Data-Driven Assessments for Admissions, Goal-Setting, and Retention

CIC Presidents Institute
January 6, 2023
Research Round Robin
For more than 1,000 four-year nonprofits (IPEDS)

Less selective institutions more likely to have retention deficits
Standardized tests for admissions focus on identifying these students.

We assume these students will do better in college (or be more prepared!)

Stevens Strategy
Colleges • Universities • Schools
High Cognitive Ability

High Non-Cognitive Attributes

Low Non-Cognitive Attributes

Low Cognitive Ability

A

B

C

D

Non-cognitive assessments focus on identifying these students

We may try to measure this with admissions essays and extracurricular activities, but those aren’t very standardized
How can smaller institutions improve retention without being more selective?

FOCUS ON NON-COGNITIVE ATTRIBUTES
Non-Cognitive Variables Predict Real Outcomes

**Non-Cognitive Variables Predict:**

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<td><strong>Career Success</strong></td>
<td>Career success &amp; positive career outcomes (Roberts et al., 2003)</td>
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<td><strong>Healthy Relationships</strong></td>
<td>More positive relationship interactions, better relationship quality (Donnellan et al., 2005)</td>
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<td><strong>Physical Health</strong></td>
<td>Better physical health (Cohen &amp; Williamson, 1991; Jerram &amp; Coleman, 2010)</td>
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<td><strong>Academic Performance and Retention</strong></td>
<td>Some non-cognitive variables are associated with better academic performance, even after accounting for intelligence (Gasser et al., 2004; Poropat, 2009)</td>
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What is the Applicant Success Assessment (ASA)?

• Assessment tool
  – Applied people analytics and psychological science
  – 55 questions, web-based
  – Tailored report for each student
  – 7 dimensions + Student Success

• Identifies risk factors for non-persistence
  – Based on non-cognitive factors (unlike standardized tests)
  – Useful for *mitigating risks* to *improve retention*

• Predicts likelihood of success at *any* higher education institution
The ASA’s Predictive Validity

• Based on two institutions in the northeast (both small, nonprofits)

• Completion of the ASA predicts retention

• The ASA “Student Success Score” predicts GPA

• Including the ASA in statistical modeling improves prediction (beyond cognitive tests)
The ASA’s Predictive Validity

At both institutions, retention was highest for students with a “success score” in the top 20%.

At both institutions, retention was lowest for students who didn’t take the ASA when invited.
At both institutions, there’s a positive correlation between ASA Student Success and GPA.
Different dimensions predict GPA at each institution – because every institution is different!
A Model for Using the ASA

Take the ASA (those who don’t already have a “red flag”)

Review ASA with advisor or counselor; discuss risk factors

At least 1 session to brainstorm strategies for mitigating risks, building on strengths

Student journals or keeps track of strategy deployment and effectiveness

Follow-up sessions

During First Year

Stevens Strategy consultants can train your advisors on how to use the ASA with students
Learn More About the ASA

Email: rpauletti@stevensstrategy.com
Phone: (561) 662-6357
Web: https://www.stevensstrategy.com/consultants/rachel-pauletti/

Curious about the ASA? Scan this code to take the ASA and get your tailored report.

Rachel Pauletti, Ph.D.
Director of Consulting for Stevens Strategy