

Challenge: Preview Your Success. Plan Your Success.

Course selection is a critical first step on the path to student success. Yet, making the right course choices can be an overwhelming experience for first-year students – or any student for that matter. In fact, the task of navigating through a degree program confronts students with an almost paralyzing array of course options, any of which could satisfy their degree requirements. For high-risk populations such as first generation and low-income students, ineffective course selection has a much more profound impact: these crucial college decisions can make or break their academic journey. Since students take on average 20% more courses than needed to graduate, what if we could give students some guidance, up front, in which courses they would not only be successful but also drive on-time graduation?

Solution: Right Student. Right Course. First Time

Enter Desire2Learn Degree Compass™, a personalized, web-based course recommendation tool that uses predictive analytics to guide students' course selection in a way that not only enhances the rate of academic success but also drives on-time completion of their degree. Built for both Advisors and Students, Degree Compass delivers real-time academic advisement that helps students plan the most successful path to graduation from the moment they begin making first-year course selections right through to their final term of study.

Powered by a predictive algorithm that taps into the success of thousands of students who have taken the same degree path, Degree Compass distills down the most complex course calendar and presents a collection of courses that are necessary for the student to graduate, core to the student's major, and in which the student is expected to be academically successful. Interoperable with enterprise information systems already in place on your campus, Degree Compass draws from historical student academic and performance data to deliver easily recognizable course star rankings that quickly guide students to make the most informed course choices about their academic path - even for the most complex or rigidly mapped programs of study.

Learning Impact Outcomes: On Track to On Time Graduation.

Degree Compass is all about helping get the right student, in the right course, the first time. While Degree Compass drives a behavioral economics that has merit and value for all learners, the greatest impact is on learners who are particularly at risk, typically under-represented and the traditionally underperforming student populations by delivering personalized and real-time guidance that motivates and encourages those learners who are largely in need of first-line help, guidance and support to successfully persist from freshman to final year. By doing so, Degree Compass gives students an unprecedented level of control over their degree path and, with the ability to plan ahead, keeping them actively engaged, in their academic future and more fully accountable for their success.

At a group of pioneering schools, current Degree Compass research demonstrates its measureable impact on critical performance indicators such as earned grades and earned credit hours for improving semester over semester progression and retention while driving closure of attainment gap amongst at-risk student populations. Impact studies at the pioneering Tennessee schools has shown that those students – such as lower socio-economic, financial aid recipients and first generation learners – who take the advice and enroll in Degree Compass-recommended courses actually earned higher grades. In fact, more than 90% of students who made the choice and took a 4-star or better Degree Compass-recommended course earned an A or a B compared with 62% of A and B grades awarded in general. Over a two-year period at the same pioneer schools, Degree Compass helped substantially greater proportions of students receive passing grades – particularly true for the student populations Tennessee had hoped would benefit from better course advice and selection such as Pell Grant recipients (3.9%[^]) and African-American students (2.1%[^]).

Further Degree Compass research demonstrated that students who follow the course recommendations also increased their number of earned credit hours. As the fundamental units that count towards a degree, the increase in earned credit hours largely erased the achievement gap between two key student demographics at the Tennessee schools: 2 credit-hours per term in 2011 that was narrowed to a much smaller 0.7 credit-hour gap in 2013. With similar results found for students receiving financial aid, it is reasonable to conclude that the Degree Compass recommendations are having profound impact on a learner's progression and persistence to completion - right from the first moment of course selection.

Return on Investment: Track, Measure and Report on Learner Success.

Degree Compass offers a simple and practical strategy that delivers concrete evidence of its measureable impact on key performance indicators such as earned grades and earned credit hours for improving retention and closing the attainment gap. For institutions struggling with how to effectively create the conditions for student success, Degree Compass offers a very low barrier-to-entry footprint requiring no new or fancy hardware and with little to no training to implement and begin realizing concrete results for learners and advisors.

Degree Compass serves all learners, across all manner of program delivery and regardless of higher education institution type. Whether you are a first generation learner at a 2-yr college, a Pell Grant recipient at a public university or an adult learner returning to higher education to upgrade your skills at a private 4-yr institution, Degree Compass delivers personalized course recommendation capabilities that afford students greater independence and flexibility when planning their degree path while freeing up Advisors to help those at-risk learners with more substantial academic planning and remediation needs.

By getting the right student in the right course the first time, Degree Compass is driving positive returns for the student in the form of tuition savings, minimizing credit creep, decreasing time-to-degree and delivering quality, skilled graduates into the workforce much more efficiently. Lastly, no prescriptive effort for student success is complete without the ability to report on results. Designed to report across a variety of demographic attributes valued by an institution, Degree Compass delivers institutions a real opportunity to report on the impact of effective course selection as one of the critical first steps in supporting any student success strategy.