Concurrent 2: Validation approach to advising and teaching

Curzan & Moldwin Report: Values (March 2019)

Recommends adopting a set of *shared values* for undergraduate education at the University of Michigan:

Bold Exploration	To expand knowledge and encourage curiosity and discovery, to gain in breadth of experiences and in depth of critical inquiry, and to embrace intellectual and creative risks.
Greater Good	To encourage a sense of responsibility to society, both local and global, and to promote informed, active citizenship focused on creating ideas and outcomes bigger than ourselves to benefit others.
Purposeful Inclusion	To thoughtfully, intentionally, and actively engage in a community that allows all members to thrive by valuing and learning from others' backgrounds, identities, and perspectives, and by striving for equitable treatment.
Collaborative Spirit	To seek and learn effective teamwork across disciplines, with intellectual and cultural humility, integrity, and awareness of the value of diverse contributions for collective achievement.
Well-being	To foster resilience in the face of adversity and challenges and to support the overall health of each individual within the learning community as they pursue their goals.
Self-determination	To promote reflection, explore purpose, and make mindful choices among pathways leading to meaningful work and meaningful lives.

Curzan & Moldwin Report: Recommendations

"As the Strada-Gallup Student Survey suggests, students who thrive after college often identify a specific faculty mentor or an instructor who made them excited about learning."

Bold Exploration	
Greater Good	
Purposeful Inclusion	
Collaborative Spirit	Design more spaces on campus outside departments to **encourage informal meetings** among faculty and students. **Coordinate advising across the University** to improve consistency, quality, and innovation in advising and of a strong network of effective support across units. **Emphasize the importance of teaching** during the hiring process. Establish a consistent culture across campus that recognizes teaching as a scholarly activity.
Well-being & Self-determination	

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Student Mental Health Innovative Approaches
(Winter 2023)

Recommendation 3: The expansion of tools to guide faculty in creating course-level policies and practices that support student wellbeing and success.

- Develop a comprehensive Faculty Toolkit with suggestions for a more inclusive classroom environment, **implementing course policies that support student wellbeing** (such as clear and transparent grading policies, policies surrounding late and missed assignments, and policies that encourage a culture of learning from mistakes), and additional faculty resources for student support.
- **Improve instructor awareness** of student mental health concerns.
- Offer and **incentivize instructor training** related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- Provide tools to **support instructor course planning**.

Student Academic Success Report (May 2023)

Pilot programmatic activities and initiatives

- Integrate expertise available to **develop trainings** for faculty, advisors, and graduate student instructors **on how to use a validating approach** to work with students, particularly those who are struggling academically and interpersonally, and those in large courses with high DFW rates.
- Develop low-barrier opportunities for **informal faculty-student interactions** at early time points in courses, as an essential step in validation strategies.
- Rethink how large course instructional teams monitor, respond to, and **communicate concerns about student progress** to academic advisors and directly to students.

Student Academic Success Report (May 2023)

Organizational change

- Invest in and **support academic advising staff**, including an expansion of academic coaching.
- Invest in **academic advising technology** and coordinating structures to support it.
- Expand ECoach for academic advisors to provide **personalized feedback to students**, informed by validation theory.

Future Research Directions

- Research the experiences of students on academic probation or warning to understand how these designations support or deter retention and success.
  - Whether and **how validating practices are used to support students' movement forward** after struggling academically.
- Support research that examines the **effects on student success of the consistent use of a validating approach**.

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What is Validation Theory?

*"Validation refers to the **intentional, proactive affirmation of students by in- and out-of-class agents** (i.e., faculty, student, and academic affairs staff, family members, peers) in order to: 1) validate students as creators of knowledge and as valuable members of the college learning community and 2) foster personal development and social adjustment."* - Laura Rendón

Shift from student's responsibility to institution's responsibility to retain at-promise students (racially minoritized, first generation, low income).

Why Does Validation Matter?

The PASS ([Promoting At-Promise Student Success](#)) Project found that validating approaches can promote the following outcomes, which are associated with improved academic performance and college experience:

- Sense of belonging

- Academic self-efficacy

- Social self-efficacy

- Career self-efficacy

- Mattering

Shift from deficit-based to asset-based thinking. View students' backgrounds, identities, knowledge, and skills as strengths that can help them succeed.

ECOLOGICAL VALIDATION MODEL OF STUDENT SUCCESS
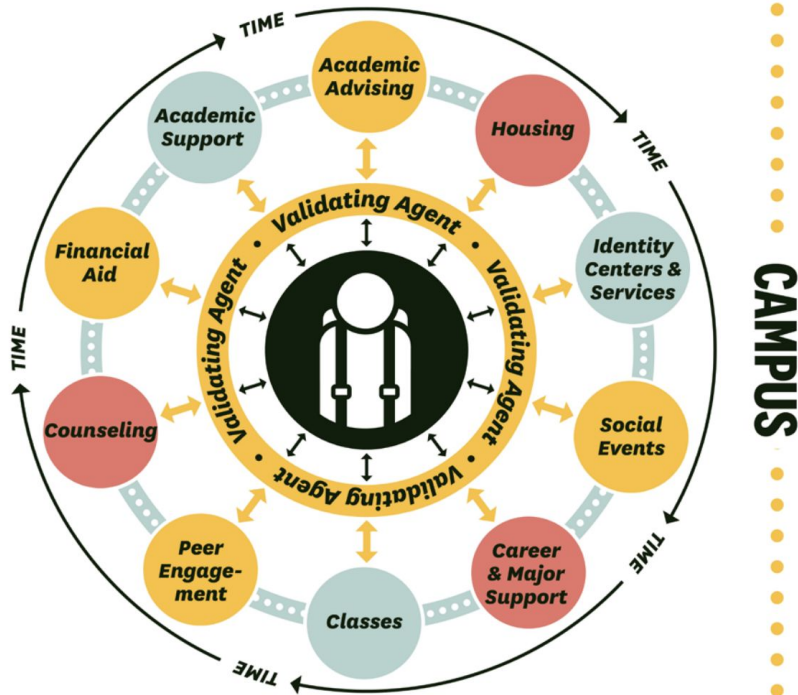
"Offer integrated, high quality programs in a **validating, asset-based, student-centered** way"

"Critical to **align resources** across campus and have **sustained collaboration** between campus partners"

"It's not just **WHAT** you do but **HOW** you do it that helps students succeed"

Source:
PASS (Promoting At-Promise Student Success) Project
https://pass.pullias.usc.edu/ecology-of-validation/

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Validation in Practice: *Comprehensive Studies Program*

➢ A **holistic academic advising** model where focus is on knowing the scholar as a whole person so as to appropriately advise on goals and needs.

  ○ 45-min advising appts. to build trust; *required* appointments (1st year)

➢ **CSP-specific** courses: Intensive sections of gateway courses with more class time, increased access to instructors, smaller class size, structured feedback

➢ Strong **communication** between CSP faculty and advisors for coordinated support (progress reports are a key tool)

➢ **Dedicated** financial aid advising team for CSP; working in our suite 1 day/week

➢ **Embedded** CSP CAPS counselor - appointments and programming

➢ **Summer Bridge** Scholars Program (courses, advisor-led student success workshops, co-curriculars, community building)

Group Activity Instructions

- Break into small groups and discuss provided prompts
  - See discussion questions on your table
- Generate ideas about how to validate students in advising and teaching settings
- Record your ideas on easel paper for a Gallery Walk of all Provost's Seminar participants during lunch
- Share your top ideas with the group

Discussion Questions

- How do we apply validation theory in **advising spaces**? What can/should we do now?
- How do we apply validation theory in the **classroom**? What can/should we do now?
- How could the validation approach be **coordinated across the multiple contexts** in which our students live, work, and study?
- What **professional development opportunities** should be offered to assist advisors and instructors in promoting a validation approach?
- What **institutional challenges and opportunities** do we need to consider in order to implement a coordinated validation approach at U-M?

References

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Thanks for participating!

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