

## WHAT WORKS TO ADVANCE STUDENT SUCCESS

Recent research from Civitas Learning evaluated the effectiveness of student success initiatives at colleges and universities. Impact was measured using the average percentage-point (PP) effect each activity had on persistence, a leading indicator of student success. Current students “persist” when they enroll for a future term and stay enrolled past the institution’s census date. Findings showed that a mix of traditional and emerging practices yield the best results for students and institutions.

**Overall, student success services are most impactful when they are targeted.**

### By gender

- Academic advising is effective for supporting the success of male-identified students, resulting in a 7.3 PP increase in student persistence.
- Email outreach is an effective strategy for supporting female-identified students, yielding a 7.7 PP increase in persistence.

### By course modality

- Orientation programming is effective in supporting the success of students in online courses, leading to a 5.6 PP increase in persistence for online students.
- Tutoring is an effective strategy for supporting success in blended courses, resulting in a 7.5 PP increase in student persistence.
- Academic mentoring and coaching are effective strategies for supporting success in in-person courses, yielding a 7.7 PP increase in persistence for in-person learners.

### By student type

- Tutoring is an effective strategy for supporting students who are attending college for the first time and for transfer students, yielding a 9.7 PP increase in persistence for first-time students, and an 8.4 PP increase in persistence for transfer students.
- Readmitted students’ persistence is positively impacted by outreach based on academic standing, leading to an 8.2 PP increase in student persistence.

### By race and ethnicity

- Academic advising is effective for supporting the success of Latinx students (yielding a 5.5 PP increase in persistence) and Asian students (yielding a 5.8 PP increase in persistence).
- Black students’ persistence is positively impacted by collaborative, student-led academic planning, resulting in an 8.5 PP increase in persistence.
- Academic advising is effective for supporting the success of White students, leading to a 7.4 PP increase in persistence.

**Some common student success practices generate a negative impact on persistence when used ineffectively.**

### Early alerts

- Early alerts to students identified as needing support can backfire, resulting in a 8.2 PP decline in persistence for students receiving early alerts.
- Traditional early alerts discourage student engagement, occur at peak times that prevent staff from responding quickly, and perpetuate implicit bias and systemic barriers to success for underserved populations.
- Employing students to provide outreach to peers identified as needing assistance is much more successful, yielding a 6.8 PP increase in student persistence.

### Degree planning

- Assigning advisors the task of preparing degree plans for students might seem like a smart way to keep students on track. But, advisor-designed degree plans often harm student success, resulting in a 9.9 PP decrease in student persistence.
- When students take the lead on degree planning with advisors acting as a guide, the results are much different. Guiding students in developing their own degree plans results in a 6.9 PP increase in student persistence.