

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 institutions. I'm your host, Katy Oliveira,

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([00:28](#)):

Until they actually saw it in the data. And it showed that for example, our black males with tutoring were seeing a, a significantly higher increase in, in lift for persistence than just our general population by seeing it in the data and actually seeing the visual of it. It, I think it triggered in the minds of our, of our frontline staff of support staff that, oh, wow, this is true. And we can make a huge impact

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

Today on the show. I'm talking about how to build a collaborative data inform campus culture with Dr. Tammy Wyatt Vice Provost for Student Success at the University of Texas at San Antonio. We talk about how to build a student success coalition that incorporates everyone on campus, how to use data and analytics to develop unified institutional goals, how access to actionable data insights builds consensus and buy-in and a step by step process for building a collaborative data informed culture at your institution. But before we dive in, take a moment to subscribe to the show, to stay up to date on the latest creative data informed approaches to student success.

Katy Oliveira ([01:47](#)):

Welcome to Next practices, Tammy, thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to share your experience and wisdom with our audience here at Next Practices, we explore how to use data informed approaches to answer urgent questions and go beyond best practices in solving today's challenging higher ed landscape. Would that in mind at UTSA what are some of the most pressing student success challenges your team is working to solve?

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([02:18](#)):

Well, I think we are no different than other institutions, um, as we're emerging out of the pandemic. So I think that that what we've been focusing on is how to best address and access and, and meet the needs of our students in multiple modalities, whether that's in person or in a virtual format. So that's where a lot of our attention has been the last two years prior to that, we've been focusing on meeting the needs of all of our students that specifically having focuses on first gen, um, and how to help better support our first gen our transfer student population as well, many times our approaches have been where if we can address the needs of some of our special populations in a way that we can scale that to help support all of our students is what we're, what we're trying to do.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([03:13](#)):

And so we've been using best practices through our student success platform and our technologies there through mentoring and on and on which I'm sure we'll talk about throughout the conversation today, but most recently really has been focusing on how can we create a new normal in some of the positives that have come out of the pandemic are we don't have to meet one-on-one in person to help support a student. There are many ways that we can support a student as things change. And as we're, as we're looking at modalities being open to that and understanding that, you know, it's been easier for our students, they've loved it. And so that's a great opportunity for growth for us as an institution.

Katy Oliveira ([04:00](#)):

How is the UTSA success team working together to help address some of these challenges that you are seeing? You said that your, your attempts to help maybe the most vulnerable populations or populations that have specific needs really can be scaled and applied across your campus. And you, you have a pretty large campus with a, a fairly diverse population. Um, and I know that one of the things you and I have talked about off camera is how you have a very strategic cross-functional approach to student success. So I'd love to, to have you share more about how your student success team is working together to help your student succeed.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([04:46](#)):

We have the division of student success here at the university, but everyone's role that's just in our name, right everyone's role across the institution is to help students succeed. There's a couple of ways that we've addressed this from a strategic standpoint. One is just simply every week, our provost works with a team of leaders, myself overseeing the division of student success, our institutional effectiveness, institutional research team, student affairs, our university college, our strategic enrollment grad school, and on and on academic innovation being another group we meet every week. And we're looking at what are, what are some of the challenges facing our students? What are the things that are coming up in the months ahead? What are things that we need to be thinking about and how can we address that? So we are trying to stay one on top of any type of issue and proactively address as many things as we can, as we see things starting to rumble up.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([05:51](#)):

So it's one thing that we do, and I think it's made a huge difference because everyone owns a little piece of what we need to help best support our students. And so whether it's saying, Hey, student affairs, this is the area that we need you to guys to work on in strategic enrollment over here and, and us with our centralized programming and, and other pieces that we do. We work collectively as a team. And we work really, really well. And in our eyes on the data, and we're always looking at the data and making those adjustments. And from that work, we created what we call our hub and spoke model, which is where some of our centralized programming that falls under the division of student success. We typically provide services for students early on in their academic career that first year, second year. So we house our first year experience program.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([06:46](#)):

We have housing and residence life, our academic support, uh, programs like tutoring and supplemental instruction, academic advising, those types of, of programs. And now what we've done is we've created a model to where all of our academic colleges also have a student success center located within them. They dotted line report back to us, and we've identified some unified goals and strategies in how to utilize our student success technology tools in a way to meet our goals, uh, our unified goals and approaches and making sure that everyone stays in their lane as to what they need to do so that we're not overburdening students. Um, but also making sure that we are not creating gaps in services as well. So we're trying to make sure that we're streamlining, whether they start out and they provide, get most of their services from a program that my team direct team would oversee to where now they're a junior or a senior in our Alvarez college of business, and they're getting primarily services and programming from the college. And so how do we build that bridge? And so we've done that through this new model and the technology tools that we use have become integral to making sure that we are looking at this from a data focused lens, as well as making sure that we are not leaving any gaps along the way cracks that students could fall through. And we're also not in a time of limited resources and budgets that we're not having redundant services when those aren't needed.

Katy Oliveira ([08:28](#)):

So it sounds like you're coordinating quite a number of stakeholders across your campus, and that you are, you said that you are setting unified goals and that you're using data as your foundation informing your decision making and your work. Is there a way that you organize all of those teams to stay in good communication and to stay on the same page that you found effective through doing this work?

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([08:55](#)):

Absolutely. There are regular monthly meetings with this team and it's, we call it hub and spoke, um, just by title, but it really is more of this collective ecosystem of supports. And so what we started this work with a small working group, and we made sure that where all, all academic colleges and all centralized support services were represented, we created this working group identified what were some of those common themes or areas that we all needed to work on? I equated to, um, like Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Everyone needs, every student needs, basic water air, just like a right water air shelter. Right. But, and then when we get sense of belonging and as we get to self-actualization at the top of that, that's a nuanced piece that that might be unique to a college, but whether we're a centralized program or we're an academic college providing services, we all, all students need some basic, basic, um, uh, what we call basic needs.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([10:05](#)):

And so we work together as a group to say, whether you're a business major, or you're an engineering major, or you're a major in our liberal and fine arts college, you all need some basic things around academic support, around career and engaged learning opportunities that are specific to that area around digital fluency and engagement and belonging, and how can we best address that? So we all agree. That's a huge piece. That's the first step. Everyone needs to be on board and say, yes, we all wanna do these things. We can all agree that these are the things that we need to do, how we do them may be a little bit nuanced, but we all need to do these things. And so one example of that is through academic support, as an example, we've used through a loom, the course insights tool in helping identify.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([10:59](#)):

We all know that we need to provide tutoring and we need to provide supplemental instruction, perhaps some academic coaching around various courses. But what are those courses in our college of liberal and fine arts, where those majors and those students, what are the courses that they need? Those are different courses than what our college of education students would need, but let's make sure that those courses that are identified as those hurdle or challenge courses are being supported by someone right by some area. And if it makes sense that it be from a centralized group, because it's typically a lower division course, that would be something that my team would help oversee. If it's a junior level, major, specific course, then that's something that the college would oversee, but we work to train and we work to provide similar. I mean, this is a huge ecosystem as we're starting to build this because we're now we have to look at also, are we training everyone in the same way?

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([11:56](#)):

All of our student employees are, we paying them on a similar scale and working to create a career ladder so that we don't have a peer mentor or a tutor who's hopping from one area to another because we pay 25 cents more an hour. So really looking at how do we build this process out and this organizational structure out in a way that we are all moving in, you know, in the same rhythm, we're like dancing together. We're all working really well together and we're not stepping on each other's toes and

we're not competing with one another as we build this out. And that's just one example of how we've worked through that process. But the most important piece was getting everyone in the room agreeing to the basic philosophy of this and what those unified goals were and then giving people the freedom and the flexibility to say, okay, well, how you're going to address that with your respective students, the, you know, and the way that we would, a lot of times describe it is here's the mannequin. You can address it. However you wanna address it for the college of liberal and fine arts business may wanna address it a little bit differently, but that's okay. We're still meeting the needs of the students. And so that's where we've found the most successes as we've started on this journey with our hub and spoke model.

Katy Oliveira ([13:18](#)):

So interesting. It's centralizing the information and coming together around a shared problem and then coordinating on how each area can contribute to solving the problem in a way that's supportive of each other's efforts rather than having redundancies and competition inadvertently because you're siloed and kind of addressing the problems and thinking they're specific to your students and not looking at it holistically. That's remarkable. I'm sure that that must have created a lot of efficiency across your campus.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([13:53](#)):

We, we are seeing, we're seeing more efficient uses of, for example, we have a platform where if you're going to have an event on campus prior to this, it was, there was, there was some good usage of that, of that tool. Um, but not everyone was using it. Not everyone was using it in the same way. And so now as a part of those, in addition to those unified goals, we have created what we call foundational training pieces around some of those institutional technology platforms that we have and to say, you know what, everyone let's use this, this particular platform in this way. And now we've been able to train people on how to do that and we can track. So we have better levels of data now to, or we will, as we're building this out, have better levels of data to where we could say in this particular college, this is what we've seen by participating on these types of activities at the institutional level.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([14:52](#)):

We can, now we can also aggregate all of that data together and say across the board, here's what we've seen with various events and activities and engagement around a particular topic area, but we can, we can break it down to the various levels, whether it's the program level, the college level, and now the institution, because we are creating those efficiencies of saying, let's all use this tool. Another example is with tutoring in our tutoring services, we use a particular platform there that that will allow us to track and, um, assess the data of, you know, what are our no-show rates. Um, what do we, who has, who has participated and what course were they enrolled in? What are those outcomes as a result of that? And so for the first time ever, we will be able to, to have conversations around tutoring services at the institutional level, but then we can break it down and say tutoring services in this particular college, um, which will be huge for us to be able to see what those, what those impacts are and help us to make even more refined, um, data informed decisions as we move forward.

Katy Oliveira ([16:02](#)):

It's pretty remarkable that one of the goals of this podcast is to create dialogue around how can we go beyond best practices to create data informed practices? Because so often what we see with our partners and my backgrounds in higher ed, too, I come out of student success and advising is that there's not a one size fits all answer for students. And oftentimes it can be student specific student group specific, but even institution specific, depending on the mix of students, the community that they're in the needs of that community. And so using data to informed approaches can empower institutions to be

informed by best practices, but to adapt and build upon best practices that might not be truly working for their students or moving forward the needle towards institutional goals. Have you experienced time when best practices fell flat or sort of national approaches to students fell flat? And have you used data and the technologies and platforms, um, that you had at your disposal to help craft practices that were more refined or more specific to your particular student population?

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([17:21](#)):

I wouldn't necessarily say that we've had something fall flat, but perhaps the first iteration we didn't get what we'd hoped for it most likely was not a result of the practice itself, not being a worthy practice, but how we implemented the practice or maybe we fell through on some of the things that we thought we needed to do. I would say as an example of how we have refined our work, UTSA has been, we've been laser sharp, focused on student success issues and really making some significant changes to our first year, second and third year retention in our four and six year graduation rates for almost a decade now really started the focus in around 2012, 2013, launched quite a few major initiatives in 2014. And so now that we've been in that mode for a while, it's are these still working? Are these still doing what we need them to do?

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([18:29](#)):

And as our outcomes are getting stronger, you have to continuously refine right to get that next level of success. And so originally it was let's let's work toward the masses. Let's see how we can move the needle in big chunks, which we were able to do. And now it is our focus is starting to look at, okay, what are those populations that we can now also work toward to help get to that next level? And so one of the things that we have done is that really excited about, and we started this within our centralized programs and in the future, we will be moving this out towards some of the programs that are happening in the colleges, but we worked with and did an impact analysis of our various programs. And as an example, with our tutoring services and our supplemental instruction programs, we were looking at, we knew that they'd been successful.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([19:29](#)):

We'd done lots of working with IR and looking at students who participate and students who don't participate, who are enrolled in the course, what are those course outcomes? And we'd done that for years, right? We'd done that for years, but we had never disaggregated the data further than that to say, well, what about those students? You know, what about some of those demographic characteristics of the students that are in the class? And often you hear even with, with tutoring that you'll hear well, tutoring is hard to assess, you know, there's some biases in it because students who either wanna go from a, B plus to an A will use tutoring, or if students too late in the game will realize that they need it. So how do you really assess it? And so by working with, in doing an impact analysis, we were able to find that overall, we were seeing a lift, right?

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([20:20](#)):

We were seeing some good progress and some lift between, you know, for, for overall, for all of our students. But when we were able to disaggregate and look at which particular student populations were seeing that, that lift at, at greater amounts, who are those groups, those were the students that we had been trying to move the needle on or, and trying to get our teams to do outreach to, but until they actually saw it in the data, and it showed that for example, um, our black males with tutoring were seeing a, a significantly higher increase in, in lift for persistence than just our general population, by seeing it in the data and actually seeing the visual of it. It, I think it triggered in the minds of our frontline staff, uh, support staff that, oh, wow, this is true. And we can make a huge impact.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([21:17](#)):

We see it here. It's not someone's thought or a best practice that someone did somewhere else where that's not anything like UTSA. And so when we were able to run our programs through and show that not only are all students being impacted, but we can make an even bigger difference with these subsets of students, by working with them. Another example is with our academic success coaching team, where a lot of the work in the past have been focused on graduate students and then even on honor students, and which was great. But when you weren't seeing that, that huge impact and lift, because those students were going to continue on and do well. But when we showed in through the data that, well, our students who were in the lower quart tiles, our first year students, another group was students who were part-time, um, or who had been academically dismissed in coming back.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([22:10](#)):

When those students participated, that was almost a double digit lift. And so seeing that visually in the data and talking through that and showing no, this actually does work and can work even better. If we pay attention to these types of things has been extremely impactful for our staff, as we're, as we're changing and evolving, right. Our processes and, and how we approach in the past. We had been, well, whoever comes to us, we will help. And we're a great service and that's true, right? We're a great service. We provide great service, whoever comes, but now it is the approach of well actually, and it's become even more so in as we come out of COVID. And when we, when a lot of our services went online, it was the students weren't just coming because you just didn't happen to walk by and see someone physically in a space and say, oh, I think I'm gonna go in there and see what that's like.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([23:04](#)):

You had to intentionally go online and find where that service was. So the importance of outreaching and calling and emailing and saying, Hey, we are here, here's a service. And this service works really well. And with specific populations and driving them in versus saying, Hey, we're here to serve you when you come. No, it's now it's like, no, we want you to come in. We specifically want you to come in and see us. It's a new world for us with that. But the data is what allowed that change and that shift to start to happen. Because we talked about it for a long time. <laugh>

Katy Oliveira ([23:44](#)):

It's really powerful, what you're describing. Essentially, you have ideas and you bring it to your teams and you may have a lot of debate and have resistance or lack of buy in across teams. It's difficult to collaborate and it may be hard to see how to apply the practice to your institution. You may have false starts. You may have challenges with implementation and adapting it to your, to your environment. Or there might be conversely entrenched programs that people are busy and they're seeing students. And those students are being successful and their calendars are booked up. And so it's not clear are evident that there are other opportunities available to support students. And what I'm hearing you say, if you think this is a fair assessment, is that what data has allowed you to do is rather than sort of being passive or reactive to what comes in the door or marketing to all students, to use these services and then leaving it to their hand, raisers, to come and utilize that startup you've been able to be proactive at scale because you're able to identify by disaggregating the data, what programs work for which students, and then be strategic about how you connect those students who need and will most likely benefit from the support to the right support to get the goal.

Katy Oliveira ([25:05](#)):

And so then your resources are more efficiently utilized and your students are more successful because they're getting the help. They, they may not even realize they need and might not raise our hand to access.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([25:19](#)):

Absolutely. You see, you said that much more eloquently than I was.

Katy Oliveira ([25:24](#)):

You said it very eloquently. You shared all the inner details. I just, I summed it up. I did the light work there.

Katy Oliveira ([25:34](#)):

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Katy Oliveira ([26:11](#)):

So what type of results are you achieving through this work?

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([26:15](#)):

Well, we're early on, right? In some of our processes and some of our structures, but what we are seeing is short term gains are first year retention, um, is looking strong this year. I say that a little bit. I should probably knock on wood. It's a little early that our first year retentions looking strong, our numbers last year, when most institutions across the country were seeing significant reductions in retention. And in some cases, double digit reductions, we were half a percent up. You know, we consider that flat or half, half a percent up. We didn't see the continued three and 4% gains that we had been seeing, but we were, we were extremely pleased with just above flat last year, because I think had we not done the work that we'd done, we would have also seen those double digit declines. We track regularly where we are.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([27:10](#)):

We're seeing that we're looking good. I'll leave it at that. Um, I'm, I'm, um, overly optimistic that our data's gonna be will, will be strong around retention and grad rates. I would say that also some of the work that we've done recently with our, with calling, we've done a lot of calling campaigns. We've done a lot of picking up the phone saying, how are you doing? And I think that has made a huge impact. And what we're hearing back from the students is some of that, um, that data, that qualitative data that we're hearing from the students has been very valuable in helping us as we move forward. One of the things that we started last year was some directed outreach. After looking at, if students were disengaging in the learning management system, if their midterm grades were looking as if they were not gonna be strong and, and we've already had done previous data around our midterm grades are a very good proxy for our final grades.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([28:12](#)):

And so at midterm, when we would see students who had a large number of Ds or Fs, or even some Cs where it's a course where you really needed a B or an A, we did some calling outreach and we were utilizing, we've been utilizing this past year, our staff, our professional staff, and some of our students, we have some student employees that we've, that we've hired to do. This is their primary role, but we know that those staff also have their real job <laugh> that they need to be focused on. And so, but by doing this the first year and seeing the impacts in some of those staff where our student success, coaches who would call and they'd say, Hey, we've noticed that your midterm grades, we've noticed that you've struggled a little bit. How can we help you? We provide support around being successful in your classes.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([29:01](#)):

These are some of the things that we can do. We would like to schedule an appointment with you. We've never done that before. And by doing that, the students, wow, you called me. Yes. I would absolutely like to have, you know, you think I need it. I think you need this. And let me tell you why. And we saw a dramatic increase in students right there on the spot going, yeah, let's make an appointment for later this week or next week. And that's one of the most successful calling campaigns we've ever seen and, and done. And even if they said, well, I don't know that I need an appointment. Can we just talk right now? They had an appointment <laugh> um, but then we were seeing subsequent reappointments and re bookings after that. And so from that, how successful fallen spring campaigning that we did.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([29:52](#)):

We've decided that for this upcoming year, we are going to hire some dedicated graduate students right now to make a business case down the road, but where this will be, what their job will be, will be to do that type of calling and that type of outreach, where they can focus on and along a, just in case kind of need by need basis. The beginning of the semester, maybe around registration, right before the semester starts for students who aren't registered. Then at first couple of weeks, how are you feeling? How are you, you know, how are you engaged? Are you, do you need connections to anything? Then when we see the first couple of weeks after the first assessment might have taken place, we see some, some LMS engagement shifting. We'll do some outreach there, then midterm grades and on and on. And so building out this calendar.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([30:39](#)):

So that's our next phase. And so we're excited and I really am hopeful. And I anticipate that we will see even stronger outcomes because not only will it help support students by getting them to the services that they need to receive, but also just that sense of, we care about you. You're a part of our UTSA family and, and email is great, and some of those pieces are needed, but sometimes that extra layer of being able to call someone and leave a voicemail, and they're returning calls, um, they're saying, thank you so much. We appreciate you taking the time to be able to do this. And we can't do this in with 34,000 students, right? We, we can't meet that need, but we can use the data to tell us which students need this. And we can target to those students that need it. So we can be very efficient and very effective at the same time. So that's, we started, we've got a really good, you know, pilot that we, that we did. And that's what we typically will do. That's what been our mantra for the last several years is let's pilot, let's adjust and refine, and then let's scale up. And so we're at that let's, we're adjusting and refining and starting to scale up for some of those types of outreaches that we've been doing.



Katy Oliveira ([31:55](#)):

What's interesting is that we often think about the results of this work through terms like retention increase and graduation increase improvements. And absolutely we want to have better retention, persistence, and completion, but I think there's other more subtle results of this approach to student success like improving student engagement. I've heard that from multiple partners who have talked to about their student success work, is that when they reach out to students just in time using data, that their response is usually not, I feel intruded upon the response is, oh my gosh, you see me and you can help me. And thank you so much for seeing me and helping me. And the other thing that I often hear is that it makes being able to see who needs help so much easier for success teams that usually don't have that kind of visibility into student needs and allows their workflows to be more efficient and more effective, and that they are better able to manage their often large caseloads and prioritize and have more equitable approaches to managing their caseload, or as opposed to having a one size fits all approach across their caseload. That often leads that same student who needs the help, who doesn't engage behind. And so it sounds to me like that you're seeing, seeing some of those kinds of results as well.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([33:24](#)):

Yep, absolutely. Most definitely. And we're definitely seeing those types of, we're trying to work smarter, not harder, right. And use the data that's in front of us. And we have made those significant gains and we've done those big chunks of improvement. And now it's the refining side. How do we refine to get to that next, that next level and be, I'll be honest. I mean, we've been at this, like I said, almost a decade. We have folks who have been through that entire journey with us, right. That whole time where it's an academic advisor or a program coordinator or an associate director, whomever, it might be, um, in one of our programs, they've been here for this long haul and, and they're tired, right. Everyone's tired and everyone's, we've been working so hard for so long. And then the pandemic just made the whole world exhausted and having to pivot and do things.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([34:13](#)):

And so now it is, yes, we, we wanna continue to evolve. Change is always good, but let's do it in a way that make helps us to work smarter and not harder. And let's use the data to help us. And wouldn't, isn't it better to be able to do the work that we wanna do and do it with intentionality and focus to where we get that greater impact versus let's just, let's just do what we've always done. We're not changing up really what we're doing. We're just changing up how we're bringing in the students and, and identifying those students to come in and, and, and get us utilize the services that we have. And so absolutely with our academic advising team, several years back, we started with, when we centralized and consolidated all of our academic advising, it used to be in all the colleges that used to be college based.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([35:09](#)):

We've had several years now of a centralized type of approach, where again, we use that same kind of basic standards of care concept. And we said, all students need a, B and C, but now we're at the point to where we can say, okay, we've done those big level things. And there's a couple, we need to keep some of that, but we also need to now add in those nuances of what your unique caseload, your unique students need in giving the academic advisors, the training and the autonomy and the freedom, to be able to determine what that is. We were not there five, six years ago. We weren't ready for that. This it's a huge long journey. You have to be willing to be patient and say, okay, here's this this step. And we're gonna make sure we get steps one, two, and three done this year.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([36:01](#)):

Then we'll get steps four and five next year and on and on. And so now we are at that point where everyone's got their basic campaigns and, and outreaches that they do to keep that needle moving the way it has been historically. But now what are those nuances? And how can we, if I see that the engagement patterns have changed, um, for this small population of my caseload, I know that I can address it this way, because I feel like I've had the training and, and the autonomy to be able to do that. And so that's where we are now. And it's really exciting because it's not. So there is some script to it, but it's not so prescriptive that everyone's a robot, right. That there's that sense of I'm a professional in this field. And I should be able to make some of those assumptions, but we had to have the data to be able to do that. And so we've built upon that journey for a really long time, but it's exciting. It's exciting in a timely place to be right now for us.

Katy Oliveira ([37:04](#)):

Yeah. It's empowering people to do their highest and best work in a coordinated, efficient way. It's pretty amazing. Well, we've covered a lot of ground. I wanna leave space before we wrap up for you to share any other lessons learned that you think are important for leaders in a similar situation or trying to do similar work that you've managed to do over the course of this last 10 years?

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([37:26](#)):

I think some of the key pieces as we've looked back over the years, one is I think first and foremost, having a regular meeting of individuals who oversee units that are not just what one might typically think are student success, but that are all contributing toward the success of our students is very, very important. So I think getting people in a room together and meeting regularly in everyone, knowing what their piece of that pie and that puzzle is and how they contribute to that. And then knowing that in such a way that they can go back to their respective teams and do the same. So our team knows how we work with strategic enrollment. We know how we work with student affairs. We know how we work with academic innovation and so on. So I think that's very important. You have to make sure that you're all everyone's facing the same direction.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([38:29](#)):

Everyone's looking at the same target. And sometimes that's not always the case. People are looking all around. And so you have to make sure that everyone's looking at the same target and working together regularly in communication. How do we all get there? Okay. That's, that's the foundational piece that has to happen. And that's, that's a huge piece and that's not easy to do. We all report up to our provost. And so it's easier when everyone reports to the same person that makes life a little bit easier in that way, but that's very, very important. I would say, secondly, that you need some type of student success platform, some type of technology. That's going to give you the data that you need at your fingertips in real time having to say, I need a report and I'll get that report in three weeks, and then you get the report and then it takes a week to look at it.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([39:24](#)):

And then it takes a couple weeks to action on it that problem's gone. <laugh>, it's a new problem now. And so how do you make sure that you've got real time data and dashboards to be able to quickly look at and assess, and you've got the right folks who are utilizing and have access to that dashboard and understand what is being conveyed on those dashboards or the, in that, in that type of data and huge, huge piece that I would say are foundational to being able to do the, the work that you wanna do. You can have any kind of organizational structure, you can have any type of, of approach, but, um, of how

you wanna address things. And because universities look different, every university looks somewhat different, but if everyone's at an institution has their eye on the same target, they've all got the same message.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([40:16](#)):

They're all working together. And they're all using the similar data to help drive that. And everyone has their role or their piece in that. Then that's going to help that train or that engine move down the road a lot quicker than if you didn't. And so that's where we found our successes. I believe in, in such a quick way, is that we have done that. And we did the groundwork for that as we were building out our intentional services and programs to meet the needs of what the data was telling us, but it's not a one year you're gonna solve the world's problems in a year. It's a multiyear process. And we are just now seeing the fruits of our labor that we did in 2014 and 2015 with our six year graduation rates. We're just now seeing it, but we're like, and we're sitting back going, oh, okay.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([41:07](#)):

You know, here, we just bumped up for percentage points, but that was from work. We did six years ago. Right. So I can only imagine where we're gonna be in a couple years when we start to see the outcomes of this work, that we're even the more refined work that we're doing. But I think that's another important piece is just to understand. And, and sometimes some senior level, um, administrators, that's hard to say, well, it's gonna take a little bit of time. We're all working, but let's put it in digestible chunks of things that we can do and start to see some low hanging fruit. You start to get that momentum from those low hanging fruit, and then you can build out and, and go from there. And so that's, that's the approach we've taken and it's proven successful for us. And so, um, those are the things that I would say though, that you have to put at the foundation are getting everyone together, getting those unified goals, getting those, everyone at that target, and then making sure you've got the data and the training to understand the data.

Katy Oliveira ([42:05](#)):

Yeah, it's so important too, because a lot of the indicators that we usually rely on to know where we're, how we're doing are so lagging that having access to data, that you can see the impact on something that's more of a leading indicator like persistence at least gives you some KPIs to help you refine and to do more nuance work. As you say, to continue on in the interim that you're moving and tracking in the right direction before you have data like a six year graduation rate, that makes, makes great sense. Thank you so much for coming on the show and sharing how you've built a collaborative culture of care on your campus. I know that this is a topic that is top of mind at a lot of institutions, and that is part of, of a challenge of doing this work. So I really appreciate it.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([42:51](#)):

Thank you for having me. We're excited to be able to share our story and we'll continue on this journey.

Katy Oliveira ([42:57](#)):

I can't wait to see how it shakes out and where it goes.

Katy Oliveira ([43:02](#)):

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