

Seven Principles of Good Practice for Student Success Partnerships



John N. Gardner

Institute for Excellence
in Undergraduate Education

These principles were developed collectively by participants at the Academic and Student Affairs Leaders' Institute: Partnerships for Promising Practices in Student Success, sponsored by the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education and held on November 29 and 30, 2012. They are based on the assumption that student success, as a desired outcome of higher education, is more likely to result from institutional environments characterized by strong partnerships that link academic and student affairs professionals, faculty, and students.

As the academic mission of a college or university is preeminent, learning is the most important measure of student success. Learning includes what happens both inside and outside the curriculum in any educationally purposeful setting where students, faculty, and staff come together, real time or electronically, under the official auspices of the institution.

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES

- 1 Good practice for student success partnerships is intentional and is based on clear institutional vision and values.**

An institutional culture that values and rewards collaboration is the basis for the realization of effective partnerships. This culture must be articulated through both an explicit vision and intentional practices that are formalized and institutionalized. While the centrality of partnerships emerges from institutional culture, partnerships also serve as a means to leverage the culture; therefore, culture and partnerships become mutually reinforcing.
- 2 Good practice for student success partnerships is focused on facilitating student learning.**

Effective partnerships depend on a shared definition of student learning that unifies the students' spheres of experience. Partners continually strive to identify and assess learning goals, both in the curriculum and in the co-curriculum. Good practice also harnesses the positive influence on learning realized through student-to-student interaction and places a premium on the importance of efforts that maximize the shaping and influence of that interaction.
- 3 Good practice for student success partnerships encourages communication that links, rather than divides, community members.**

Partners are careful to use language that connects, rather than separates, student affairs and academic affairs entities. Shared efforts foster understanding, acknowledgement, and respect for each other's different strengths and roles. Partners communicate in ways that discourage generalizations about different subgroups that may be based on stereotyping or prejudice.
- 4 Good practice for student success partnerships enhances the learning environment for all members of the academy.**

While the ultimate goal of good practice for student success partnerships is to achieve student learning and success, good practice fosters environments where faculty, academic administrators, and student affairs administrators also learn, grow, and benefit from each other. This occurs when partners achieve broader understanding of where and how student learning and success take place.



5 Good practice for student success partnerships creates a learning environment that truly reflects and embraces diversity and inclusion.

Good practice becomes a model for how diverse members of a community can and should work together for the attainment of beneficial societal goals. Partnerships, as they reveal and encourage personal and intellectual difference, also insure that the institution achieves a greater and more successful degree of diversity than would otherwise be possible.

6 Good practice for student success partnerships depends both on individual relationships and formal institutionalized connections.

While partnerships often begin between individuals or within divisions or units, for maximum effectiveness they must expand to permeate the entire institutional culture. Also, while recognizing that successful partnerships are often the result of informal personal relationships, these partnerships must be formalized in public, explicit, official agreements so that they will endure over time and will not be based only on transient connections.

7 Good practice for student success partnerships recognizes the inherent value of partnerships as a means to an end and as a valuable end in themselves.

Partnerships, while conceptualized as a means to enhanced student learning and success, can become a dominant value in the institutional belief system. Such practice then becomes a way of working and living that has intrinsic educational value. Such practice also becomes a model for how our students should live and work in our larger society based on their experience in higher education.

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John N. Gardner
Institute for Excellence
in Undergraduate Education

123 East Main Street, Suite 201 • PO Box 72
Brevard, NC 28712 • 800-385-8399
www.jngi.org • info@jngi.org