



Between the fall of 2019 and spring of 2022, through the Serving Native American Students with Holistic Student Supports project, six Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) began redesigning the student experience through the development of a customized holistic student supports framework. This approach emphasizes the need for institutions to deeply understand their students and then collaboratively redesign services that are critical for the success of every student. The colleges participated in a community of practice with other TCUs in the project and received intensive, customized coaching from Achieving the Dream to strengthen their capacity to serve students in their communities. The overarching goal of the project was to help colleges dismantle barriers in structure, policy, and practice to make it easier for students to identify and access academic and nonacademic supports in a timely manner to support completion of their college goals.

Aligning Student and Learner Services to Improve Advising

To better serve the advising needs of students, Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (FDLTCC) needed to improve the coordination, collaboration, and teamwork between its student services and learner services teams.

To make this happen, FDLTCC's leaders made one key organizational change: They teamed each professional advisor with a faculty program coordinator, whereby the advisor was responsible for specific academic programs. With this shift, FDLTCC advisors build critical expertise and evolved from generalists to specialists, which better enabled them to support students with academic planning, course sequencing, and other specialized supports related to their choice of major.

To streamline this teamwork, advisors and a number of program coordinators created a student advising roles and

College Information

- Tribally chartered by the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Location: Cloquet, MN
- As of 2020–21, FDLTCC offers 15 associate degrees, eight certificates, and two diplomas.

responsibilities document that clearly outlines each team member's involvement. A similar document was created to outline the roles and responsibilities associated with onboarding first-time college students, which extends beyond the advising team to include the Admissions and Information Technology teams as well. With these in place, each person's role in a student's success became increasingly apparent, and it increased each person's accountability in the process.

A Move to Proactive Engagement Makes for a Strong New-Student Experience

With COVID's impact on student behavior, waiting for students to make advising appointments was insufficient, so Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (FDLTCC) began taking a more proactive approach. Now, FDLTCC advisors take the initiative to reach out to every new student to schedule an advising meeting. They will phone, email, and text until they are successful at connecting with the new student and scheduling this appointment.

During this initial onboarding session, the advisor covers vital topics with the student, including:

- Discussing the student's Intake Form responses
- Connecting students to appropriate college and community resources
- Creating an academic plan
- Assisting students with registration
- Prompting the completion of the Online Orientation Module
- Offering guidance on the financial aid process

Beyond fostering a strong advisor/advisee relationship right from the start, this proactive approach is also helping to ensure all students get onto a solid path toward achieving their academic goals right from the start.

Implementing a Student Success Platform that Streamlines Communication Between Instructors, Advisors, and Students

Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (FDLTCC) deployed the Starfish student success platform, which they rebranded "North Star" to more quickly identify and support struggling students. With North Star, when faculty or staff detect a student might be struggling, they can easily alert FDLTCC's support staff and track the issue to resolution.

Based on their student population, FDLTCC has configured North Star to create automatic alerts based on a student's:

- Non-attendance after first week to term
- Attendance concern during the term
- Fourth-week academic progress report (for students living on campus and student athletes)
- Midterm grade academic progress report (for all students)
- Referral for various supports (e.g., disability services, information technology support, tutoring support, and mental health support)

During summer session 2022, in Phase 2 planning, students will be added to the platform. They will be able to view their personal FDLTCC support network, "raise their hand" to seek support in a variety of areas (e.g., financial aid, basic needs, and mental health), and set appointments to meet with critical support staff.

Streamlining the early alert process enables faculty, staff, and students to team together to identify, act, track, and resolve potential challenges that might have otherwise impeded the student's academic progress. Plus, it offers the college the ability to understand student success at both a micro and macro level — so they can make appropriate changes in an effort to increase all students' chances of success.

The initial results of this program are promising. In less than one year, FDLTCC has gotten 80 percent of faculty to adopt the new retention software, contributing to a 5 percent increase in the fall-to-spring retention rate in AY 21-22 compared to the prior.

Achieving the Dream (ATD) is a partner and champion of more than 300 community colleges across the country. Drawing on our expert coaches, groundbreaking programs, and national peer network, we provide institutions with integrated, tailored support for every aspect of their work—from foundational capacities such as leadership, data, and equity to intentional strategies for supporting students holistically, building K-12 partnerships, and more. We call this Whole College Transformation. Our vision is for every college to be a catalyst for equitable, antiracist, and economically vibrant communities. We know that with the right partner and the right approach, colleges can drive access, completion rates, and employment outcomes—so that all students can access life-changing learning that propels them into community-changing careers.