

Statement on Student Success and Retention

Academic success begins before students enroll in their first class. There are numerous variables which influence success and retention. These include, but are not limited to, academic preparedness, work and family responsibilities, having a specific goal and a commitment to completing that goal, and the financial means to attend college. Palm Beach State College is an egalitarian institution admitting students who may or may not have the means or the ability to complete a postsecondary degree or certificate. Up to 70% of incoming freshman test into one or more preparatory classes. Most students work full- or part-time while attending classes and many have children. All of these challenges and many more must be factored into the academic success equation. Student success is measured on how well we as an institution help students reach their individual goals whether it is one course for personal improvement, a series of courses for transfer to another college or employment needs or a complete certificate or degree.

It is imperative that PBSC help students prepare for academic success from the moment of first contact. Below are some basic ways PBSC can help students

1. Establish admissions counseling as a means of helping students beginning at the point of application. Hire and train admissions specialists who can assist in the assessment of prospective students' career goals (or lack thereof) and academic preparedness in order to give appropriate program and testing information.
2. Establish placement testing, assessments, and cut-off scores that correctly place students in or out of college preparatory classes.
3. Establish career counseling as an integral part of the first year experience. Numerous studies have shown that students who have clear and committed career goals have higher rates of success and retention.
4. Educational planning/orientation should be more comprehensive to include the assessment of incoming students' strengths and weaknesses and give students feedback in small groups or individually.
5. Students in college preparatory and strategies for college success classes should be taught by full-time faculty who understand diverse learning styles and maintain office hours.
6. Establish academic counseling as the model to assist students with educational planning which includes a clear assessment of individual student's barriers to academic success and alternative plans to reach their goal(s). Assure that academic counseling staff have the appropriate educational credentials and experiences to guarantee students will receive a high quality experience.
7. All college policies should be oriented toward long-term student success goals rather than short-term enrollment goals.
8. Classes should be scheduled with the needs of students in mind first and balanced with financial and faculty needs second.
9. The college prep curriculum should focus on abilities of students at the point of entry based on academic need, but special emphasis should focus on those who are most at-risk. Appropriate course sequencing is essential.
10. Establish high quality classroom engagement models that include comprehensive faculty development which values diverse learning styles and a commitment to the utilization of technology and techniques that enhance learning.
11. Strengthen student engagement outside the classroom through Service Learning, enhanced student activities and student mentoring.
12. Maintain an environment conducive to learning including but not limited to the physical attractiveness of the campuses, cleanliness and classroom readiness.
13. Establish physical space on each campus that allow students (including groups of students) to gather for formal and informal academic and social engagement.
14. Develop a student tracking system to monitor success and aids in decision making.