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BoldFuture Workshop: April 2

Problem/Issue: “Provide effective and compelling campus connections for non-traditional students”

Findings through interviews:

Points of excellence:
1. Non-traditional students are a welcomed and valued population of the student body.
2. The Off-Campus and Non-Traditional Student Services department on campus is a wonderful, although hidden, gem.

Possible areas for improvement:
1. Students do not understand the definition of non-traditional. They do not understand that it includes many students other than just those who are older than the traditional age.
2. Non-traditional students feel that they receive a large quantity of information from the university as a whole, but not quality.
3. Student support service departments on campus do not meet the needs of this student population.

Capture the opportunity!

Theme: Quality Coordinated Approach to Non-Traditional Students

In our discussion with non-traditional students, we learned they believe NIU makes a sincere effort to welcome them to the student population but beyond their admission, students must function like traditional students to conduct NIU business and achieve academic success.

1. Explain the definition of “non-traditional” student to the general NIU population, faculty and staff.
2. Rename the “Off-Campus and Non-Traditional Student Services” to “The Center for Non-Traditional Students” and move to a more visible location to encourage student awareness and participation.
3. Re-examine how NIU uses social media to provide for quality information for specialized groups instead of quantity of information.
4. Offer “Alternative Orientation” options:
   a. Give non-traditional students specialized workshops and seminars (i.e. Blackboard and MyNIU basics) on the same day of traditional orientation.
   b. Saturday and/or evening orientation option
   c. Required virtual orientation for students completing their entire degree online or off-campus (no current orientation requirement)
5. Provide students with evening hours on one set day a week to conduct business with all the student support services departments (Admissions, Bursar, Financial Aid, OneCard, DRC, Career Services, and Health Services)
6. Utilize NIU Outreach and support undergraduate degrees that are offered entirely through on-campus evening courses. (Current focus on off-campus or online.)
7. Offer a specific section of UNIV 101 and UNIV 201 for non-traditional students