing things just because everyone else is doing them. I like having the ability to truly impact student lives. My ambition is to not become complacent and always strive to improve the world around me.

How did you get into student services/affairs?

My senior year of undergrad I became an RA. I loved the position and wanted to become a Graduate Hall Director. This goal was backwards in a way, because to become a Graduate Hall Director, I had to be in grad school...so I applied. Still under the idea that Student Affairs wasn't the career path I would be following however as I was finishing grad school I realized how much I enjoyed the field and went on to serve 4 years as a full time Hall Director until this Fall when I moved across country to take the Area Coordinator position with SUU.