

# DRIVING

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TOWARD A DEGREE

2020

**FROM SILOS TO SYNERGY:  
THE IMPORTANCE OF  
COLLABORATION**

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RESEARCH BRIEF #3

JUNE 16, 2020



Bay View Analytics

# FROM SILOS TO SYNERGY: THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLABORATION

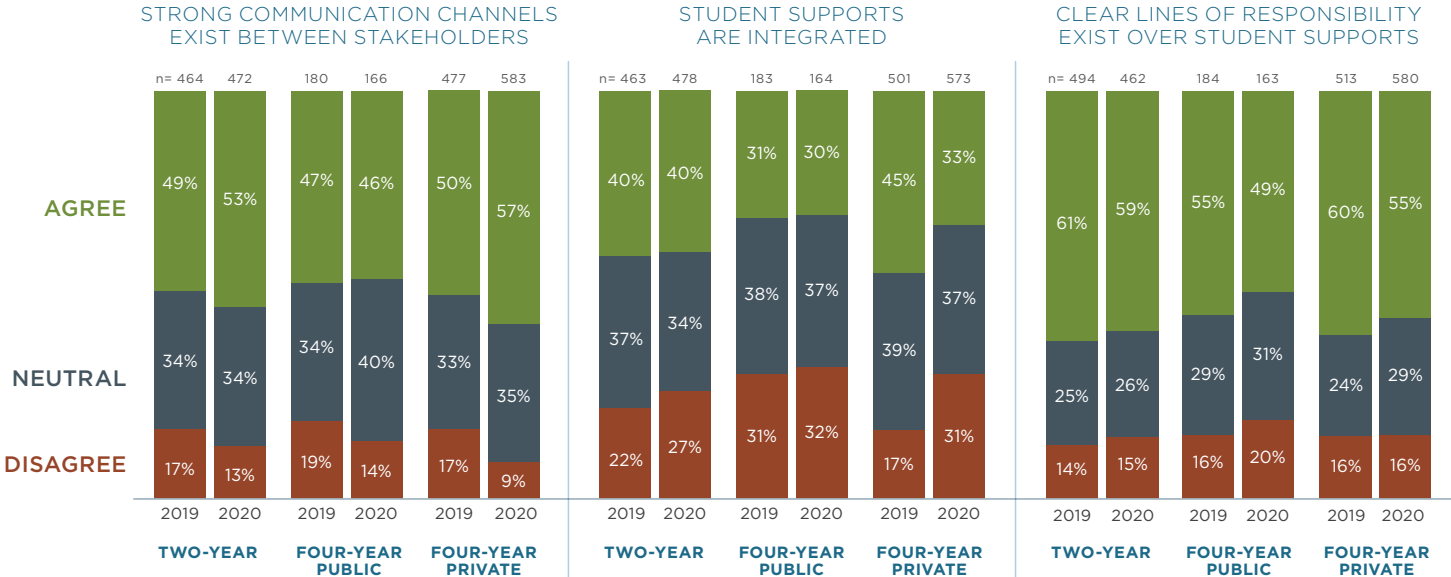
Beginning in Spring 2020, Tyton Partners published research briefs examining findings from the 2020 *Driving Toward a Degree* initiative. These research briefs highlighted the shifting institutional landscape and increasing adoption of holistic student support models to meet the needs of the 21st century student body. Institutions are adopting collaboration to varying degrees and our analysis placed institutions in one of three clusters. In this research brief, we dive deeper into collaboration as a fundamental component to a student-centered approach.

Institutions reporting the highest levels of collaboration share the following attributes:

- Clear lines of responsibility over student supports
- Strong communication channels between stakeholders
- Integrated student supports (i.e., interconnection across the student experience)

In 2020, institutions reported clear lines of responsibility, strong communication, and integrated student supports at generally lower rates than in 2019, indicating a decreased focus on greater collaboration in support of their holistic student supports. Moreover, collaboration remains lower than expected across institution types. When examining this data through the lens of institution type, four-year institutions notably reported less clear lines of responsibility and integrated supports than the prior year.

## ATTRIBUTES OF COLLABORATION BY INSTITUTION TYPE, 2019-2020

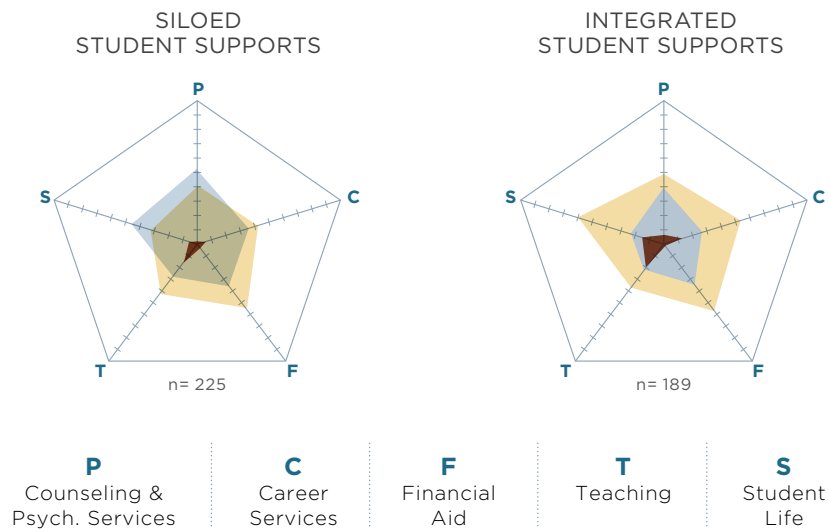


Despite institutions reporting clearer lines of responsibility, stronger communication channels, and more integrated student supports, functional silos persist. Limited engagement between stakeholders remains an obstacle to the achievement of integrated and holistic student supports. By not pursuing meaningful collaboration, departments from academic advising to career services to counseling & psychological support are foregoing the opportunity to better accommodate student needs.

What does this look like in practice? The radar charts below display the degrees and levels of engagement through the lens of academic advising for institutions reporting integrated versus siloed student supports. Notably, 54% of academic advisors at integrated institutions report directly providing and regularly referring students to career service counselors, compared to 42% of advisors at siloed institutions.

## RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ACADEMIC ADVISING AND OTHER STUDENT SUPPORTS

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FOLLOWING STUDENT SUPPORTS AT YOUR INSTITUTION? FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF...ADVISING



- I directly provide this student support
- I directly provide and regularly refer students to others providing this support
- I occasionally refer students to others providing this support

### LEGEND

Shaded areas represent the percentage of respective student support stakeholders who report direct engagement and/or regular coordination with other supports or occasionally refer students to other student supports staff

Levels of relationship are on an 100% scale; the dotted line represents if the level is 100% "engagement"

In an ideal scenario of robust engagement, the shaded yellow portions would cover larger areas of the radar charts. Today, these modest blips indicate greater engagement is paramount if institutions hope to achieve holistic student supports.

# HOW CAN YOUR INSTITUTION REDESIGN ITS STUDENT SUPPORTS TO IMPROVE STUDENT SUCCESS?

Driving Toward a Degree is a data-driven resource designed to help institutions pursue integrated student supports. Since 2016, data has been collected and analyzed via longitudinal primary research studies by Tyton Partners, with the support of the Bay View Analytics and in partnership with NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising, Achieving the Dream (ATD), and the Reinvention Collaborative. Contact Tyton Partners ([drivetodegree@tytonpartners.com](mailto:drivetodegree@tytonpartners.com)) to take advantage of the Driving Toward a Degree initiative as a data-driven resource for improved student success through supports redesign. To learn more about our organization, visit [tytonpartners.com](http://tytonpartners.com).

We welcome the opportunity to help institutions and suppliers alike address the gaps in their policies, practices, and technological products, and to assess current capabilities and identify future needs. To learn more and access other research briefs in this series or prior year studies, visit [drivetodegree.org](http://drivetodegree.org)

We also invite you to share this series and your perspective on holistic student supports via the Twitter hashtag [#drivetodegree](https://twitter.com/drivetodegree).

This publication was created with feedback from the Advising Success Network (ASN). The ASN is a collection of five partner organizations working to transform higher education advising structures and systems to improve graduation rates and advance socioeconomic and racial equity. Led by NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, partners include The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (ASSCU), Achieving the Dream (ATD), EDUCAUSE, NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising, and The National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition. For more information about the ASN, please visit [advisingsuccessnetwork.org](http://advisingsuccessnetwork.org).

*Driving toward a Degree* and the Advising Success Network are made possible thanks to generous support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

**SEE RESEARCH BRIEF #1: *Collaboration is Crucial to Holistic Student Supports***

**SEE RESEARCH BRIEF #2: *Is Your College Student-Ready?***