

## SCS:099 Retention and GPA Improvement Outcomes Research Study Findings & Recommendations

The Relationship between Participation in the SCS:099 Strategies for Academic Success Course and the Retention Rate and Academic Success of First-Year Students at NCAT

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### OBJECTIVES

- Determine whether a significant difference could be observed in the retention and academic success (measured by GPA) of first-year students on academic probation who completed the SCS:099—Strategies for Academic Success Course (intervention group) and those who did not (control group), and if there were observable differences when accounting for quantitative and categorical variables such as high school GPA, SAT/ACT scores, gender, socioeconomic status, and first-generation status. Cohorts analyzed enrolled in the Fall 2019, Fall 2020, and Fall 2021 terms and completed the course in the subsequent Spring term, respectively.  
Determine which of the five required student success course components had the best impact on students' retention and academic success, based on their perception.

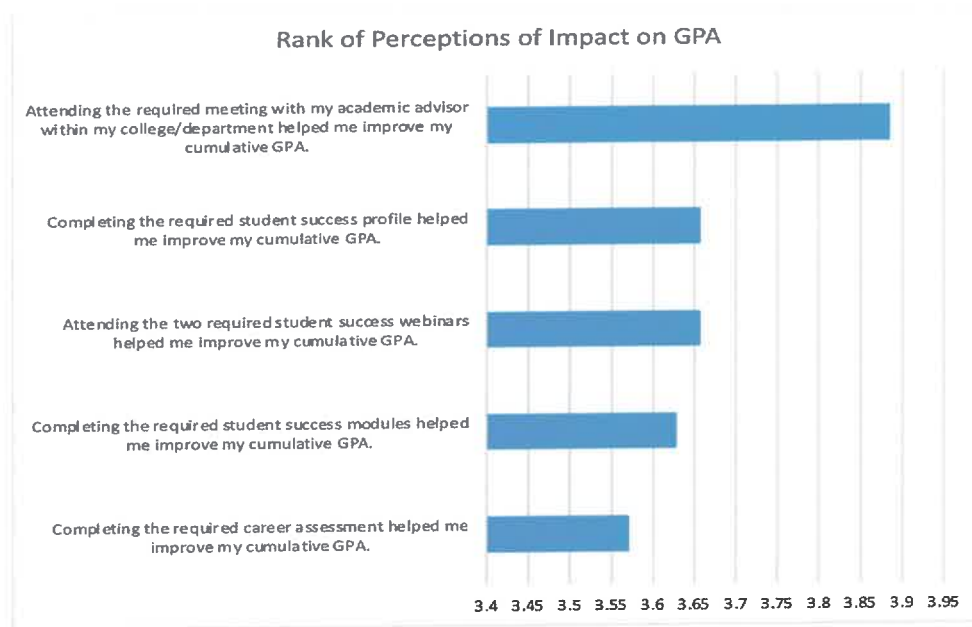
### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- RQ1: Is there a difference between the retention rate of the intervention group and that of the control group?
- RQ2: Is there a difference between the change in first-year GPA (first semester to second semester GPA) of the intervention group and that of the control group?
- RQ3: Are there differences between the retention rate of the intervention group and that of the control group when controlling for high school GPA, SAT/ACT scores, gender, socioeconomic status, and first-generation status?
- RQ4: Are there differences between the change in first-year GPA (first semester to second semester GPA) of the intervention group and that of the control group when controlling for high school GPA, SAT/ACT scores, gender, socioeconomic status, and first-generation status?
- RQ5: Which components of the SCS:099 Course do students in the intervention group perceive to have had the best impact on their academic success (improved GPA)?
- RQ6: Which components of the SCS:099 Course do students in the intervention group perceive to have had the best impact on their retention?

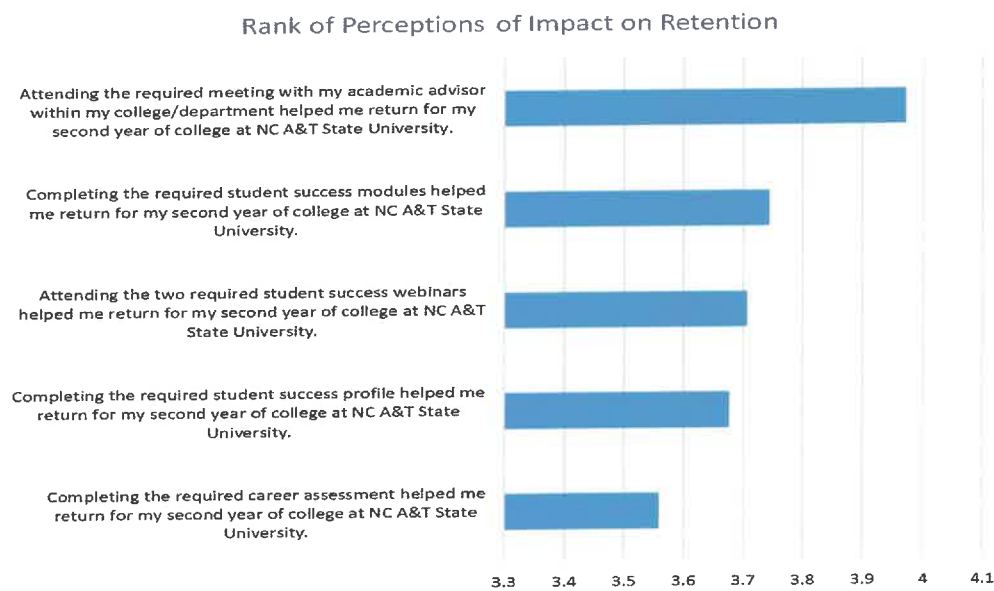
## FINDINGS

- **RQ1 & RQ3:** 507 students who completed the course (intervention group) were more likely to be retained than the 957 students who did not complete the course (control group). Students who completed the course were retained at a 59% rate, while students who did not complete the course were retained at a 22% rate. The retention rate of those students who completed the course was 37% higher than those who did not complete the course.
  - There was a statistically significant difference between the retention rate of the intervention group and that of the control when controlling for high school GPA, SAT/ACT scores, gender, socioeconomic status, and first-generation status.
  - Amongst these variables, the strongest predictors of retention were completion of the SCS:099—Strategies for Academic Success Course ( $p < .001$ ), low socioeconomic status ( $p = .002$ ), high school GPA ( $p = .006$ ), and first-generation status ( $p = .013$ ).
  - Completion of the SCS:099 Course was the strongest predictor of retention amongst these variables.
- **RQ2 & RQ4:** There was a statistically mean difference in first-to-second term GPA of the control group and the intervention group. For the control group, the mean difference between first-to-second term GPA was .16 (improvement). For the intervention group, the mean difference between first-to-second term GPA was .55 (improvement).
  - There was a statistically significant difference between the change in first-year GPA (first-to-second term GPA) of the intervention group and that of the control group when controlling for high school GPA, SAT/ACT scores, gender, socioeconomic status, and first-generation status.
  - Amongst the variables, the strongest predictors of the difference between change in first-year GPA (first-to-second term GPA) of the intervention group and that of the control group were completion of the SCS:099—Strategies for Academic Success Course ( $p < .001$ ), low socioeconomic status ( $p = .020$ ), and high school GPA ( $p = .026$ ).
  - Completion of the SCS:099 Course was the strongest predictor of change in first-to-second term GPA (improvement) amongst these variables.
- These results suggest that completing the SCS:099—Strategies for Academic Success Course has a significant impact on improving first-to-second term GPA (academic performance).

**RQ5:** Respondents perceived attending the required meeting with their academic advisor within their college/department as having been the most helpful in improving their cumulative GPA. 44 participants (from the intervention group) completed this survey.



**RQ6:** Respondents perceived attending the required meeting with their academic advisor within their college/department as having been the most helpful component in their retention. 44 participants (from the intervention group) completed this survey.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Require that students meet with their assigned academic advisor within the first two weeks of the term for pre-advisement and the completion of an academic success plan.
- Require students submit the academic success plan as evidence of the required meeting with their academic advisor, as opposed to an email/appointment confirmation.
- Alignment with academic advisement through CAE:
  - The declared freshmen advising team piloted an advising appointment campaign specifically for students on academic probation in the Spring 2024 (first two weeks of the term).
  - We found that students on academic probation did not respond well to the campaign (invitation to meet with their advisor). Instead, students on academic probation responded to an invitation for pre-advisement meetings at a higher rate.
  - This observation was insightful and helpful in shifting our communication approach from a 'deficit-based' to a 'strengths-based' approach that does not emphasize students' academic standing. The goal is to pivot from punitive language that could discourage students from meeting with their academic advisor in a timely manner, considering that initial meeting is instrumental in the implementation of early intervention strategies as well as establishing timely check-ins throughout the term (bi-weekly meetings).
- Consider changing 'probationary student' to 'students on academic probation' in line with shifting toward a strengths based approach, conducive to appreciative advisement.

## Academic Recovery Program at North Carolina A&T State University

By Kase Gregory

### SCS:099—Strategies for Academic Success

#### Description:

The Academic Recovery Program and SCS-099 class are designed to aid students' progress from Academic Probation to Good Standing. The zero-credit hour course is infused with strategic lessons and tasks that help students identify past mistakes and create mindfulness in pursuing their academic goals. It is the mission of this program for students who complete the course to improve their academic standing, thus increasing the university's overall retention percentage.

#### Enrollment Requirements:

- First-Time full-time freshmen students with <2.0 cumulative GPA who are placed on academic probation after their first semester
- New Transfer students with <2.0 cumulative GPA who are placed on academic probation after their first semester
- Students returning on appeal or suspension waiver who have not previously completed the course
- Student returning after suspension

#### Course components:

Category	# of Activities	Percentage Grade Weight
SCS 099 Modules	1	30%
Academic Advisor/College Meeting	2	20%
CAE Student Success Webinars	2	20%
Advisor Information	1	15%
Success Plan	1	15%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

#### Strategies for Academic Success Modules

Students must complete an online course consisting of modules that focus on academic standing, university policies and study strategies.

#### Academic Advisor/ College meeting

Students must meet with their academic college or academic advisor to discuss their probation status, identify any concerns and create an action plan for success.

### CAE Student Success Webinars

Weekly webinar series that engages with students directly. These webinars focus on university current events and academic enhancement while allowing students a forum in which they can ask questions and get assistance with specific concerns regarding academic barriers.

### Advisor Information

Students are to upload the name, campus address, telephone number and email of their academic advisor.

### Success Plan

The purpose of the Success Plan is to help students to identify potential barriers to success, generate potential solutions, establish goals, and develop a plan of action. Students will create SMART short-term and long-term goals for academic and professional success.

### **Grade Evaluation:**

Satisfactory: Complete >79% of total percentage

Unsatisfactory: Complete <80% of total percentage

## **Proposed Changes for Spring 2025**

### **Academic Success Summit:**

- The Academic Success Summit would be a one-day conference style program that would allow Academic Recovery students to complete 80% of the SCS-class in one day.
  - Components will include:
    - Keynote speaker
    - Choice of academic skills workshops
    - Lunch with choice of discussion topics by table
    - Panel of students who have overcome probation
    - Closing and door prizes

Summit will take place early in the spring semester, and will require at least a 3-hour commitment on the part of the student.

Students will partake in a qualitative assessment to measure impact. Data will be used in further evaluation of the overall Academic Recovery program.

### **Academic Sanctions:**

- Place account holds on students who have not completed the course in its entirety by Spring Break.
- Students who do not complete SCS-099 are not eligible for Suspension Waiver or SAP Appeal