It Starts With the Faculty: Improving Campus-Wide Engagement in Advising

Samford University, Small Private Institution, Birmingham, AL

- **About:** Samford University is a private Christian university with 3,000 undergraduate students and a six-year graduation rate of 73%.
- **Challenge:** A communication gap existed between faculty advisors and student support staff due to inconsistent tools and processes for monitoring and supporting student progress. Faculty were aware of student issues but lacked the time to fully address them, while student support staff had the capacity to intervene but didn’t know which students needed help.
- **Solution:** Faculty leadership established new policies requiring midterm grade submissions, while student support staff began using EAB’s holistic student data to strategically intervene with at-risk students.
- **Impact:** First-year retention increased 2% within one year of EAB Navigate implementation with no additional investment in tutoring, supplemental instruction, or other student success measures.

### Impact Highlights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90%</td>
<td>Average faculty progress report response rate since launching Navigate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Increase in first-year retention one year after full Navigate launch</td>
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<tr>
<td>$674K</td>
<td>Additional tuition revenue</td>
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Shifting the Culture of Support on Campus—and Bringing Faculty Along

**Before EAB implementation**

- Disengaged faculty members
- Communication gap between faculty and staff
- At-risk students slipping through the cracks

**EAB data and tools pave the way for culture shift**

- **Engage Faculty Through Policy Change**
  - Navigate implementation process reveals the need to better incorporate the **faculty perspective**
  - Faculty senate begins requiring **midterm grade submissions**

- **Strengthen Communication Channels**
  - **Progress report campaigns** timed around midterm and withdrawal deadlines
  - Staff provide **use cases** for grade submissions and emphasize **faculty’s critical role** in driving student success

- **Equip Support Staff with Better Tools**
  - Navigate provides **holistic insights** that allow staff to strategically work with faculty and intervene with at-risk students
  - Staff improve **efficiency and effectiveness** with better data
Retention Continues to Climb Without Any Additional Investment in Staff

First-Year Retention and Additional Tuition Revenue

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Retention Rate</th>
<th>Additional Tuition Revenue</th>
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<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>87.9%</td>
<td>$136K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>$281K</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>88.7%</td>
<td>$257K</td>
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Increase in first-year retention one year after full EAB Campus launch

Total additional tuition revenue based on freshmen to sophomore retention rates

90% Average faculty progress report response rate since launching EAB

"Academics thrive on open inquiry, so transparency is critical to encourage faculty involvement. When faculty saw the volume of initiatives being impacted by their progress report submissions, they were willing to put in the time and effort to provide insight on their students.

-Nancy Biggio, Associate Provost for Administration"