Narratives within an integrated model of student retention and success support in higher education

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The Student Retention and Success (SRS) portfolio at the University of Tasmania uses an integrated functional model of student support across three main themes, Academic Success, Wellbeing and Employability, to deliver a range of services, programs and other initiatives to support students in their transition to university and enhance their academic, personal and career development throughout the university lifecycle. The model is people-centred and involves strategically targeted and networked partnerships with academic disciplines to inform the work of the portfolio and ensure that resources are evidence-based and deployed to points of most need and impact for students. At the centre of the model are ongoing and evolving narratives between the SRS portfolio and Academic Colleges that are guided by Institutional Strategy, business intelligence data for courses, units and students, cohort / student need and curriculum design need as shared by academic staff, and ongoing quality assurance and quality improvement based upon evaluation of intervention strategies and support. This presentation offers a visual example that articulates this integrated functional model in practice. The example revolves around a recent opportunity for the portfolio to partner with the University’s College of Business and Economics within a new course to embed student support and development that is integrated across the portfolio areas and across the curriculum, and developed through a student lifecycle lens. This has enabled us to purposefully package a suite of proactive and connected interventions to support students throughout their journey in the course, from time of entry to time of exit.

Learning outcomes

- Student retention and success in higher education is everybody’s business with partnerships and collaboration key to delivering effective retention and success strategies;
- Continuous improvement and evaluation should be informed by scholarship and also inform evidence-based decision making relating to the deployment of resources to support students in their transitions through the university life-cycle.
- Both student and staff narratives are fundamental to understanding the student experience, at both a cohort and individual level.

Presenter

Dr Jane Skalicky, University of Tasmania

Dr Jane Skalicky is an Education specialist with a research focus on student learning, engagement and success in higher education. For the past ten years, she has held senior leadership positions at the University of Tasmania with institutional strategic and operational responsibilities in key areas relating to student retention and success. Currently, Jane is Director of the Student Retention and Success portfolio of the University’s Academic Division, leading a team of staff and student leaders across the portfolio areas of Student Learning, Equity and Access, and Employability. Within this position, she has used her extensive knowledge of student populations and understanding of factors that impact students’ retention and success to lead the development of key institutional strategies and policies and to establish networked partnerships across the University, to ensure that student support services and programs are relevant to the changing needs of students and curriculum and strategically delivered to areas of most need and impact.