Students and Financial Challenges

Imagining ways to address the needs of students who conclude they cannot afford to stay at NIU requires increased communication and a more proactive approach.

**UNAWARE OF RESOURCES**
Programs that can help students with financial concerns, including the Huskie Installment Plan, are not actively advertised to students.

**LACK OF QUALITY INTERACTIONS**
Students reported noticing a lack of empathy from staff, statements that are difficult to read, and a university that remains inflexible on policies and deadlines.

**NEED FOR COLLABORATION**
Lack of communication and coordination between offices working with students on financial issues hinders students’ ability to address financial challenges.

**Opportunities for Improvement**
Better utilization of campus resources and increased connections are likely to assist students in tacking financial challenges in a timely manner.

**A PROACTIVE AND UNIFIED APPROACH IS KEY TO SUCCESS**
Making contact with students early in the semester and providing specific information about all options when bills are coming out will allow students to address issues before it is too late. It is also important for campus partners to collaborate on this proactive outreach.

**INCREASE PERSONAL TOUCH IN REFERRALS**
Instead of sending a person blindly to an office, make the extra effort to make a personal connection. Walking a student to an office or starting the conversation with a campus colleague can provide the quality interactions that show we are here to support all of our students.

**EXPAND FINANCIAL CENTS PROGRAM**
Increasing the reach of this peer education program can help educate students about resources and options for dealing with financial concerns while providing students with internship and peer mentoring opportunities to support student career success.

**WHO DID WE SPEAK TO?**
The number of students our group questioned, 70 of whom were in 3 course sections.

**COMMITMENT TO NIU**
While the students in the course sections reported wanting to leave NIU if it weren’t for being close to graduation, others interviewed one-on-one said they had not considered leaving for financial reasons.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**
- Creating a unified financial calendar; increasing communication about financial issues—especially at open houses and orientation—and better training on campus systems used with regards to finances (MyNIU) can provide students with more tools to address financial issues.

**WHO DID WE SPEAK TO?**
The number of students our group questioned, 70 of whom were in 3 course sections.

**COMMITMENT TO NIU**
While the students in the course sections reported wanting to leave NIU if it weren’t for being close to graduation, others interviewed one-on-one said they had not considered leaving for financial reasons.

**Opportunities for Improvement**
Better utilization of campus resources and increased connections are likely to assist students in tackling financial challenges in a timely manner.

**A PROACTIVE AND UNIFIED APPROACH IS KEY TO SUCCESS**
Making contact with students early in the semester and providing specific information about all options when bills are coming out will allow students to address issues before it is too late. It is also important for campus partners to collaborate on this proactive outreach.

**INCREASE PERSONAL TOUCH IN REFERRALS**
Instead of sending a person blindly to an office, make the extra effort to make a personal connection. Walking a student to an office or starting the conversation with a campus colleague can provide the quality interactions that show we are here to support all of our students.

**EXPAND FINANCIAL CENTS PROGRAM**
Increasing the reach of this peer education program can help educate students about resources and options for dealing with financial concerns while providing students with internship and peer mentoring opportunities to support student career success.