

Oral Defense Announcement

University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Education with an emphasis in Teaching and Learning Process

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In What Ways Do Faculty, Students, and Advisors' Perceptions of an Urban University Contribute to Undergraduate Student Success?

Date: April 18, 2024

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Place: 202F Anheuser Busch Hall (ABH)

Abstract

This dissertation conducts a thorough exploration of the nuanced perceptions of faculty, students, and advisors within an urban university context and their collective influence on undergraduate success. Utilizing a robust mixed-methods approach, this study bridges insights from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) with a thematic analysis of qualitative data, encompassing perspectives from 601 faculty members, 2009 students, and 15 academic advisors. Central to this investigation are the theoretical frameworks of Bandura's self-efficacy, Tinto's social integration theory, and Strayhorn's sense of belonging, which together provide a multifaceted understanding of the determinants of student success.

The research identifies a significant interaction between individual experiences and the institutional environment, with academic advising, high-impact practices (HIPs), and personalized support systems standing out as critical elements that influence educational outcomes. Findings indicate variances in perceptions of success across different university stakeholders, underscoring the importance of developing customized support mechanisms that cater to the diverse needs of students, faculty, and advisors. The effectiveness of first-year engagement strategies, the implementation of HIPs, and the establishment of robust faculty-advisor-student relationships are highlighted as essential for fostering student retention and engagement, particularly in the challenging landscape of urban higher education.

Advocating for a holistic educational approach that integrates academic, social, and personal support, this dissertation contributes valuable insights into the dynamics of student-faculty-advisor interactions and the overall campus climate. It suggests actionable strategies for enhancing student engagement, retention, and success, emphasizing the need for continuous evaluation and the adaptation of evidence-based practices. By foregrounding the significance of effective communication and collaboration among academic advisors, faculty and students, this study offers policy and practice implications that aim to bolster student achievement in urban university settings, contributing meaningfully to the discourse on higher education.

Defense of Dissertation Committee

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