

Project Storm Spotter
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Background

Georgia Southwestern State University's (GSW) student population has special challenges in completing college.

47% receive Pell Grants 57% first-generation
 24% begin college as adults 31% 25 or older
 54% in one or more online class 27% live on campus



Project Storm Spotters Synopsis

1. Use data-proven method to identify non-cognitive student risk;
2. Develop data-driven responses to individual student risk factors through peer mentoring program;
3. Develop long-term, data-driven institutional strategies based on aggregated data of student risk.

Fall 2013 administered College Persistence Questionnaire (CPQ) to first-year students in the orientation course. Each student received success plan based on individual risks.

Storm Spotters, peer mentors/co-instructors assigned to each orientation class, provided immediate support mentoring students throughout the term. Aggregated data collected to develop data-driven, targeted institutional retention strategies.

Storm Spotter Project Objectives:

1. Improve Fall-to-Fall retention of first-year full-time cohort;
2. Identify individual student risk factors;
3. Provide peer mentoring and student success plans;
4. Develop strategies for GSW's specific retention issues.

Results of Project Storm Spotters

1. F-to-F retention up **5%** in one year (7% over two).
2. First-years earning 2.0+ GPA up **12%** in two years.
3. First-years earning **15+ credits** first term up 3 fold.
4. First-years earning **30+ credits** first two terms more than doubled in two years.

Key Findings of Project Storm Spotters

1. Retention gains were achieved while increasing our expectations for academic achievement.
2. Providing data allowed us to shift the conversation from anecdotal and preconceived notions about why our retention is low to evidence based strategies and discussion.
3. Data indicate GSW's key areas of risk for retention are academic integration and social engagement. Other areas of risk are academic self-efficacy and motivation to learn.
4. Peer mentoring is a key component to student support.

Fall-to-Fall Retention, First-Term GPA
Credits Hours Earned

Cohort	Retention Rate	% Above 2.0 Fall Term	% 15+ Credits Fall Term	% 30+ Credits Fall & Spring	% 28+ Credits Fall & Spring
2013	69.8	75.5	24.8	15.2	32.6
2012	64.9	74.4	8.9	11.1	22.2
2011	62.6	63.4	8.9	7.1	17.3
2010	64.7	68.4	10.8	6.7	18.7
2009	66.4	68.7	9.2	6	17.4



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