



STUDENT SUCCESS

2016-2017 Annual Report
Student Affairs & Student Success



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Dalton
Public Health
Dalton was referred to an academic advocate by his college advisor who had concerns about his progression. The advocate learned that he needed classroom accommodations due to a hand injury and facilitated the process. She also connected Dalton with Care Team partners to address other challenges, helping him to get back on track with his studies.



“...we believe every student can succeed if given the opportunity...”

Our highest priority is the success of our students. We devote unprecedented resources to support them so they can graduate on time with minimal debt. As we have enhanced our culture of caring, we have become a national leader in the areas of retention and graduation rates, and we have eliminated the graduation rate gap by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. At USF Tampa, we believe every student can succeed if given the opportunity to do so. And the success of every student will contribute to our university’s standing as a national top-tier research institution and a Preeminent Research University in the state of Florida. Our students’ success is our success.

Dr. Judy Genshaft
USF System President

Temiloluwa

Mechanical Engineering

To address financial predicaments, senior leadership established a special fund to assist struggling students. With just two semesters left, unexpected financial barriers were going to halt the graduation plans of this high-achieving Nigerian student. The Persistence Committee helped Teme with the support he needed to complete his degree.

“...student success does not belong to a particular office...it is a shared responsibility...”

“...the right support to the right student at the right time.”



Over the last five years, the University of South Florida has become a national model for student success, leading all public research universities in the nation for increases in four-year and six-year graduation rates for undergraduates. Today, our four-year graduation rate stands at 60 percent and our six-year rate stands at 71 percent.

As a result of a campus-wide cultural shift at USF, student success does not belong to a particular office or vice president—it is a shared responsibility, embedded within each department and college. This philosophy is at the heart of our work as we continue to push ourselves to improve the student experience so that all students—regardless of zip code—have a rewarding path to graduation and become well-educated global citizens.

Dr. Ralph Wilcox
Provost & Executive Vice President



In 2016-17, USF identified, created and implemented what just may be the most impactful model in higher education to deliver the right support to the right student at the right time. By unlocking the insightful information in our data, we are able to identify specific students as they begin to show signs of challenge. We proactively connect with them, identify the issues affecting their performance and well-being, and coordinate with campus resources and programs to engage the support needed for the student to excel. This targeted caring approach is the culmination of eight years of student success initiatives and will drive our future achievements.

Dr. Paul Dosal
Vice President
Student Affairs & Student Success

INTRODUCTION

From 2011 to 2015, the University of South Florida® - Tampa increased its six-year graduation rate for first-time-in-college (FTIC) students by nearly 17 percentage points, the largest increase for any public institution in the country, according to the Chronicle of Higher Education.*

In 2011, just more than half of the nearly 4,000 undergraduates who were first-time freshmen six years earlier received their degrees. By 2015, the six-year graduation rate had risen to 68.4 percent before continuing its climb to 71* percent for the 2011 cohort.

USF’s four-year graduation rate has also soared from 43 percent in 2009 to nearly 60 percent in 2017. The first-year student retention rate reached 90 percent for the 2016 cohort, an all-time high. In the process, USF has also eliminated the achievement gap for race, ethnicity and income. Black students and lower income students graduate at rates equal or higher to white and higher income students.

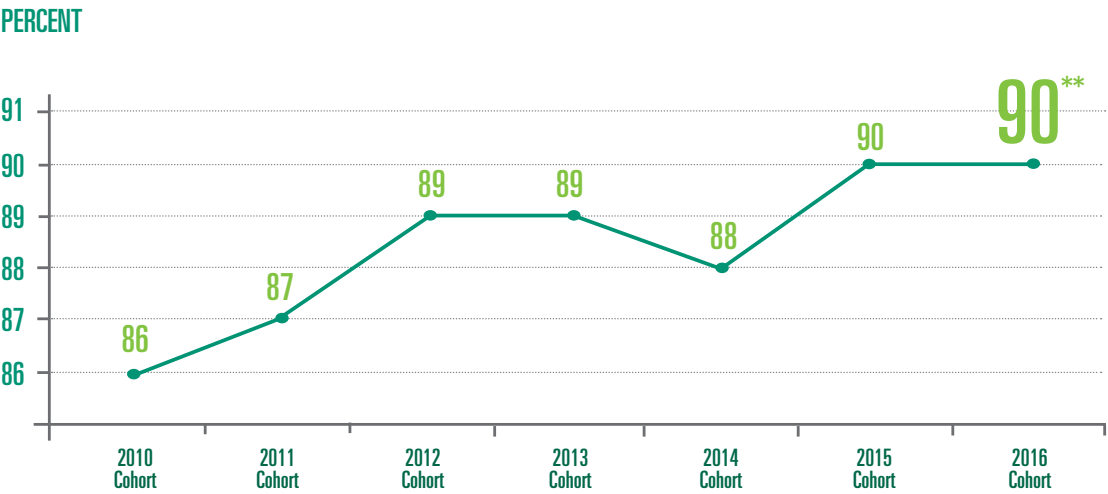
These achievements have earned the university recognition from Eduventures, The Education Trust, and other organizations and publications nationally. By achieving a six-year graduation rate of at least 70 percent and a retention rate of 90 percent, USF wrapped up 2017 qualified for state Preeminence, a designation reserved for the highest performing institutions in the State University System.

These dramatic improvements are the product of a student success movement, an intentional transformation of institutional culture and practices launched in 2009. Based on the well-established fundamental precept that every student enrolled at USF would succeed given the opportunity to do so, the university’s student success efforts focused on the full integration and deployment of predictive analytics, coordinated case management, and an agile technology platform during the 2016-17 academic year.

This annual report will highlight the innovative work that drove these impressive gains and

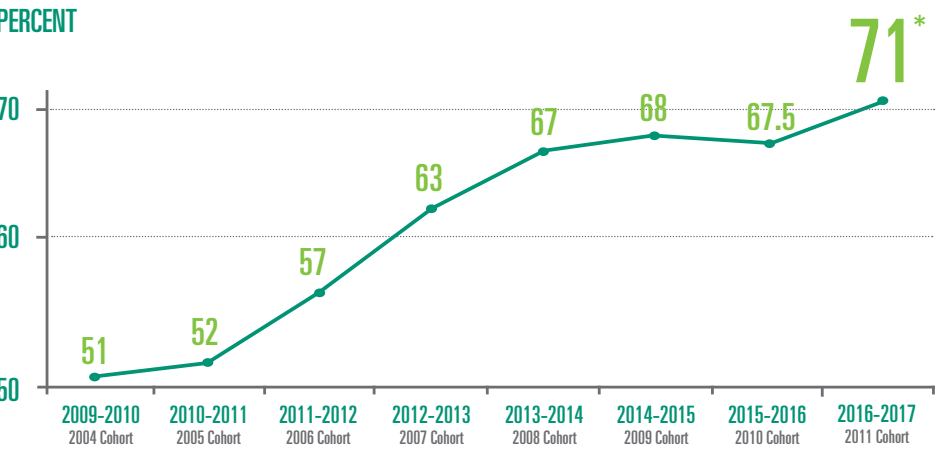
established USF as a national model of student success. By creating cross-functional collaborative teams, utilizing predictive analytics, and creating a culture of care across the campus, USF moved the institution off a “performance plateau” during the year and positioned itself for state and national preeminence.

FIRST-YEAR RETENTION RATE

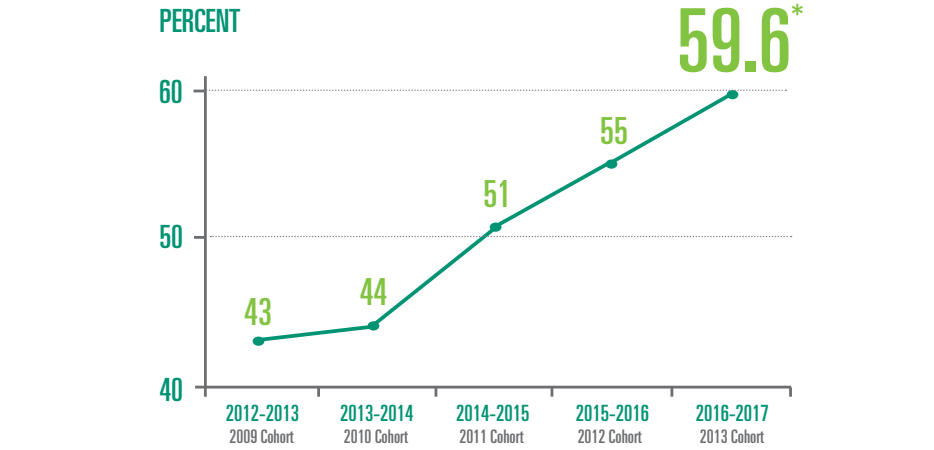


*Bauman, Dan (2017, Aug. 13). How 3 Colleges Improved Graduation Rates. Retrieved from www.chronicle.com
** Source IPEDS: Data reported follows IPEDS methodology but are based on internal preliminary data.

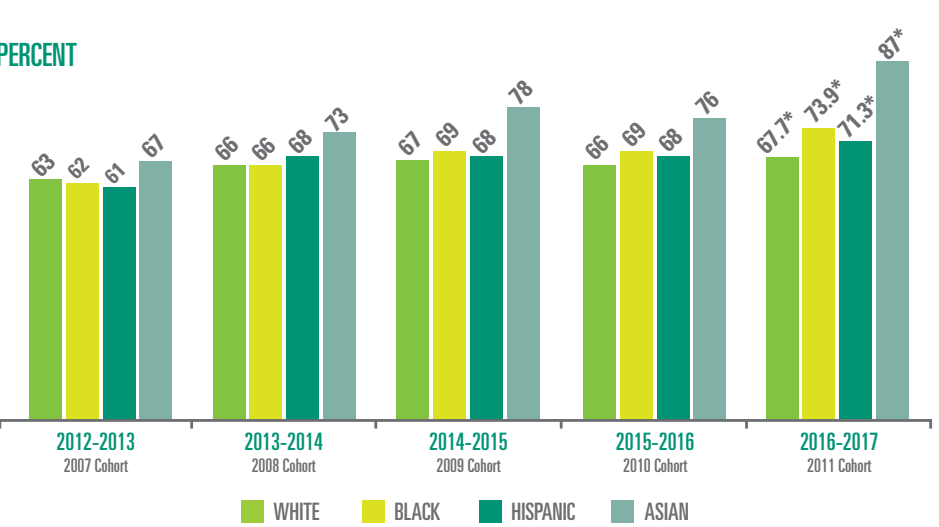
SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATE



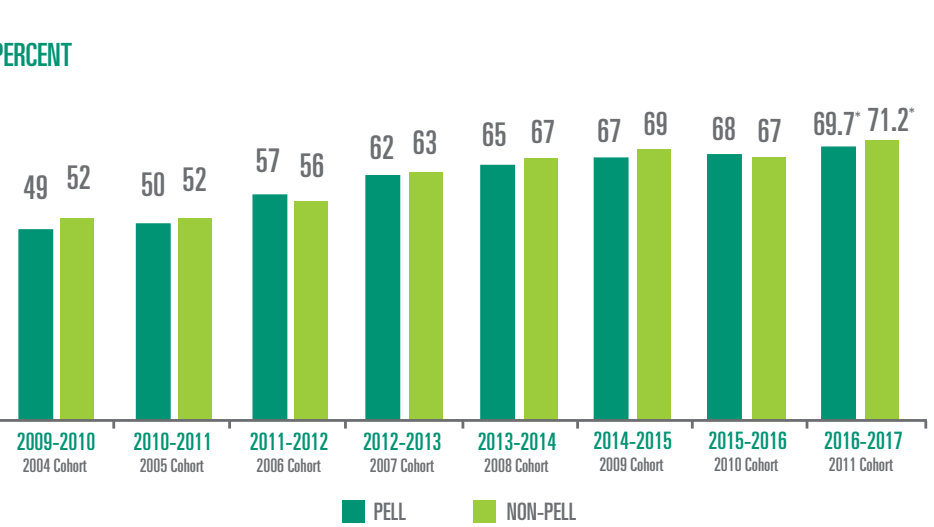
FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE



SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATE: RACE & ETHNICITY



SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATE: PELL VS. NON-PELL



* Source IPEDS: Data reported follows IPEDS methodology but are based on internal preliminary data.



THE CHALLENGE

USF headed into the 2016-17 academic year determined to achieve a 70 percent six-year graduation rate and a 90 percent retention rate. In spite of numerous programs, policies and services implemented, these critical metrics remained short of the university's goals and those set by the State of Florida, which, if achieved, would unlock significant performance-based funding and establish USF as a preeminent institution under state guidelines.

To move the institution off its “plateau,” policymakers and support personnel had to find ways to help eighty more students persist into the second year. By conceptualizing the challenge in this way, the retention and graduation rate targets became both feasible and personalized. If individual students could be identified when they would benefit most from assistance or extra incentives, then the university would attain its strategic objectives.

THE PLAN

From its early adoption of homegrown predictive analytics in 2012, which focused on first-time in college (FTIC) student retention, USF leadership recognized the potential of data to help sift efficiently through a population of nearly 43,000 students to identify individual students needing help to progress and, ultimately, graduate in six years or less. 2016-17 was to be the year that a recently formed Persistence Committee and a team of student success advocates would really harness the power and potential of its predictive analytics platform to achieve USF's retention and graduation goals.

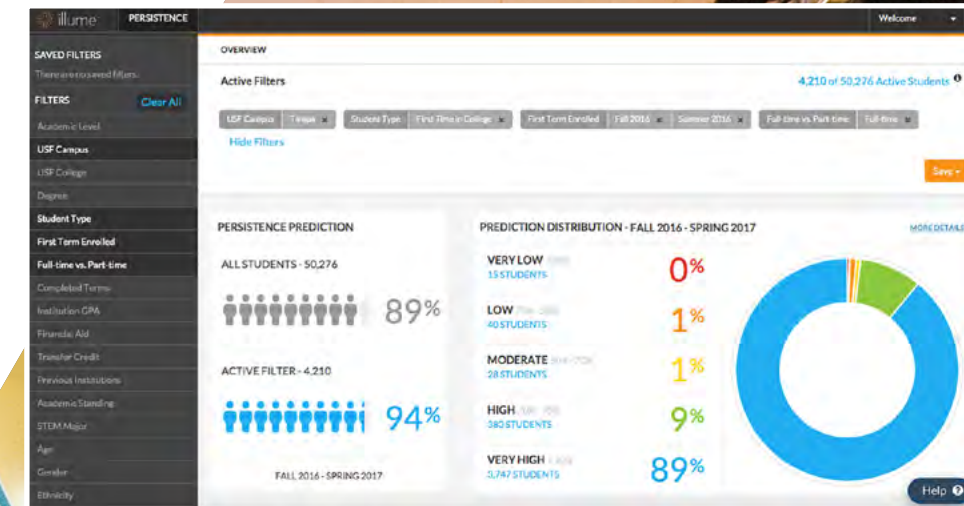
Through a partnership with Civitas Learning, the innovative Texas-based education technology firm, USF began to deploy the company's predictive analytics application Illume® and Inspire for Advisors online in 2015. The platforms captured more than ten years of data from USF's student information and the learning management systems to analyze over three hundred variables to predict the likelihood of students' persisting and graduating. The applications, however, only “shine the light” on student performance; they do not “tell” administrators how to “fix” problems and improve student performance. Hence, university personnel had to figure out how to set up the appropriate structures and processes to benefit from the Civitas platforms.

After going through one “false start,” administrators recognized the need to form a cross-functional team of support personnel who were in a position to develop timely and appropriate practices derived from the actionable insights provided by Illume and Inspire for Advisors.

In early 2016, USF personnel began to explore new ways to utilize the lists of at-risk students generated by the analytics tools, which used “live” data to segment students by cohort and their probability of persistence. Requests for data—like persistence probability for any given segment of the student population—now took minutes to complete as compared to the days or weeks that it previously took with disparate systems, programming, and manual processes. The real-time reports, pulled by USF's Office of Decision Support, provided support personnel with a list of individual students in the 2016 or 2017 cohort who were predicted not to persist—a level of precision that USF had not utilized prior to Illume's implementation.

With retention and graduation goals set, USF's student success outreach personnel focused their efforts on students in the two key cohorts who Civitas rated ‘Moderate’, ‘Low’ and ‘Very Low’ to persist.

Civitas Learning's Illume applies predictive analytics to categorize students by their likelihood of persistence. Students with Very Low, Low and Moderate Risk levels were the focus of proactive student success initiatives.



EVOLUTION OF THE PLAN

With at-risk FTIC students identified, student success outreach personnel went to work. Academic advocates began the process by conducting a “triage” of the list of at-risk students with information provided from other reports or departments and by contacting (or requesting contact with) individual students to determine the hurdles each student faced. Student outreach could be a ‘soft’ touch handled by a USF representative with a connection with the student (such as a Resident Assistant, Orientation Leader, advisor, etc.) or a more formal one-on-one meeting with the advocate or a representative within a specific support office. Identified routine issues were resolved by nudging the student to take action and/or by staff conducting intra-office communications, transactions or referrals.

Complex issues requiring a greater level of departmental collaboration or procedure/policy review were discussed in weekly meetings with the Persistence Committee, a cross functional team of decision-makers formed early in 2016 charged to address retention issues. Committee members would take responsibility for resolving an issue within their respective departments, facilitating resolution with other units on campus, or providing guidance for the advocates or others to take action.

As the work of the Persistence Committee progressed, a few people began to realize that they were adopting a case management approach to student success. This approach had been developed to some extent by USF and some of its colleagues as part of the Integrated Planning and Advising

for Student Success (iPASS) project (an initiative funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and managed by EDUCAUSE) and also by the USF Students of Concern Action Team on a more limited scale.

The cross-unit collaboration was proving to be effective in resolving student issues. If a more formalized internal structure and technology platform were to be implemented, USF could intentionally adapt case management techniques from the health care industry and scale up its efforts to serve all undergraduate students. With this goal in mind, senior leadership began to pull together a team to articulate a new vision for student success, one that deliberately borrowed from case management techniques to coordinate the delivery of services to individual students.

The cross-functional Persistence Committee meets regularly to discuss and resolve complicated student cases, policy and procedural issues, and other topics impeding students’ success.

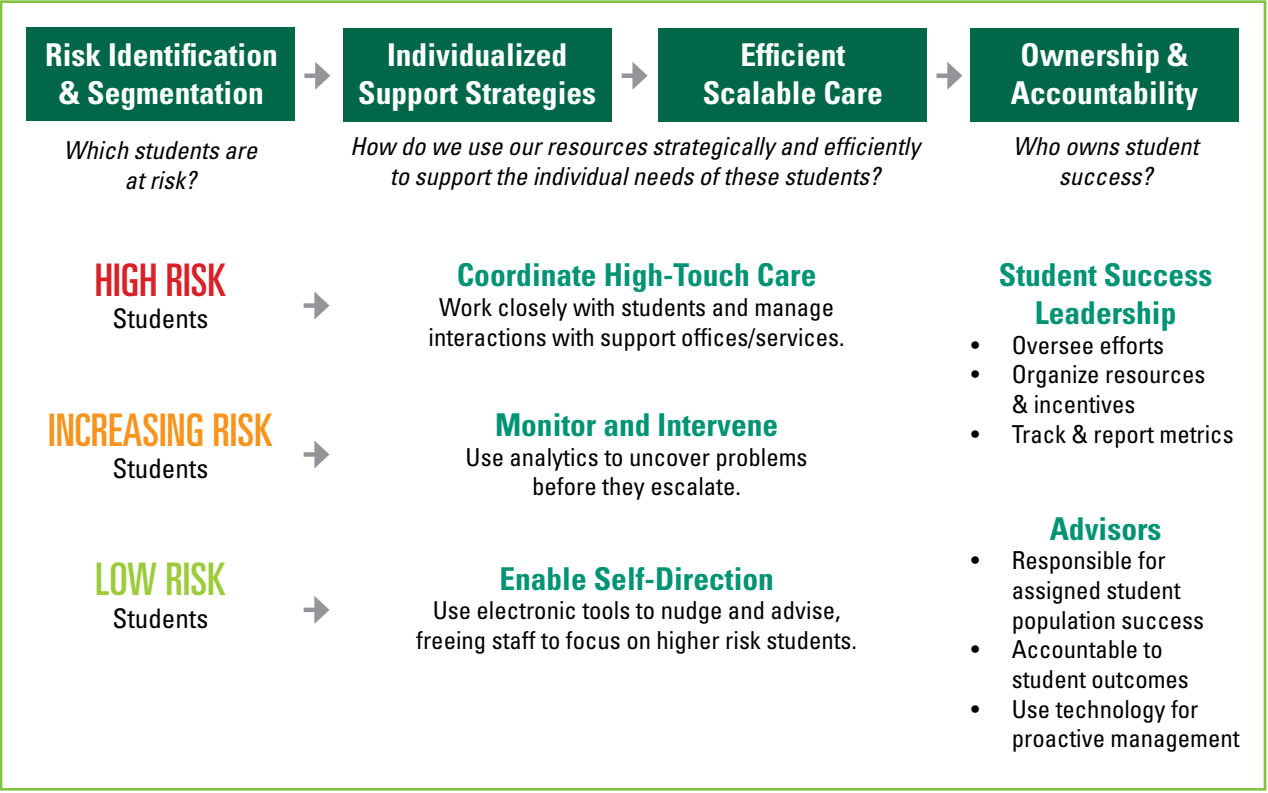
PERSISTENCE COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION

- Academic Advising
- Academic Advocacy
- Academic Foundations
- Career Services
- Cashiers Office
- College of Behavioral & Community Sciences
- Dean of Students
- Decision Support
- Financial Aid
- Library
- Male Student Success
- New Student Connections
- Orientation
- Residential Education
- Student Ombuds
- Student Well-being
- Student Outreach & Support
- Undergraduate Studies
- USF World

ADOPTION OF CASE MANAGEMENT

As defined by the American Case Management Association, case management is “a collaborative process of assessment, planning, facilitation, care coordination, evaluation, and advocacy for options and services to meet an individual’s...needs through communication and available resources to promote quality cost effective outcomes.” With similarly aligned student success processes, USF readily adopted the new model with academic advocates serving as the central point of contact (the case manager role).

The Office of Academic Advocacy hired additional advocates, an academic coach, and an academic advisor to staff the expanded function. In addition to the Persistence Committee, more than 200 contacts in various units across campus, who were historically involved in resolving identified student issues, gladly identified themselves as a Care Team, which greatly expanded the collaborative network.



The Office of Academic Advocacy is at the core of USF’s case management model, serving as case managers to students needing support.



One-on-one guidance from her academic advocate and support from members of the Care Team helped this student to declare a major, get registered for classes and utilize academic and wellness resources to get back on track to graduation.

CASE MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION

PERSISTENCE COMMITTEE

OFFICE OF ACADEMIC ADVOCACY:

- Director
- Assistant Director
- Data Specialist
- Academic Advocates:
 - First Year Advocates (2)
 - First Year Academic Coach
 - Exploratory Curriculum Majors Advisor
 - Transfer Advocates (3)
 - FTIC Cohort Advocates (4)

CARE TEAM:

- Academic Advising
- Academic Advocacy
- Academic Foundations Instruction
- Academic Success Center
- Career Services
- Cashiers Office
- Financial Aid
- Library
- New Student Connections
- Orientation
- Residential Education
- Student Ombuds
- Student Well-being
- Student Outreach & Support

POWERING WITH TECHNOLOGY

With hundreds of students to address and multiple contacts and action items for each student, it quickly became apparent that a technology solution was necessary to facilitate the case management model.

Sidney Fernandes, USF System vice president for technology and chief information officer, was familiar with case management technology from his experiences at USF Health and offered his full partnership to develop the tool.

Already engaged with student success initiatives with the integration of Civitas Illume, Fernandes and team envisioned a platform that would gather all available data, track individual student cases, facilitate communications, connect resources, and provide the information that student success support personnel needed to do their job well. They also saw value in the platform serving as a reporting tool for administrators and, eventually, a self-service hub for students to access their own information.

In 2015, IT engaged with Appian, a low-code digital transformation platform company, to automate complex campus processes and workflows. With no time-consuming traditional computer programming involved, the Appian platform allowed IT to build

upon existing applications and data with speed. Having utilized the platform for a smaller project, IT was ready to put it to use for a case management tool.

Dr. Dosai, Persistence Committee members, academic advocates and other student success stakeholders joined IT for a two-week Sprint Zero initial planning session in the fall of 2016 to develop an agreed upon project scope for the new tool. Using the Appian platform and following Scrum methodology, IT impressively delivered the first iteration of USF’s case management system, Archivum Insights, in just 12 weeks. The system rolled out in the spring of 2017 to academic advocates, academic advisors, Persistence Committee members and other units supporting the student success initiatives.

Archivum Insights bridged various complex platforms (i.e. student information and learning management systems); integrated with the Civitas Learning software; featured state-of-the-art design; and addressed the functional needs of academic advocates, academic advisors, and other student support personnel.

The academic advocates, as well as the Persistence Committee and the Care Team members, were now able to digitally access key student data in one place (including the Civitas Learning tools), create and manage student cases, add and review notes about students, and create and track referrals to other campus partners. The case management system transformed the previous paper, spreadsheet and email intensive process into a user-friendly, intuitive digital dashboard.

In the summer of 2017, a second phase resulted in the development of a student dashboard that, when launched, will allow students to see their academic standing and identify and communicate with their pre-assigned academic advocate and Care Team members for proactive assistance. Additional enhancements and functionalities—as determined through collaborative planning sessions with all stakeholders at the table—will continue to be incorporated into this highly flexible and evolving platform that is currently being used by student support personnel.



“The complexities of campus technologies and data sources presented an optimal opportunity for our digital transformation platform to show its value and muscle. The resulting system, Archivum Insights, is a flexible, mobile application that addresses evolving user needs and streamlines the university’s case management processes. Since the launch of Archivum Insights, the university has leveraged Appian to address other processes on campus.”

Robert Kramer
General Manager - Appian



The IT Archivum Insights team discusses development in the morning’s stand up Scrum meeting.

“We didn’t want to be a ‘bits and bytes’ organization. IT wanted to be an organization that could partner to help our students succeed.”

That’s why we adopted the Agile approach to software development and the Scrum method—to transform our organizational culture to deliver. Agile is an attitude, with openness, commitment, courage, and focus as core values. Scrum is the framework to execute with a daily meeting of a small cross-functional team, focused on moving a project forward in two-week sprints to completion in 12 weeks. The development of Archivum Insights proved the methodology and reflected our cultural shift to true collaborative teamwork.

Sidney Fernandes
USF System Vice President for Technology and Chief Information Officer

The Office of Decision Support is a critical partner in the process of integrating university data with its technology tools.



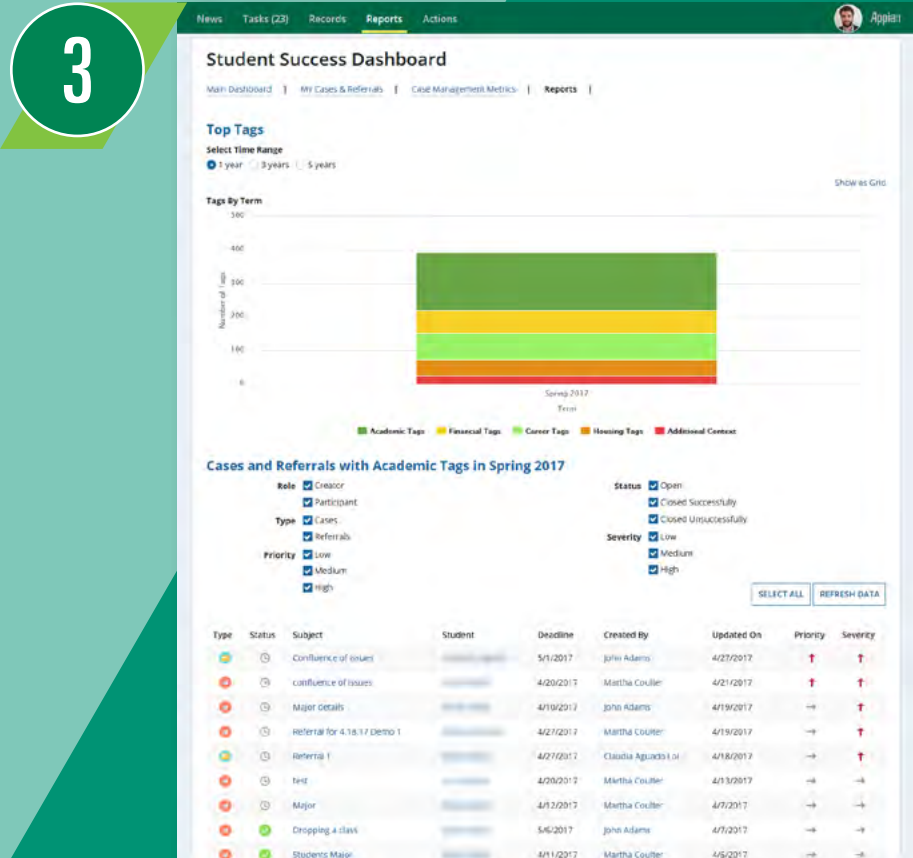
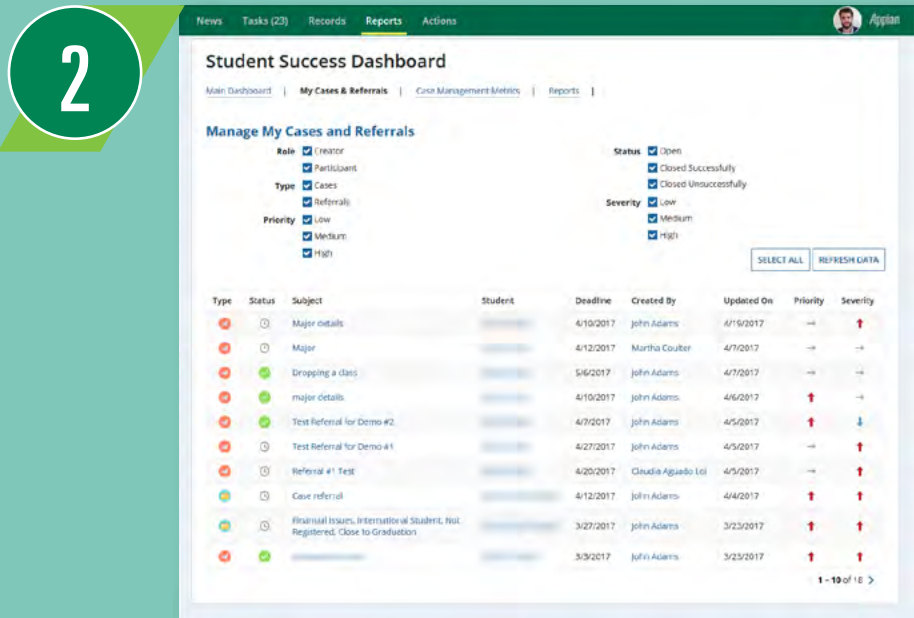
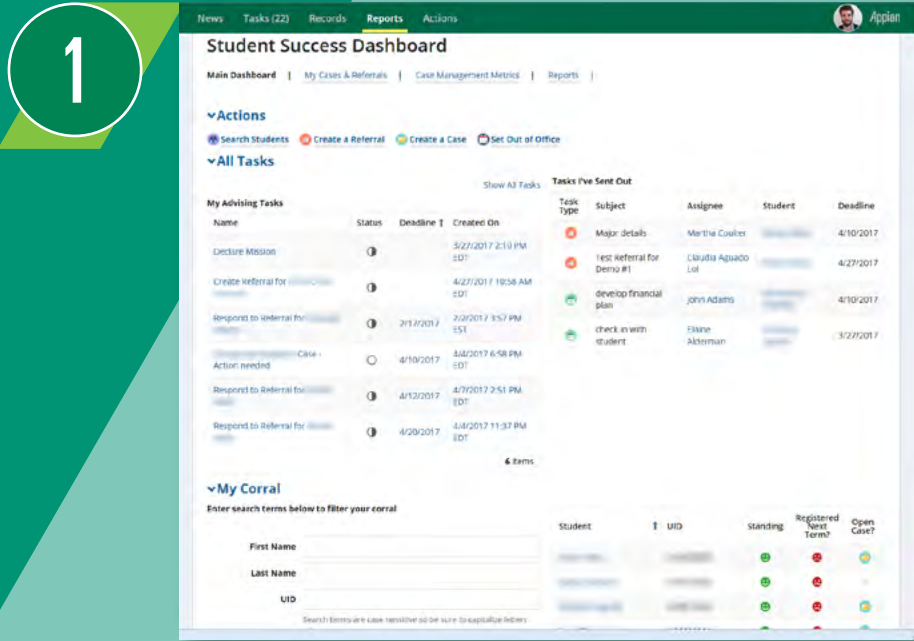
“Looking forward, we will be seeking opportunities to integrate additional data into Archivum Insights for a clearer and more complete picture of a student’s experience and challenges.”

Event and program attendance, service usage, referrals—data that will help us to not only support our students when they begin to show challenges, but also that can help us to develop proactive communications, services and programs to address challenges before they arise. Archivum Insights has the opportunity to become an even more powerful tool for making data-informed decisions for timely action.

Valeria García
Associate Vice President
Office of Decision Support



ARCHIVUM INSIGHTS SCREENSHOTS



These screenshots provide a basic understanding of how the case management tool assists support personnel in managing and tracking students and their progress.

- 1 **Main Dashboard:** Academic advocates and other support personnel can search students, create a new case, create a referral or review student cases they are currently working.
- 2 **My Cases & Referrals:** Users can review case information, status of actions with collaborators and prioritize their work and follow up.
- 3 **Reports:** Users can generate insightful reports on their cases easily with a few keystrokes.

THE RESULTS

The 2016-17 academic year proved to be pivotal for USF as its student success movement was re-energized with the powerful combination of predictive analytics, case management, and a new technology platform. The combination was put to the test in May when the university kicked off its Finish in Four Summer Initiative to encourage students to graduate in four years by taking their final credit hours over the summer rather than extend into the fall semester.

Academic advocates utilized Archivum Insights to identify qualifying students, then coordinated outreach with the Care Team to recruit and support participants. The tool kept the advocates and Care Team members informed as it facilitated the process and ongoing progress of the students in the program, something that would have been much more difficult to pull off in such a short timeframe previously. Finish in Four program results indicate that the program contributed to a four percentage point jump in USF's four-year graduation rate.



Brandon

Business Analytics & Information Systems

Far from home and family for the first time in his life, Brandon struggled in his first semester. Identified through predictive analytics, an academic advocate reached out to him, explored his interests, and connected him with a college and fraternity advisor. Brandon soon found himself comfortable on campus and with an academic direction.



OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

While the new initiatives in predictive analytics and case management occupied the attention of senior leadership in Academic Affairs, Student Affairs & Student Success, and Information Technology, the programs, practices, and policies that had been responsible for previous years' successes continued. Their impact cannot be overstated as they contributed to the on-going initiatives by strengthening and enhancing their own work in many different ways.

- Don't Stop, Don't Drop mini student grant program was funded.
- Course Redesign project was expanded.
- Care Team professional development training launched.
- New public private partnership Housing Village opened in fall 2017.
- Proactive financial aid counseling services worked with 558 students to resolve issues and contacted 1734 students to obtain needed documents.
- Conducted a phone campaign to remind 5416 first-time in college students to apply for federal financial aid.
- New Student Connections introduced peer coaching for high risk first-time in college students.
- New Student Connections expanded CampU, an extended orientation experience, to ACE student participants.
- Parent & Family Programs expanded family coaching support.
- Orientation launched a pre-enrollment portal for new undergraduate international students and special cohorts (ACE, SSS, athletes) to facilitate their onboarding success.
- Career Services major exploration program, career counseling courses, and graduate school pathways program were expanded to serve more students in making career decisions and preparing for them.
- A complete overhaul and redesign of the first-year seminar adjusted the focus to strong academic preparation, a renewed focus on study skills, and a more rigorous preparation for college-level classes.
- MWell4Success initiative was approved for implementation to address student mental health literacy.



CONCLUSION

2017 was the year USF pushed off its performance plateau and reached preeminence targets on graduation and retention rates, unlocking future state funding that will be used to further its strategic student success initiatives.

But USF’s achievements are not just numeric. At-risk students across the institution are experiencing higher quality, more personalized and effective outreach and guidance as the result of the university’s student success case management approach.

New initiatives are in the works to continue our progress and address our challenges, including enhancements to case management, Archivum Insights and our first-year student experience, as well as our male student persistence initiatives and the MWell4 Success program to address mental health literacy.

USF is proud that students are excelling, but the institution will not stop here—higher goals are being established as USF continues to move forward as a premier global university with student success its number one goal.



Student Success stakeholders come together for a Sprint Zero planning session for the next phase of Archivum Insights.

María

Cellular & Molecular Biology

María’s last year of college was threatened due to financial difficulties when civil unrest affected the currency of her home country, Venezuela. Determined not to have her dreams halted, María reached out to the Student Ombuds, who took her case to the Persistence Committee. The cross-functional team was able to coordinate a scholarship for this talented young woman through USF World and María is set to graduate in spring 2018.



The Chronicle of Higher Education
**USF #1 in Nation for
Graduation Rate Improvement**

Eduventures 2016
Innovation Award
for "Defining and Reporting Outcomes"

The Education Trust names USF
**#1 in Florida and #6 in nation
for Black Student Success**

2017 Ruffalo Noel Levitz
Retention Excellence Award

Eduventures 2016 Student Success Ratings:
**Top Performer in
Overall Student Success**
among public research and doctoral universities

Foundation for Student Success names USF
one of seven mentor institutions
to share successful initiatives to reduce the equity
gaps with Black, Latino and Native American students

Military Times EDGE magazine:
**#1 Ranking Nationally on
Best for Vets: Colleges 2017**



University of South Florida - Tampa

Student Affairs & Student Success
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