# Chapter 46
# Strategies to Support the Faculty Adoption of Technology for Student Success Initiatives

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## ABSTRACT

*Faculty members have a key role in helping students to navigate through the academic requirements for their chosen degree program. As the call for more institutional accountability increases across the higher education landscape, retaining and graduating students becomes critical for institutions. Technology has been touted as the solution to alleviate the problem by adopting more efficient ways of improving and monitoring student success. Historically, the faculty's primary focus was to teach, engage in research and service with limited oversight and full autonomy. This chapter will examine strategies to facilitate and support the faculty adoption of technology as it pertains to student success initiatives. The author will discuss the types of faculty and their responsibilities, the barriers institutions face to faculty participation and how to motivate faculty to adopt technology to support student success. Finally, selected strategies for successful faculty adoptions that will support student success initiatives and programs will be reviewed.*

## INTRODUCTION

Academic Robert Diamond noted "An institution's greatest asset is its faculty," and goes on to state, "faculty members bring creative, culturally sensitive ideas to the planning process, and as key change agents, they ultimately must participate in any sustainable institutional change" (Diamond, 2002). Today, faculty members face increasing pressure to perform at ever-higher levels with extensive research experience and publications needed to simply land an academic job, let alone achieve tenure. In their work on the status of faculty and the academic profession in America, Schuster and Finkelstein (2007) discuss many of the shifts that have occurred in the later part of the 20th century. Over time, these shifts have caused a substantial transformation of the American academic profession and a restructuring of the academy.

One of the most promising shifts and intriguing discussions concerns the faculty adoption of technology to improve student success outcomes. Many believe the key to transforming our institutions is to involve and engage faculty early in any technology adoption process. Much of the research concerning these theories has already occurred through grant-funded initiatives sponsored and supported by organizations such as EDUCAUSE, Achieving the Dream, Lumina, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Student success initiatives and programs take on many forms in higher education so we must be clear to define what constitutes these activities. It is important for institutions to engage all members of the campus community to create a culture of student success that is appropriate and inclusive for each institution. We know that faculty often serve as the primary interface between students and the institution, and any inclusive student success initiative requires faculty input to achieve a timely or holistic interpretation of student status in the academic enterprise. But most schools still struggle to implement technologies that can support faculty in executing on these items. In fact, faculty members are often viewed as the missing link when it comes to using campus technology solutions. How can an institution ensure that valuable faculty insight into student behavior isn't lost – how do we harness the faculty point of view?

## KNOWING "WHO ARE YOUR FACULTY"

This may seem elementary, but knowing the faculty at your institution is critical to understanding how to help them to engage in adopting student success technologies and programs. Being cognizant of the types of faculty who work at higher education institutions and the type of institutions where they work are crucial to improving student success. While the workload may have changed, the role of the faculty member has remained consistent over the years in terms of their functions and responsibilities. The faculty responsibilities generally encompass three functional areas or components: *teaching, research, and service*. The proportion of time a faculty member spends (or is expected to spend) in each area varies generally by institution type and more specifically from institution to institution.

### Teaching

This generally includes actual in-class time working with students, as well as time spent mentoring and directing research by students and preparing for class. Depending on the specific institution, such time could also include office hours as well as time spent revising old or creating new courses. Technology has changed the way faculty engages students in the learning process through the delivery of active learning and pedagogies. Most technologies aimed at supporting student success are applicable to this area.

### Research

The area of research broadly refers to the inquiry and/or discovery activities of the faculty member. Faculty members in all institution types engage in some form of intellectual inquiry that demands a significant portion of their time and energy and should also be valued as research.

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