

Supporting Retention and Student Success of Online Program Students with Professional Coaching: Sharing Data from a Pilot Study and Preliminary Observations from a Large-Scale Coaching Project Implementation at Oregon Tech

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ABSTRACT

With the many challenges facing higher education, institutions are looking for ways to retain students and to increase enrollment. The Oregon Institute of Technology (Oregon Tech) has recently adopted a student support model that provides one-on-one professional coaching for all students enrolled in an online program. The evidence-based, student support coaching model utilized by Inside Track, a professional non-profit coaching company, has been proven to increase retention and enrollment rates at other institutions. However, Oregon Tech wanted to systematically evaluate the effectiveness of professional retention coaching, especially for its online campus students. This presentation will share data and institutional experience from a small Oregon Tech pilot program that introduced a coaching based student success model to the online campus. The presentation will share how this innovative approach equipped Oregon Tech's online campus with new enrollment and retention tools and will explore what was learned from the pilot study that ran from March through September 2024. On their own, advising, coaching, counseling and mentoring are each crucial resources in the student support toolbox. Adding coaching to the mix alongside existing institutional services created a new collaborative process that enhanced existing campus efforts. Providing one-on-one direct student coaching also gave students the sense that they have a team supporting them through to completion. During this presentation, attendees will also hear about the new project to roll out professional retention and student success coaching to all student Oregon Tech campuses and student populations.

Keywords: belonging; goals; inclusion; non-cognitive skills; self-advocacy