The most recent data shows that WSU retains approximately 75% of its students from freshman year to sophomore year. Each WSU student who takes a full credit load and lives on campus, pays $17,200/year; when taking attrition into account, WSU records a loss of ~412 students/year which translates into $7M of lost income.

WSU utilizes a program called APRS, a system where WSU teaching faculty are asked to report midterm grades for students who have been identified as “at-risk” in terms of retention and overall academic success. Some of these students are also on academic probation and others were admitted on appeal. Students you will be asked to report on are working with other WSU professionals in addition to their academic advisor. These students are registered with Athletics, Access Services, Advising Services, Inclusion & Diversity and/or TRIO Student Support Services.

The intended goal of the program is greater academic success and better retention rates for at-risk students. Currently, 30% of the teaching faculty at WSU participate in the APRS. National research shows that Millennials do not “do optional” and checking grades on D2L or a similar system is optional. By reporting grades for these students at midterm on APRS, you take the “optional” out of the equation because an academic advisor in one of the before-mentioned offices will also have access to the grade(s) and will work with the student on how best to proceed.

During the summer of 2015, the Minnesota Legislature passed a higher education bill that focuses on performance-based outcomes for MNSCU schools in hopes of increasing student success and retention by 2017. To receive full funding, MNSCU schools must increase by 4% the number of diplomas awarded and increase by 5% the employment rate for recent graduates. We believe interventions like APRS can help keep some of these students successfully enrolled and help guarantee full funding from MNSCU in the future.

Why should I participate? How will I be asked to report my grades? What difference does this make? How long will it take?

Why should I participate in the APRS system, I use D2L?
Because another WSU professional will be checking the grade(s) as well and will make sure the student is aware of how they are doing. These advisors will recommend interventions that will hopefully lead to better success. This level of intervention is not possible with D2L and many times, students do not check their grades on their own.

How will I be notified/asked to report my grades?
You will be sent an email containing a link to the system around week 6 or 7 of each semester asking you to report grades. The students you need to report on will be preloaded into the system, you submit the grade(s), you can provide feedback if you have any, and submit. You will only be asked to report on the students in your sections who have registered with one or more of the before-mentioned offices.

How long will it take me to enter my grades?
It depends on how many students you are asked to report on, of course, most faculty have 6-7 students in their cohort, but most participating faculty say it takes from 5-20 minutes/semester.

Will this help us reach retention goals?
Millennials want interaction and they want lots of information….they are just not good at asking for information or help! Academic coaching and faculty/advisor intervention is a great way to get students involved in their education. When a trusted advisor alerts them to problems or when they reassure them that things are going well, the student is more likely to stay enrolled.

What do participating faculty say about the program?

“Many times lack of academic success has nothing to do with cognitive skills. APRS puts the students in contact with an advisor who can touch on what is really going on; financial issues, homesickness, depression…..and get them the needed assistance to be successful.”

“It does take time each semester – but it is not overwhelming. I participate because of my background with Athletics. I understand that people (coaches etc.) cannot help the students that need help – if they are unaware of issues and concerns.”

“It is painful and seems pointless, but I assume it helps the students who are doing poorly somehow, some way. I have gotten it down to an efficient task so I put on my to-do list.”

“I submit grades in hopes that the intervention they receive will prevent at-risk students from withdrawing or from earning poor grades at semesters end.”

For more information contact: Kate Parsi Academic Progress Reporting System (APRS) Coordinator TRIO Student Support Services Academic Advisor/Tutor Coordinator 507-457-5156