Using Quantitative KPIs to Improve the Student Experience and Retention

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Session abstract: As part of a comprehensive Guided Pathways approach to improving the student experience, Midlands Technical College (MTC) streamlined the curriculum, reorganized academics, and reinvested in the campus environment. To assess the impact of these changes, MTC identified appropriate and applicable KPIs, including assessing student satisfaction each year, and operationalized the KPIs into the student experience. This session will explore how Midlands Technical College closed the loop on the impact of the college's academic restructuring and how tracking student attitudes impacted the culture of change, highlighting how making substantive innovations and improvements can lead to student success and better degree completion.

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Preview:

1. Review MTC's Collegewide Initiatives designed to Improve the Student Experience

2. Identified Appropriate and Applicable KPIs to Measure our Success

3. Closed the Loop on those Innovations through a Process of Continual Improvement

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Initiatives Designed to Improve the Student Experience

Using KPIs to Assess Improvements & Innovations

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Guided Pathways:
Streamlined the curriculum, reorganized academics, faculty professional development, and reinvested in the campus environment

Revamped Academic and Career Advising:
Centralized advising centers with professional advisors

Improved Learning Environment:
Freshman Seminar Revamp & Online Readiness Orientations

Strategic Plan KPIs:
Assessing the impact of these changes, MTC identified appropriate and applicable KPIs, including assessing student satisfaction each year, and operationalized the KPIs into the student experience.

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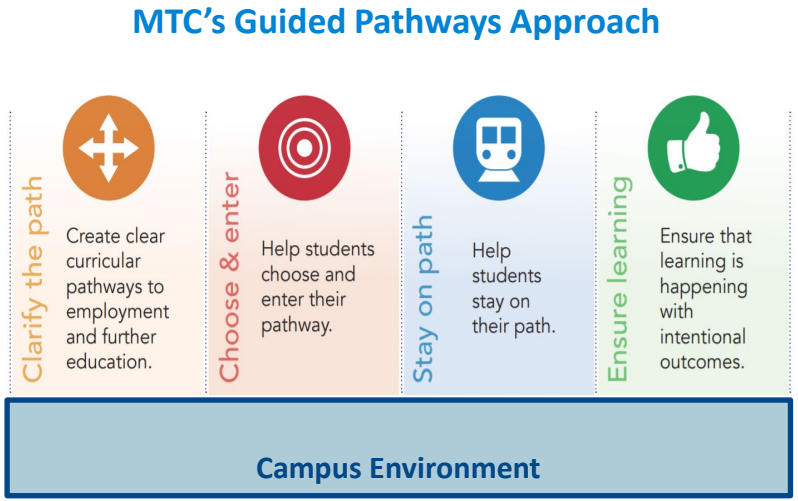
- **Guided Pathways:**
  - All Curriculum Streamlined into "Pathways"
  - Reorganizing Academics into Schools of Study connected to Pathways
  - Orientation Redesign & Linked to Advising
  - Freshman Seminar Redesigned and Embedded in the Schools
- **Collegewide Professional Development for all Employees:**
  - Service Excellence
    - Communicating with Impact (DDI)
    - Taking the HEAT (DDI)
  - ACUE (Invite from President Rhames)
- **Campus Environment:**
  - Fast, Campuswide WiFi
  - Co-curricular activities
  - Student friendly gathering spots around campus
  - Academic and Career Advising Centers
  - Welcome Week & School Week/Events
  - Food Trucks



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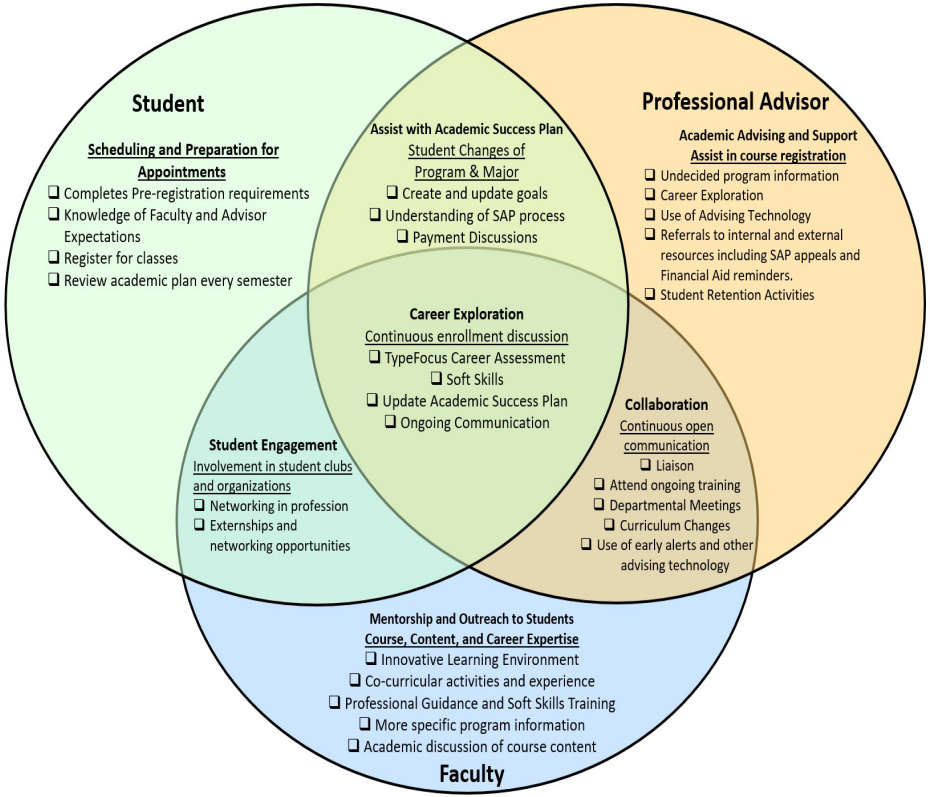
Advising Re-Imagined (MTC CARES):

- ❑ Centralized Advising Centers with Professional Advisors skilled in NACADA best practices
- ❑ Comprehensive Advising Software (Appointment Manager and Student Planning)
- ❑ Advisors Working with Faculty and Staff Engaging Students and Tracking Progress with Early Alerts and Kudos

Goals:

- ❑ Helping students choose an appropriate program of study and career goal and, if applicable, transfer destination
- ❑ Teaching students how to use available resources to effectively monitor their progress and register based on their developed plans
- ❑ Tracking student progress, intervening at the first sign that students are going off track



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Freshman Seminar Content:

To apply skills and information about careers and study strategies effectively…students need to develop the metacognitive skills that allow them to recognize change as it occurs, reflect on how change affects their situation, and create plans to manage the change. Bailey et al, 67

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Assessing Student Satisfaction

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RNL has found that Student Satisfaction is positively linked with:

- Higher Individual Student Retention
- Increased Institutional Graduation Rates
- Higher Institutional alumni giving
- Lower Institutional loan default rates

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DATA COLLECTED HELPS MTC KNOW:

- What our students think
- What they are experiencing
- What they think we are doing well
- What are their priorities for improvement

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Ruffalo-Noel-Levitz (RNL) Student Satisfaction Survey (SSI)

- *RNL combines MTC's survey results against other institutions results to allow for national comparisons and to calculate statistically significant differences between MTC and national averages on satisfaction means only.*
- *The survey asks respondents to rate the importance and satisfaction of each item on a scale. This allows RNL to identify areas of strengths and challenges.*

Strength – An item needs to be in both the top half of importance and upper quartile of satisfaction

Challenge – An item needs to be in the top half of importance and the bottom quartile of satisfaction or upper quartile of the performance gap

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Ruffalo-Noel-Levitz (RNL) Student Satisfaction Survey (SSI)

- **Teaching – 17 Questions*
- **Campus Environment – 41 Questions*
- **Student Support – 22 Questions*
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – 14 Questions*
- *Advising – 11 Questions*

- Fall 2022 was the first year CCE students were included
- MTC further adapted the RNL questions to mirror the current MTC strategic plan.

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Fall 2022 - Composite	MTC	National
How satisfied are our students compared with students nationally? (Percentages indicate the students indicating satisfied/very satisfied)	62%	68%

Fall 2022 - Composite	MTC	National
How likely are our students to enroll again, if they had it to do over? (Percentages indicate the students indicating probably/definitely yes)	71%	77%

Fall 2022 - Composite	MTC	National
So far, how has your college experience met your expectations?	5.00↓	5.09
Rate your overall satisfaction with your experience here thus far?	5.50↓	5.69
All in all, if you had it to do over again, would you enroll here?	5.80↓	6.02

Fall 2022 – Academic Survey	MTC 2018	MTC 2019	MTC 2020	MTC 2021	MTC 2022	National 2022
So far, how has your college experience met your expectations?	4.71	4.86	4.75	4.93	4.97↓	5.09
Rate your overall satisfaction with your experience here thus far?	5.24	5.40	5.35	5.54	5.49↓	5.69
All in all, if you had it to do over again, would you enroll here?	5.54	5.75	5.70	5.86	5.79↓	6.02

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Consistent Strengths:

- *The campus is safe and secure for all students*
- *Computer labs are adequate and accessible*
- *Tutoring services are readily available*
- *Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields*
- *Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours*
- *On the whole, the campus is well-maintained*
- *There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus*
- *I am able to experience intellectual growth here*

New Strengths:

- *Class change (drop/add) policies are reasonable*
- *There are convenient ways of paying my school bill*

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Consistent Challenges:

- *The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent*
- *Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course*

New Challenges:

- *Financial aid awards are announced to students in time to be helpful in college planning.*
- *My academic advisor is knowledgeable about my program requirements*
- *My academic advisor is knowledgeable about the transfer requirements of other schools*
- *Campus item: My academic advisor is available when I need help*

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Closing the Loop

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Reimagining student success and college excellence

Four Focus Areas of MTC Strategic Plan (2021-2024)

- Recruitment, Enrollment and Economic Development
- Teaching, Learning and Student Support
- Resource Management
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

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Teaching, Learning and Student Support

Engage excellent teaching, learning, and support services to ensure every student succeeds.

Outcomes

- Invest in the Guided Pathways Initiative
- Deliver excellent instruction
- Support the basic needs of students
- Ensure all students complete their educational objective - includes Academics and CCE
- Enrich the student learning experience

Teaching, Learning and Student Support - Metrics	Baseline	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	Goal
Increase Completion Percentage					
Fall to Spring Persistence Rate	67%	68%			72%
Fall to Fall Retention Rate	44%	43%			47%
Graduation Rate*	39%	39%	41%		42%
Increase Students Earning 6+ College Credits in the First Term (Early Momentum)					
Fall	64%	59%			70%
Spring	48%	55%			52%
Increase Student Satisfaction Survey (Scale 1 to 7)					
Teaching	5.77	5.85	6.05		6.00
Campus Environment	5.80	5.92	6.01		6.00
Student Support	5.83	5.90	5.93		6.00

*Source: National Student Clearinghouse

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Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Ensure the institution has an academically enriching and supportive climate for all members of its community, to include faculty, staff, students, partners and community members.

Outcomes

- **Create an inclusive environment**
- **Increase diversity among faculty and staff**
- **Encourage student participation and involvement**

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) - Metrics	Baseline	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	Goal
Establish a DEI Office/Officer	NA	DEI Officer hired 2023			Yes
Affirmative Action Goals*	89.7%	94.5%			95%
Number of African American Male Faculty	32	44 +38%			+20%
Employee Satisfaction - DEI Survey (Scale 1 to 7)	5.08	4.94			6.00
Student Satisfaction - RNL DEI Survey (Scale 1 to 7)	5.75	5.88	5.97		6.00

**Source: South Carolina Human Affairs Commission*

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Impacting retention / student success

- Assessment of progress on campus climate items

- Understand and celebrate your strengths

- Knowledge of challenge items that students care about

- Communicate regarding changes made

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Wrap-Up & Questions:

1. Improved Student Experience through MTC's Guided Pathways - Student Engagement Initiatives

2. Created Applicable KPIs – Including RNL SSI (Student Satisfaction Survey)

3. Operationalized KPIs – Current Strategic Plan with Scorecards

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