




Student Engagement
Coaching for Persistence and Completion at
Indiana State University

CASE STUDY

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Improving student success and institutional cost-effectiveness

A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BUILT ON A SHARED COMMITMENT TO STUDENT AND INSTITUTIONAL SUCCESS

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The Institution

Indiana State University - 21st Century Scholars Student Population.



The Challenge

Improve student outcomes and leverage data and insights to tailor the student experience and make more informed decisions about resource allocation.



The Solution

A partnership with InsideTrack involving coaching for first-year students followed by targeted application of the intervention for subsequent cohorts based on data analysis.



Coaching for persistence and completion

In addition to collecting valuable data, coaching helped students transition to campus life and build skills for long-term success.

The pilot year focused on collecting data to identify how best to allocate coaching resources and tailor the student experience.

- Two groups of 1,000 randomly selected, demographically balanced, first-time full-time freshmen treated equally aside from one receiving proactive coaching through their first year
- Coaching delivery focused on student persistence towards a degree and getting the most out of the college experience
- Coaching topics included: goal setting, time management, building motivation, effective use of resources, applying classroom learning to the real world, planning and follow-through of administrative tasks, financial literacy, normalizing the student experience, and contingency planning



FOUNDATION FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS

Completion with a purpose

Coaching builds self-sufficiency, addresses issues early, and provides a safety net so stumbling blocks don't become insurmountable obstacles. Coaches assist students in building the knowledge, skills attitudes and beliefs for long-term success.

Students who work with a Coach are:

- More likely to engage with support resources
- More likely to recommend their institution to others
- More likely to adopt a growth mindset
- More realistic about their goals with a clear plan to achieve them
- More likely to follow through on action items in a timely manner
- More proactive in pursuing financial aid, scholarship, leadership, study abroad, and internship opportunities
- More effective in their communication with faculty and staff
- More financial aid literate and likely to remain in good standing
- Less likely to feel isolated and more receptive to mental health support

CREATING “FIRST-OF-MANY-GENERATIONS” STUDENTS

Closing the achievement gap through public-private partnership and operational consulting

Together, InsideTrack and Indiana State University turn insights into action to maximize student impact, equity, diversity, and sustainability. Data analysis from the pilot year allowed Indiana State University to target coaching toward specific populations while implementing process improvements to cost-effectively benefit all students


- The second year of the partnership focused on 21st Century Scholars (first-generation, low-income students) and students who evidenced the greatest positive benefit from coaching
- 1:1 financial counseling with a qualified advisor
- Required advisor consultation prior to dropping a course
- Midterm grade reports are released sooner so students have time to seek support
- Streamlined campus-wide student outreach
- Grant funding from USA Funds to support coaching program

When registration opened, one student had three holds on his account. Initially discouraged and confused, with the support of his coach, the student took action to resolve the holds in time to register. Some holds were identified as being unnecessary obstacles to student persistence and policies are currently being reconsidered as a result.

“The coaching has helped students to increase self-efficacy, to work against that sense of not belonging, of being an imposter. InsideTrack coaching helps students develop cognitive and emotional skills to navigate a complex system on their own.”

— Linda Maule, dean of Indiana State's University College program for first-year students





“If not for coaching, I’d be trying to retake the classes I failed my freshman year.”

— Loretta Stewart, 21st Century Scholar, Indiana State University Student and Indianapolis native

PROVEN RESULTS

A cost-effective approach that's good for students and the institution



+5.9%

difference in retention for 21st Century Scholars who received coaching compared to those who did not receive coaching



15%

uncoached students were 15% less likely to resolve account holds in time for registration than coached students



100% Anticipated Payback

increased revenue from tuition and state performance-based funding initiatives are on track to offset initial investment in the program





InsideTrack is a mission-driven nonprofit that fuels positive change by empowering and advancing all learners to achieve their educational and career goals through the transformative power of coaching. We help people get the education they need to enhance well-being, create opportunity and secure meaningful employment — ultimately facilitating economic and social mobility. Since 2001, we have served over 3.1 million learners, partnering with more than 350 institutions and organizations to directly improve enrollment, retention, completion, and career advancement — tailoring our coaching outcomes to fit the needs of our partners and the learners they support. Our coaching methodology is evidence-based and research-confirmed, supporting all types of learners at every stage of their journey — especially those who face systemic barriers to postsecondary success. We are a catalyst for transformational impact, ultimately empowering learners and the organizations who serve them.



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