

Katy Oliveira ([00:07](#)):

Welcome to Next Practices, data informed strategies to shape the future of higher ed. In each episode, you'll hear from transformational higher ed leaders on how they're tackling today's most pressing challenges to make a difference for their students and institution. I'm your host, Katy Oliveira.

Leticia Wilson ([00:28](#)):

Sometimes our students, they don't know what to ask because they don't know what they don't know, or they're trying to manage so many responsibilities. They really know what have time to ask. They're just treading water, trying to keep their chin above the water, right? So we wanna be the proactive outreach with our students. And then when we reach out to the students and we get them on the phone, or we get them in our office, we wanna have conversations that build trust. We wanna have conversations about how they're doing holistically, and then we can get into how is school going? What can I do to help you? What can you do to help yourself? Right? Because it's not only how can I help you, but it's empowering the student so they can know where they can get the help on their own

Katy Oliveira ([01:21](#)):

Today on the show I'm discussing high impact advising practices with Leticia Wilson, director of advising initiative from Del College. Thank you so much for joining me today Leticia. I am so happy you are here.

Leticia Wilson ([01:37](#)):

I'm grateful to be asked, first of all. So thank you for having me here on this podcast. I'm excited.

Katy Oliveira ([01:45](#)):

So I like to start since this is about conversations with fellow leaders on what we can do to drive higher ed forward and create an equitable, accessible environment where students can succeed. Tell us a little bit about who you are and what motivates you to do this work.

Leticia Wilson ([02:06](#)):

So thank you once again, for having me, Katy, I'm so excited to be on this podcast and to be on this platform to get, to share some high impact practices. So I always like to start off with saying I'm a human being before I'm anything else. I'm a human outside of that. Some of things that describe me as a person I've been in higher ed for probably over 15 years at this point, but also I've had the chance to work at the alphabet suit, right? So I've worked at a predominantly white institution. I'm a graduate of an HBCU, which stands for historically black college or university. Yes. And I also work here at Del Mar college, which is under the MSI umbrella minority serving institution as an HSI Hispanic serving institution. So I'm so grateful that I've been working here at Delmar college in Corpus Christi, Texas for the past.

Leticia Wilson ([03:02](#)):

Are you ready, Katy? This is my 10 year anniversary this year. So I've been at this institution for 10 years. So I'm very grateful. So outside of higher ed, I used to coach track and field. I also worked as an advisor. I've worked as an assistant Dean, so I do a lot of things outside in the community. But with my students, I get the opportunity as the director of advising initiatives to really champion high impact practices in advising, right? So a marks, the beginning letter of the alphabet and advising is my love child. I love advising, even though I don't advise every day and interact with students, I still get the chance to work with students. I get the opportunity to work with amazing colleagues and that means faculty, staff, primary role advisors, dual credit coordinators. And I get the opportunity to put on professional development opportunities to enhance those skills that are already residing within our advising community. So that's what I do at Del Mar college, but I do a lot of other things outside of that, but I'm excited regardless of sit at our, we get a chance part of our students story. So that's just a little about I do here Del Mar, but also who I am as a person.

Katy Oliveira ([04:31](#)):

Given your breadth of experience and your familiarity with the general student experience as a whole or the student journey as a whole, what are the most pressing challenges that you see both as a higher ed experience as a whole, but also at your particular institution for your particular students?

Leticia Wilson ([04:51](#)):

Ooh, Katy, that's a good question.

Katy Oliveira ([04:53](#)):

Starting big here.

Leticia Wilson ([04:55](#)):

Yes. Oh my goodness. That is a loaded question, but I appreciate the question. So I would say one of the biggest challenges, and I'm gonna start broad just in higher ed and with students that students are juggling multiple responsibilities. So if it was just, I wanna come to school, take classes for two years or four years graduate, and then get that next job or that next promotion, it would be easy, but our students are kind of like a juggler that has on those plates on their arms and they're on this. And then they have something, you know, that they're toggling on their head. They're managing several different things that I mentioned earlier, right? Their jobs, their outside of school commitments, but also who they are outside of being a student. So it's mitigating those other responsibilities outside of school, on top of school. But in addition to these changing times, Katie, these times are consistently and actively changing when we were, we're still in the midst of COVID right?

Leticia Wilson ([06:01](#)):

And so their employers are changing the work requirements. And so they have to adapt to that. They also have to adapt to some of them are parents. So if they have childcare and if they have to teach their own children, because they're now the teachers with virtual schoolwork, but then also making sure that they are, I think, balances and myths and harmony is a must. So how to make everything in harmony because they have a partner, you know, they have other responsibilities, but they also wanna make sure that they're not burnt out themselves because if they're off on school, then that means they're on at home. If they're off at home, that means they're on at school. And if they're off at school and work, when do they find time for family? So it's navigating all these different nuances in these changing times. And what does that look like?

Leticia Wilson ([06:56](#)):

And how do you make sure that you're encouraging your students to do the work, but also you're doing the work as an advisor too, because that burnout happens on both sides. So how can we be compassionate towards each other as humans? How do we move forward in these ever-changing times and how do we give our students what they need? So let's toggle back to Del Mar college. That was as a broad, as a whole, what our students are dealing with. But particularly at Del Mar college, most of our students are first generation. The average age of our student is 24 because of over 25% of our students are dual credit students. So we have an array of students, even though their average age is 24. The majority of our students, I would say that quarter portion are dual credit students, but they're also that nontraditional student, whatever nontraditional is anymore, right?

Leticia Wilson ([07:50](#)):

And so their needs change based off of who they're coming in as. And so we have some students that deal with food insecurity. So the beauty of knowing what our students need is that we don't just grapple surveys or have focus groups. We then take those moments to hear their voice and amplify their voice and then figure out strategies to meet that need. So since our students deal with food insecurity, we now have a food pantry that we've had for a couple of years, and it's only expanded. So it's dry foods and foods that need to be refrigerated and they can come twice a month. And so that's something that we've had for our students that has been in need. Also, a lot of our students need that guidance and it's not just okay, back in when I was in school, here's your course catalog.

Leticia Wilson ([08:43](#)):

You go to your advisor to register or get approval if you wanted over full time. And that was it. You were on your way, but now our students really need somebody that's gonna co-create co plan be their person. And that's what advising does. So they don't have to go around the Mulberry Bush or do the Walmart point go over there. They wanna be connected to a human being. And that's what advising does here at Del Mar college. They're connected with a faculty advisor, a my academic plan advisor, a primary role advisor, which we call it Del Mar embedded advisor. And that's their person. So if they need tutoring, they can come to their person who is the advisor. And they're like, you know what? I'm really struggling in calculus. How can I get the help that I need that advisor will then lead them to the math learning sitter that we have on campus that also provides online tutoring, because we also know that we have students that are food insecure, but also transportation might be an issue as well.

Leticia Wilson ([09:52](#)):

So the beauty at Del Mar college, if you have a Del Mar ID, which all students do, you can have a free RTA bus pass, free of charge. That's part of your tuition. Also, we know that students, like I said earlier, are managing several different things and

that can really weigh down on you mentally. And so we have a counseling office that I not only sees students in person, but the counseling office also does tell a counseling so we can meet students where they are when they don't have the transportation to get to a counseling appointment, they can still meet their mental health wellness through meeting a licensed professional counselor, virtually or face to face. We also have tutoring for students, right? Because since we're a community college, we're an open access school. So it's not contingent on you having an SAT or ACT score or being the top 10% at the community college, we get the opportunity to meet students where they are. And so that means sometimes students haven't been to school in 20 years.

Leticia Wilson (11:02):

And so it's a little scary, jumping back into something that's been unfamiliar for that length of time. So we have the stone writing center. We have the student success center, which we have, I'm so proud. We have virtual reality tutoring. So can you imagine taking anatomy and physiology since I was a bio major, that's why I'm using that reference. And you're studying the human body and you're studying, where is the kidneys? Where is the pancreas? Where is the heart? Where are the lungs? But you can see it by putting on these 3d glasses. And you can see those figures form in the body. And then it resonates because we know that our students are different types of learners. Some people are visual learners, some people are auditory, some people are tactile. So the beauty at Del Mar college is we hear the student's voice through the focus groups and the surveys. And then we either enhance what we already have or start what we need to start for our students need, as they're managing all these multiple responsibilities, but also making sure that we meet how they learn best. But knowing that they have a point person, which is their advisor in my eyes, I'm kind of biased. They also have the faculty because faculty have more seat time with the students, right? So they're in classes with them. They're in clinicals, they're in internships, but they also have a community of advisors as well.

Katy Oliveira (12:32):

It's so important to see students as whole people, but oftentimes it's hard to see what's happening with students to be able to be there when they need it just in time, in real time. And I know that you were talking about that you survey your students to assess what the most pressing challenges are at your institution. Are there any other ways that you or your broader team sits down and assesses? Okay, we need, we need a food pantry and we need to connect these particular students to this resource. Or we need to have this kind of caseload for advisors. We need an embedded advisor. We not only need a faculty advisor, but we need an embedded advisor. How do you make the determination to stand up those kinds of initiatives for your students?

Leticia Wilson (13:20):

I love that question, Katy. So outside of the focus groups and the surveys, we also do CCSE data. So we, the community college student engagement survey, our institutional research team does that work as well, upcoming in June. And this is hot off the presses, Katy. So you're getting behind the scenes. It's April now, right? So in June, what we have every quarter, we have an advising enhancing skills workshop, which everybody on the campus is invited to attend. We typically highlight an advising topic last time it was men of color. And then we have different student support services to come in, because let me tell you Katy, in this virtual world or a hybrid world, whatever you wanna call it because we're still on campus, but we're still doing virtual meetings depending on how big the meeting is. You probably understand, I see your head nodding.

Leticia Wilson (14:13):

We want to be able to give just like students just in time information. We also wanna give our faculty and advising community just in time information. And so it's hard because not everybody is able to go to every committee meeting. Not everybody knows about all the nuances. So we've taken on that to have that quarterly meeting. And in June, we're gonna have a student panel. So not only are we doing the focus groups, the surveys we're constantly reaching out to our student government association to ask the leaders, what are you hearing that your colleagues or your fellow students need, but then we're also bringing them in, in different meetings. We have students that sit on the strategic and the strategic planning meeting. So not only are we strategizing what the institutional goals are, but we have a student as part of the committee, and then this June, we're gonna have a student panel because like we've done that work, Katy with the surveys, with the focus groups.

Leticia Wilson (15:18):

But how often do we reach out to students to hear their voice? Are we just hearing the voice of students that are leaders? So that's why I've reached out to my Trio department. And I met with the director and I was like, look, Valton, who's our phenomenal director. I really need to hear from your students as well. Because a lot of times our students leaders, they have a seat at the table, but how are we getting the voices of other students that might not get the same opportunity? And so

that's why I've been strategic about recruiting students to be a part of this panel so we can hear those varied voices. So that's some of the work that we're doing to try to consistently hear the student's voices, the focus group, the CCSE data, the institutional research doing or work, having students sit on committees, standing committees, and also hearing their voice from different student contingencies,

Katy Oliveira (16:15):

Making sure that you are talking to real live human students as much as possible, as broadly as possible to get a good sense of what, what the student's needs are. How do you use data and analytics and other technologies to help support that work? Or do you?

Leticia Wilson (16:36):

So we've had, Civitas Learning as a platform for several years, over five years. At this point, I've been in my role as a director of advising initiatives for the three years. And so we've used Civitas Learning platform, I would say in a phased approach. So we started using Inspire for Advisor first and using it to document our advising interactions. Cause we wanna eliminate the, they said, she said, and so we have better internal communication, but we also wanna make sure when we meet with that same student, if the same advisor doesn't meet with them, that they can just continue the conversation. So that's how we leverage the first tool under Civitas Learning. But we started with our graduation coaches. They used that predictive analytics tool to not only document their advising interactions, but have just in time conversations with students. Cause sometimes it's hard, right? You maybe have 15, 30 minutes with students.

Leticia Wilson (17:41):

What are you gonna talk about outside of registering for classes? Students are not open. Let's just say humans are not open to have a discussion. If the first thing that you're gonna talk about is what they need to change or what they need to fix. Let's say a student comes in and you're saying, I got this progress report and it looks like you're failing in algebra. What's going on? A students going to say back up, bee, beep why is that the first conversation piece? And they may not go back into your office because they're already trying to manage all their multiple responsibilities. And the first thing that you say is what are you doing? They're shaking their finger. So the beauty of Inspire is that we're using those key indicators to help us have those relatable human conversations. So it has, I, I can't remember right now, but it has, you can, um, talk about things that they're progressing in that are great.

Leticia Wilson (18:42):

And then you can talk about opportunities for them to shift. So then you could talk about, well, it looks like you've completed 30 credits. You should be proud of yourself, even how, what we say in our language matters. So instead of saying, I'm proud of you, that's taking out the authoritative language. We should change our language to say, you should be proud of yourself because the students are doing the work. So it's not only the tools, but how we use the tools. Katy, the phase approach is that we started using Inspire for Advisor, right with our graduation coaches. And then we extended that circle to our enrollment specialists and our primary role advisors to use that same tool. And now we've extended it to our faculty members. Like I said earlier, they have the most seat time with the students. So we started with that program.

Leticia Wilson (19:36):

The second phase was using Illume. Now Illume, everybody was a little like, uh, I dunno if I wanna use this. This is pre COVID, right? Or BC not before Christ before COVID <laugh> they were talking about, I dunno if I'm comfortable using this technology tool, we don't know. Even if our students are opening their email, whoa, COVID hit 2020. Now we were reliant on reaching out to students in a different way, other than face to face. So we've been using Illume probably almost simultaneously as Inspire, but we started using it even more, especially when 2020 hit, because we wanted to make sure that our students still felt connected to us as humans. Right? So we were reaching out to students not only for open registration, but how were you doing? And we would make sure that we would title the subject so that they would know this is not another email that I just need to put in junk, but they're actually reaching out to me.

Leticia Wilson (20:41):

We had, what's called a we care campaign where we reached out to students. We had a script for those faculty and advisors and we had them send an email first through and then we had them follow up with a phone call. Hey, I reached out to you, this is your advisor here. I just wanna call and see how you're doing and pausing for a response. It's not just a salutation. Like we used to walk in the hallways and say, Hey, how you doing? And you keep walking, but it was a, how are you doing? And then waiting for a response. And then what I did as the director of advising initiatives, that I came up with a flow chart. So depending on what their response was, then they would be able to give them what they needed. We're guilty. Katy, I'm guilty too, that we wanna just give, give, give.

Leticia Wilson (21:34):

We wanna make sure that we hear the students, what they need and then give them what they need instead of kind of throwing up, oh, we have this, we have this, we have tutoring, we have the food pantry. They didn't ask for that. The student asked for this is what I need from you. And so when we did that tiered approach of the we care campaign, starting with Illume, following up with the phone call and then giving students what they need, then that allowed our students to feel seen going back to what you said about equity and inclusion that also made our students feel like, okay, they care about me as a person, not just a number to bulk up our enrollment numbers, but they see me as a human being first and they actually listened. And now I have a person that I can go back to if I have another question along the way in my journey.

Leticia Wilson (22:27):

So we started with Inspire. We then went out to Illume and now we're using course insights. That's fairly new. So we're still trying to build momentum. So we're using the data to make informed decisions on how we help our students. So we can pull a report from course insights and say, you know what, I'm a biology advisor. Let me see how many of our students have passed inorganic chemistry, which we call is kind of a gateway course. And then let me reach out to those students that are on the cusp and it's midterm to see what I can do to help them. So sometimes our students, they don't know what to ask because they don't know what they don't know or they're trying to manage so many responsibilities. They really don't have the time to ask. They're just treading water, trying to keep their, their chin above the water, right?

Leticia Wilson (23:21):

So we wanna be the proactive outreach with our students. And then when we reach out to the students and we get them on the phone or we get them in our office, we wanna have conversations that build trust. We wanna have conversations about how they're doing holistically and then we can get into how is school going? What can I do to help you? What can you do to help yourself, right? Because it's not only how can I help you, but it's empowering the student so they can know where they can get the help on their own. So that's the work that we've been doing with our predictive analytics tools. So we're going beyond the tools, we're using the tools to make actionable steps, but steps that make sense for our unique students,

Katy Oliveira (24:13):

Right? So it's data informed action. It's taking the data to know who to prioritize, where to prioritize, what ties, what interventions are happening. But at the end of the day, the human advisor who is having the conversation with the student has to build trust and relationship and connect the student to the right kinds of interventions and conversations and messaging. So the tools illuminate the opportunities, but the human being has to facilitate that. I know in a capacity constrained advising world, how does your team work together to do that piece? Because I know that that can be a challenge. If we're being honest, across advising departments to have that happen consistently across an advising team, as a former leader of an advising office. I know that that consistency across advisors can be challenging. I suspect that your great quarterly gatherings of your professionals is one way to do that. But I'm, I'm curious on what does that look like on an ongoing basis at your institution?

Leticia Wilson (25:20):

I'm gonna be completely transparent with you, Katy. That's a work progress. I don't believe anybody is perfect in that, but I also wanna make light that, although I'm the director of advising initiatives, as I said earlier, my primary role is to facilitate the professional development. I don't have any advisors that report directly to me because we have what's called a decentralized shared advising structure. So some advisors report to their department chairs and some advisors report to their director of admissions and some advisors report to their divisional deans. So because of that, that really anchors the work that we do in those quarterly workshops. Right? And so we've also built, what's called a resource, an advising checklist. So we have a checklist on what conversation should you have with students when they have zero to 15 credits when they've earned 30 credits and once they're over 45 credits.

Leticia Wilson (26:22):

So that way, regardless of who you report to and where you're located, the consistency of practice will be that advising checklist. That's how we champion the work together. We're consistently talking to each other in those quarterly workshops. We have that resource for the institution to have those conversations with students. Because sometimes we may forget if we've only seen this student three months ago, and now it's like, what should I talk about with the students outside of what classes you want next semester? So we can go through conversations about, have you determined what school you wanna transfer to? Have you got involved in the student government organizations or the registered student organizations? Because it's just not coming out with a piece of paper saying I have this degree, but employers wanna know what other

attributes do you have as a person to make me wanna hire you. So we're trying to set students up for those stackable credentials. So a certificate and associates, do you have a mentor in the field? Have you shadowed somebody? Have you utilized our tutoring services or have you led a student group for tutoring yourself? So really empowering the students to do the work, but we're having those conversations with them so they know how to do that work.

Katy Oliveira ([27:48](#)):

Yeah. So it's just a matter of, of collaborating and working together to think intentionally about how you engage with your students.

Katy Oliveira ([27:59](#)):

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([28:36](#)):

What is your advisor to student ratio? How are your advisors? I know that sometimes having the time and space to actually engage with the students that you need to engage with in, in any given moment can be a challenge. What does that look like for your advising team?

Leticia Wilson ([28:51](#)):

So once again, as I said earlier on the last question, that's a work in progress.

Katy Oliveira ([28:56](#)):

Oh, that's the piece. That's still a work in progress. I hear that <laugh>

Leticia Wilson ([29:00](#)):

As of now to date, since we're talking April, 2022, we have what's called a pathway model. So since we're a Texas community college institution, we have our different majors divided in eight different pathways. So we have remember I talked about the advising community that we have. So some areas have a dedicated primary role advisor based on their pathway. And some areas have their faculty advisors as their point person for their pathway advisor. And so that's how we advise our students based on the pathway that they're in and based on their major, but hopefully we'll have something else that has evolved in the next couple of years. But right now we have our pathways model. And that's our start.

Katy Oliveira ([29:50](#)):

Do you mind talking a little bit about how the pathways model, I know that the pathways model is a dedicated model, but how does it work? Do you mind elaborating a little further on how it looks at Del Mar?

Leticia Wilson ([30:01](#)):

Yeah, no problem. And I'm happy you brought that up. We just got off of the pathways Institute, which was in Houston, Texas last week. And I had the opportunity to present on an online advising certification course that I built with a whole lot of other content experts. So I'm excited to talk about the pathways work that we're doing that is championed by our Dean of institutional research, Dr. Christina Wilson. And she leads our pathways initiative. So just to give you some context, pathways talks about the pipeline of education. So it starts with K12 and then it talks about onboarding persistence graduation, and then transitioning into the workforce. So it talks about that entire pipeline. And I feel as a community college, we are essential in that pipeline because we have the enrollment meeting students open access, but we also have that connection with the four year colleges and the workforce, because not all of our students wanna go on for a four year degree.

Leticia Wilson ([31:11](#)):

They're trying to get credentials so they can work immediately in the workforce. So we have that connection to all entities sitting in this space of community colleges. So going back to pathways, what we've done at Del Mar is that we are championing that work with our grant that we recently got. This is almost three years ago, which I can't believe it's called project SENDA, SENDA in Spanish means path. But the acronym that we're using it for is students engaged in direct advising. It's a five year, 2.8 million grant to not only help students in their pathway, but the grant also allowed us to hire four

additional advisors, which they've all been hired on. And so in that work, we wrote the grant, we go to conferences and talk about what we're gonna implement using smart measured goals. But we've also championed the advising certification course, which allows all of our advising community to take the course on canvas and then feel better about how the changes are happening either from the federal government, at the state level, our pathways, curriculum changes, technology changes, all of that is embedded in the course and it's level one and level two.

Leticia Wilson (32:36):

And in level one, we set the foundation. How has advising evolved over time? What is NACADA, the global academic advising community? What is student learning outcomes and advising, and what does that look like? What are our existing advising technology tools? What are the different advising approaches? Oh, there's appreciative advising by Dr. Jenny Bloom. Oh, there's strength based advising. Oh, there's motivational interviewing. So exposing people to advising is a field of study. It's not, you go through burger king and you take your order and then you leave. No there's theory, there's approaches there's practices. And I believe that's the beauty of me. And my doctoral program is I get to bring in those scholarly works from the NACADA clearing house. I get to bring in Civitas Learning and make how to videos. So then people know how to use the tools to make those actionable steps with their students.

Leticia Wilson (33:36):

I get to pull in videos from the food pantry or the tutoring center, because sometimes we get so involved in our own work. We're not familiar with all the different resources at all of our different campuses. So this course is basically a catchall for everything your students might need and it's evolving. And then after every module, there's an assessment to see how have you retained that information. But also in the course, they have to do a mock advising session, which is great. It is so good. They have a rubric, they have to make the student feel welcome. Get to know the student as a person, then talk about what are their plans? What are your outside of school commitments? Because faculty, they have that in their role, right? All faculty are assessed once a year and they have what's called observations in the classroom. But how often are people assessed on what is the observation in your advising practice?

Leticia Wilson (34:39):

So we've embedded that in the course. And the beauty of this is what is the return on investment for the college is that people that are new to Del Mar college, they're taking this course and have a sturdy foundation on our approaches with our students at Del Mar college. But it also helps people feel more equipped. Nobody wants to be in front of the student and not understand how to use the tools or know where to send the students when they need help. So this gives that foundation of knowledge and also the people that interact the beauty of the grant is that they get paid for doing that. <laugh> so that's an incentive, but in addition to that, everybody wants to grow. And so it provides the opportunity for people to grow in their own practice because we have great advisors that are already championing, great work that are presenting at conferences like the Texas academic advising network, AKA TEXAAN that are giving professional development in their own department that are cross collaborating with different advisors across pathways to talk about, Hey, what are you using to help students schedule their appointments? So we share best practices, but we also wanna make sure that everybody gets the same foundational information. So that's why we built the course. And we've had five cohorts to go through the course, but it's great for us also as an institution to know that we're onboarding people and exposing them early on, instead of here's a student that's gonna come in next week, are you ready? <laugh> so we're helping them not just get ready, but be ready just in time. So it allows the advisors to have those human connection conversations instead of transactional conversations.

Katy Oliveira (36:33):

That's amazing what I'm hearing just to synthesize as we start to come and come to the end of our time together, I'm hearing that it's a multifaceted approach to creating not only intentional, just in time, proactive advising, but also high quality trust building relational advising practice that you have the tools. So it's, it's having the tools, having the data so that you can make data informed decisions. And so that you can have data informed outreach and you can prioritize students and make sure that they're getting the help they need. And they're multifaceted and, and having a view into that complex multifaceted life of your students. But once you get the student in part A is getting the student in knowing what student to get in and knowing when to get the student in, but part B and just as equally important. So by saying part B, I'm not, I'm not saying it's less important, equally important. Um, the other piece of the puzzle is having an advisor that is intentional with the student that's in their chair with the right messaging, with the right trust building, with the right conversation. And it's both of those parts together that create a, I don't even know what to call it a magical and effective advising experience for your students.

Leticia Wilson (37:58):

Absolutely building that culture of care and not to say that we didn't have it before, but now with the demands of the pandemic and different responsibilities, different work environments, different needs, amplified needs. We just have to be even better. And so we're trying to provide those resources. So we're not just being an advisor, but that we're using that relational piece because the core competencies of advising is the conceptual, informational and relational. And in this time period, Katy, the relational piece is so vital students. Won't be comfortable telling you what's going on unless you've built trust, unless you really care about them as a person. And we've done that work and we'll continue to do the work, but we want the students to know that we are a part of their process. We wanna co-create a plan, but we want them to know that we're here for them.

Katy Oliveira (39:00):

Since you've shifted to this way of doing your work, what outcomes are you seeing for your students and your advisors? Sometimes I think we think in terms of, of course, the big ones like retention and completion, but I think persisting from semester to semester building trust, having the capacity to work with students, having more students seek help are all also really important outcomes that I know any advising office would like to see and grow that ultimately feed into things like retention and completion. Are you seeing positive trends in some of the direction of those kinds of outcomes on your campus?

Leticia Wilson (39:36):

And that's a still working progress as well. So those outcomes are something that we love our board members to know about something that we like our whole institutional community to know, because they're like, okay, we've shifted this. What are the outcomes of how we've shifted? So the beauty is that we've recently built a three year strategic enrollment management plan. That one of our key objectives is to increase the number of sophomores because we're a community college. So since we just built the program, we will see next year, how much headway we've made with that persistence. Cause we don't wanna talk about retention. Retention is for institutional practice. We wanna talk about persistence because humans persist from semester to semester. So we've started with establishing our objectives and outcomes. And now we're gonna wait to see the data as part of our SEM or strategic enrollment management plan.

Katy Oliveira (40:36):

Thank you so much for coming on the show. We're coming to the end of our time together. And so I like to leave the last word to you. We covered a lot of ground, but I find that there's always something else that maybe you were wanting to share or something that's come to mind that we didn't have an opportunity to cover. I wanna give you space to share that as we close out.

Leticia Wilson (40:56):

Mm well, first and foremost, I wanna thank you once again for asking me to be a part of the podcast. I love doing the work with you all at Civitas Learning. I would just encourage anybody that's listening. Rather, you're an advisor, a supervisor of advisors, a faculty member, a counselor, a Dean, or even a president to lean into what you need in this time. We've been tasked with being there for our students, increasing our numbers, as far as enrollment, um, helping our students meet their multiple needs. But I would like for anybody, that's listening to kind of sit in this space and lean into what you need, how are you filling up your cup? So that means are you taking a break, taking a day off and not looking at your email or does that mean that you're reaching out to other people that are doing the work?

Leticia Wilson (41:54):

So you don't feel like you have to start from scratch, reach out to your colleagues that are a part of this Civitas Learning community or on LinkedIn, but what are you doing to really give yourself some rest? So you can be your best with your students? That's all I would like to say is just stay encouraged and that I'm not sharing this to say, oh, we've come this far. Um, we've done great things here at Del Mar college, but we're consistently learning from our students on what they need. And I get excited to continuously engage with our students and our faculty and staff. And thank you for allowing me to be here.

Katy Oliveira (42:33):

Student success has always a work in progress, always changing, always evolving. And I think having these conversations is, is barely important. Thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate it.

Leticia Wilson (42:45):

Thank You.

Katy Oliveira ([42:49](#)):

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