

Chapter 4

The Utilization of a Formalized Complaint Management System as a Communication Tool to Foster Student Success

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ABSTRACT

The field of Higher Education is experiencing a revolution spurred on by the expanding frontier of technology. Leaders of higher education institutions seek to improve student communication processes which will positively impact the student experience. Effective communication strategies are needed which can effectively be used in times of conflict at institutions of higher education. This quantitative study examined a series of predictors, both individually and collectively, as they related to the number of additional classes students completed after the conflict had occurred.

INTRODUCTION

Leaders of institutions of higher learning view student success as a fundamental pillar with-in their core values (Burnett, 2016). These leaders, at times, struggle to improve effective communication tools that align with this pillar (Culp & Dungy, 2014). Academic leaders are in need of innovative processes that ultimately increase learner success (Culp & Dungy, 2014). A major contributor that helps improve student performance is the presence of a formalized complaint management system (Filip, 2013). In conjunction with effective policies and procedures, a formalized complaint management system helps position institutions of higher learning to more effectively assist students in staying on course towards achieving their academic goals (Knox & van Oest, 2014). Students, at times, link quality standards within the institution with their experiences (Cooper-Hind & Taylor, 2012). In order for students to maintain

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a positive perception regarding the relationship between themselves and their university following laps in communication/service, an effective service recovery procedure must be in place. (Gruber, Chowdhury, & Reppel, 2011). Student complaints provide valuable data to the institution and, when used effectively, can provide leaders with valuable information that helps improve proactive communication with the student body (Davidow, 2014). With a unique ability to assist students in navigating through communication barriers its potential influence on their continued persistence, complaint management is a process that needs to be developed by academic leaders (Filip, 2013).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study was designed to analyze the benefits of a formalized complaint management system in regards to enhancing communication channels especially in times of conflict. A review of the literature regarding the effectiveness of complaint management systems verifies the need for more studies within this area. This current study helps provide academic leaders with valuable information on the benefits of establishing a formalized complaint management system, in order to improve student success (Cooper-Hind & Taylor, 2012). The results of this study provide a compelling case in support of the benefits of establishing and maintaining a complaint management system within a higher educational system (Jones, 2015).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were used in this study:

Q1. What is the relationship between each of the individual independent/predictor variables (type of complaint process [2012 to 2013 versus 2014 to 2015], classes completed, GPA, current degree program, and use of tuition assistance) and the number of classes in the program in which the student remains after the formal complaint?

H1₀. None of the individual independent/predictor variables (type of complaint process [2012 and 2013 versus 2014 and 2015], classes completed, GPA, current degree program, and use of tuition assistance) will be related to the number of classes in the program in which the student remains after the formal complaint.

H1_a. At least one of the individual independent/predictor variables (type of complaint process [2012 and 2013 versus 2014 and 2015], classes completed, GPA, current degree program, and use of tuition assistance) will be related to the number of classes in the program in which the student remains after the formal complaint.

Statistical Test: Pearson Correlations

Q2. What is the relationship between the linear combination of the individual independent/predictor variables (type of complaint process [2012 and 2013 versus 2014 and 2015], classes completed GPA, current degree program, and use of tuition assistance) and the number of classes in the program in which the student remains after the formal complaint?

H1_a. The linear combination of the independent/predictor variables (type of complaint process [2012 and 2013 versus 2014 and 2015], classes completed, GPA, current degree program, and use of tuition assistance) will not be related to the number of classes in the program in which the student remains after the formal complaint.

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