

Katy Oliveira-Lambert ([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](#)):

Now we have evolved to where we have our academic success coaches, student success coaches now who are part of those calling campaigns that we do. And at the end of right, as midterm grades are coming on, that group now is the group who makes the calls. When we look at midterm grades and see students who are struggling, they're outreaching, they're calling, they're saying, we're here for you, and they're actually having many sessions on the phone, and then they're driving them in. We would never have been at that point, had we not started the conversation a few years earlier around, let's think this through and let's look at the data. And now that's where those coaches will say that's probably some of the most rewarding experiences that we have

Katy Oliveira-Lambert ([01:15](#)):

Today. On the show, I'm talking with Dr. Steve Wilkerson and Dr. Tammy Wyatt of the University of Texas at San Antonio. Dr. Wilkerson is the Associate Vice President and Chief Analytics Officer, and Dr. Wyatt is the Vice Provost for Student Success. You can catch my early conversation with Dr. Wyatt in episode number five. Today on the show, we're talking about how UTSA Student Success Team works closely together with Institutional Research to improve student outcome. We talk about how they've deconstructed silos, how IR works together with campus partners to support proactive student success, and how regular evaluation of their student success initiatives allows the UTSA team to be responsive rather than reactive to student needs. But before we dive in, hit that subscribe button so that you can keep up with the latest practices in proactive student success.

([02:11](#)):

Welcome to Next Practices. Thank you so much for taking your time to share your experience with us. I'm so happy to have you both here today. And Tammy, welcome back to the show. I wanna start with both of you just introducing yourselves and, and talking a little bit about your role in student success.

Dr. Steve Wilkerson ([02:30](#)):

Sure. So I'm Steve Wilkerson, the Chief Analytics Officer here at University of Texas, San Antonio, and been in higher ed for 30 years. And about half of that was in student success, actually before I got into assessment and IR type roles. Um, I was an academic advisor. I led supplemental instruction, then I moved into program assessment and institutional assessment and effectiveness processes. I'm a first gen student and so, um, my, you know, my degree here from UTSA and I pretty much stayed. And I look at our role and my role of my office is they understand the most important thing on this campus is helping students achieve their dreams, right? And so we work really closely with student success, but they all pretty much understand what we're about, is about student success. We really support that office and I'd just like supporting, you know, other students and helping my colleagues support their students in achieving their dreams.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([03:23](#)):

Thank you for having me back. Katy, Tammy, Wyatt, and I serve as the Vice Provost for Student Success here at UTSA. I just finished my 20th year at UTSA in higher ed. I started out as an assistant professor in

2003 and just progressively got into administration. And here I'm so, um, excited about the opportunity to talk about the work that we've done and how we've partnered together. Gosh, we've probably been partners in crime, serious student success crime, I guess you could say. Since 2012, probably. Yeah, probably. Yeah. So a little over a decade. We, our office has worked very, very closely together in my role as Vice Provost for Student Success. I'm responsible for bringing together groups across all campus and fostering partnerships around student success, around equitable student outcomes, the overall student experience, engagement and belonging, that type of work. And help working with not only the colleges, but other academic support areas to do that. And so today I think we're excited to talk about some of the programs and initiatives that we have partnered with together, but the approach of how we do that.

Katy Oliveira-Lambert ([04:36](#)):

Before we dive into that, Tammy, just to give our listeners, uh, just a little bit of understanding background. 'cause I think UTSA has a really great approach to student success. Do you mind just giving like a thumbnail sketch of how student success is structured? And for listeners, we talk about this much more in depth in episode five, where Tammy comes on and talks about UTSA's, like more comprehensive approach to student success. But we'll give you like a little brief, maybe CliffNotes version. And if you're interested in learning more, definitely pop over to episode five and listen there to hear a little bit more details on, on how that's structured.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([05:13](#)):

So in our division, within the division of Student success, which is our centralized unit, we, we have a, we like to call a hub and spoke model where we're the hub, and then we have all of our, our spoke partnerships. And so within our centralized hub area, we have our centralized academic advising team in some related programs such as our graduation help desk, some of our onboarding and bridging programs, and our support services that help not only incoming but transfer students as well. We also have all of our academic support areas like SI and tutoring and academic coaching, uh, academic success coaching that Steve's knows so much about. We also have our engagement and belonging programs, which include our first year experience, our first gen transfer center housing and residence life. And we have a program that supports specific populations as well. One of those is our Fostering Futures program, which helps support youth with a history of foster care.

([06:14](#)):

And we also have our pipelining types of programs, outreach and pipeline programs, so are all of our TRIO. And we have a countywide project that we're working with partners outside of UTSA, but in the county to help support foster youth. Additionally, we have an Office of Student Success initiatives, and that's where we really get this hub and spoke type of approach where our Office of Student Success Initiatives oversees and helps facilitate standardized best practices around various programs and services, but also our student success technology platform, which is Civitas Learning. And whether it's Inspire, Illume or Impact the work that we do there, as well as creating an ecosystem around a support for all of our students within the academic colleges, our six academic colleges that have student success centers. And so that's kind of what we look like organizationally and how we work and what we've been doing over the last decade.

([07:15](#)):

Just in a, again, like you said, a Reader's Digest version, CliffNotes version. We've been very focused on over the last decade of making sure that we're providing, um, the right services and supports. We really

focused on the what in the beginning it was about what, what are we doing? And so we did a lot of things. We've restructured academic advising, we centralized it, utilized a student success caseload model for proactive outreach, all of that work. We created peer mentoring programs for our first year students, our transfer students, our first gen students. We've leveraged institutional financial aid to help support high needs students. We have redesigned our curriculum for more equitable student outcomes. So we've done a lot of the what and that what has been very effective and has helped us to move the needle in student success. But as you know, and most folks know, as you start seeing successes, you have to then become more refined in your work and more intentional and deliberate to continue to see those successful changes and advances, continued advances, right?

[\(08:26\)](#):

We don't really need to do anything more. It's not always about doing more either. We don't need to do more. We feel like we've done a lot of things and are continuing to do a lot of great things. It's really, now it's the how we do this, right? I don't believe that there are any at this point in time, any major initiatives or any strategies that we haven't tried to approach. So it's now the how, looking at the systems, looking at our systems approach. And so that's where, over the last five years under our current leadership, we've really been focusing on the how we as an institution, an entire institution works together with student success at the forefront. You know, Steve and I, our teams were, have been there, uh, and, and had that line of thinking for the last decade, but the entire institution has that line of thinking now and is working together. And so we can talk about as the podcast goes on, how we do that. But that's where our shift has really been about the five year mark of this last decade. It was, here's the what, let's create those initiatives that move those big Boulder initiatives. Now let's be more refined in how we address the needs of our students and use data to do that. But, and then talk about how we approach that as an entire institution.

Dr. Steve Wilkerson [\(09:46\)](#):

So when you say Boulder, Boulder like a rock or boulder? Like Boulder with an L, like bold?

Dr. Tammy Wyatt [\(09:51\)](#):

Both? I think so. Yeah. <laugh>

Katy Oliveira-Lambert [\(09:53\)](#):

<laugh>.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt [\(09:54\)](#):

We boldly, we <laugh>. 'cause UTSA Bold is our tagline. Yeah.

Dr. Steve Wilkerson [\(10:00\)](#):

So

Katy Oliveira-Lambert [\(10:00\)](#):

Yeah. Well, I love that because I think there's something there about the refining and the sophistication and that once you have those big best practices in place, those tried and true initiatives, then a lot of folks sort of stall out or they kind of, they plateau. And that it's the refining and understanding what's happening for your students and you're, and different pockets and subpopulations of students, I think where you can, where you can really start to see those small gains add up across the experience.

[\(10:30\)](#):

Steve, do you mind sharing a little bit about institutional research at UT Sand A? I know every institution takes a different approach, so I'd like to know a little bit about the mission, the strategic priorities, how you interface or collaborate, connect with the rest of the campus culture. So if you'll just give us a little, little tour, if you will, of institutional research at UTSA

Dr. Steve Wilkerson [\(10:51\)](#):

Thank you. I've kind of talked about how we've turned the ship, right? So when I took over the office, it's been about a decade almost. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> about 2013. At that time, we were very traditional IR office. We did state and federal reporting, you know, those normal things, ad hoc things people put in request. And we didn't really have dashboards, we didn't have business intelligence. We did some analyses that are more deep around particular aspects of the institution, but not a lot of those. It was really very traditional. And when I took it over, I set a vision not to think about me, about the team that I wanted to head towards. Interactive dashboards, BI capabilities, and giving people information that they could influence their decision making and being data informed. And we, it took us a while. I mean, I'll be honest, we had to retrain and, and hire new people and, and learn new skills and do new things. So that's why I call it turning a ship bit.

[\(11:47\)](#):

Then I've got a internal facing report center that has 50, uh, 150 plus reports. Many of those we have within the dashboards, we have dashboards that monitor processes, right? Like things like admissions processing and time of how things are flowing through the funnel. We have some dashboards that help Tammy look at daily retention for different pockets of students throughout the cycle of registration. So she'll know what, right now, as of today, what her retention rates will be in the second, third year, right in the first year. And slice that down by all kinds of different demographics. 10 years ago, we would not have been able to do that. So one of the ways we really work with folks is we have leaders like Tammy who have a business need, and I, I'm a person who let's build something, you know, just get something whiteboarded and build and then we'll iterate and get something out and iterate and make sure it's serving the purpose that's intended.

[\(12:44\)](#):

And so my team really works with the end user on what is the business need, right? And I'm always having them. And one of the things that the skills that I'm trying to develop within our team is to ask those kinds of questions, like the why, the how and, and how are we gonna use it kind of thing. And part of it, I think what drove me towards this is coming outta student success and trying to support students. I never had free access to the data that I'd want at the time, right? So I had that experience, right? It's always retrospective looking things. And so that's pretty much how we do. And, and we're in the center of the campus. We're a very data-centric campus now. We've evolved towards that. And so we have dashboards just about every aspect of the institution is in my shop now and trying to be a 360 view of the campus is what we're towards. And we look at as we have a role of service to serve the faculty, students, and staff and, and leadership across the campus to help meet the, the goals of the institution organization that's very service focused.

Katy Oliveira-Lambert [\(13:44\)](#):

Yeah, I love the distinction that you made of being able to have access to the data now having a use case and having the different folks on campus have access like that. Tammy could go and look at the retention

data today and have a sense of how it changes over time rather than being looking at it retrospectively. And I think that that's a real difference and a real shift that I see happening more and more across institutions. But I think I'm noticing it's makes a really big difference in how responsive you can be to your students in the moment. So I, I think that's really interesting and I, I'd love to talk more about that. I think that's where a lot of your work together centers. So how IR and student success teams are working together to improve student success. And so I'd love to learn more, like what does that look like? How are you shifting away from just looking at things retrospectively towards integrating the use of this information in your daily work?

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([14:42](#)):

I think one piece that is really critical is the organizational structure and the frequency in which our teams meet in addition to a couple of other very critical units. So we have an integrated framework, student success framework here at UTSA where we've got, not only is it the deans of the academic colleges, but also our academic support units. And every institution looks different, but they all have these same units. They may be called something differently, but they're all a critical piece or function of how a university works. And so for us, we have our academic council, which is all of our vice provosts and all of our deans, academic deans, which is led by our provost. We have subset groups within that that meet regularly. And one of those groups, it's called Ruby Tuesday, funny name, but it's our Ruby Tuesday group.

([15:31](#)):

And we do meet on Tuesdays usually, usually most of the time, but if not, we'll have a <INAUDIBLE> on a Friday, which was last week, Ruby Tuesday. And fun name for a fun group of of folks. And we meet every week, hour and a half. And that meeting doesn't get canceled. It may get shifted or moved, but very rarely does it get canceled. And it's so important. It's an hour and a half long every week. And it's anchored in with Steve and Institutional Research. It's facilitated by our provost and it's student success, senior leadership from student success, strategic enrollment, academic innovation, student affairs, career engaged learning, faculty success, undergraduate studies and graduate school. And we have our university comms there as well, so that they're aware of what all's going on. And so we meet regularly and we look at data. Steve's beautiful dashboards that he can talk about and that he's created.

([16:27](#)):

It's dedicated time to talk about shared problems or issues that are coming up, maybe it's around right now we're in orientation season, it maybe it's around course availability and course access. So we get in the weeds sometimes. Other times it's a 30,000 foot conversation around what are some of the programs that we need to be offering in the future and, and, and meeting market need and market demand. So it's a variety of high level all the way down to in the weeds conversations, shared problems that we talk about and strategize. We have projects that we are coordinating and organizing that maybe one person has a lead on, but we're all involved in. So that is one, just one way that Steve and I at least once a week, are connecting around student success. Because at u at UTSA, just because my title has it in the title doesn't mean I'm the only person, um, that is responsible.

([17:20](#)):

The entire senior leadership, all of our academic support units know that all of our roles are related to student success. I just have it in my title. So we meet regularly. In addition, Steve and I have met and worked quite a bit with Impact and every one of the programs or initiatives within student success. We

started there first has been, I guess, analyzed you could say, by using the Impact tool. And that has really helped us become more efficient in our work. For example, with tutoring, um, our tutoring program went through and we, we saw that overall it was doing a pretty decent job around 2% lift to the persistence to the next semester. But then when we looked at certain populations like our males of color, we saw that there was an even larger lift, a huge lift. It was 4 to 5%.

[\(18:17\)](#):

So we knew that this was an opportunity to really focus in on helping support the students that we were impacting the greatest. And it was wonderful data to show our tutoring teams the impact and the difference that they were making, especially during covid times when there was a lot of burnout and things like that. It was really nice for our staff to be able to get that validation and affirmation at the work was doing what we'd hoped it it would do. So we work and we have a calendar across the annual year to say, Hey, these are the programs that we want to look at and examine. That's been now expanded out to our students' success centers in the academic colleges and other initiatives. And Steve is very, doesn't have an ego and he doesn't give himself and his team enough credit, but what they have done, their team's super credit the team don't give your net.

[\(19:08\)](#):

Yeah. But you leave the team and the way the conversations happen now is very different than what it was a decade ago, five years ago. It is now about real time. And folks, you know, whether it's academic advisor or whether it's an associate director over a program or a senior director or whomever, they're saying, Ooh, dashboards. And they're thinking real time data. How can we, we make tweaks in real time versus let's wait a semester or a year and let's look at what we did and let's think about it. Mm-hmm. And then no, it is in the moment changes and adjustments, which also as, as Steve has mentioned, has helped us with some calling campaigns and looking at when students are registered, what students are and what students are not. It tells us what the financial needs of those students are so we know when we go to call them that we can have some information at hand, the right information at hand to have the right conversations.

[\(20:08\)](#):

So for some students, it's about how can we get you connected with your, with financial aid and with others. It's how can we get you connected with your academic advisor because it's not a financial issue, maybe it's a course availability issue. So Steve and his team get us all of that data. Last year we called over 5,700 students through a calling campaign. This year it's 5,200 students, but their team is the, the provides us that data in, in real time so that we're able to, to support students when they need it and how they need it. And so the data's essential to that, our ability to be able to do that. And so I think the conversations have shifted, like I said, of of, of dashboards. I dunno, what's a

Dr. Steve Wilkerson [\(20:49\)](#):

Dashboard? Now? They do. Yeah. It's like, I think when we're talking about Ruby Tuesday, the big shift about this organization is, there's a couple things I think drove it. One, Ruby Tuesday helped de-silo the institution, because we're all in this together and people understand that. And we work really well, col everybody, it's very, it's one of the most fun. Most of us don't like going to meetings, meeting meetings, but this is probably the one meeting of the week. I actually look forward to it, right? And we ended every week with what I call dessert. So we pull up a dashboard and we'll look at like daily enrollment and how we're looking and how the funnels are looking or whatever. And we, you know, our new dashboards, a



here's something thing that we've rolled out there. And the other, I think the other thing that's really helped spread the message of the central role that student success plays.

[\(21:34\)](#):

Sometimes when people think about enrollment, they think about the front door, right? Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, but they don't think about the middle. And sometimes they forget about the, the leaving door. You know, we want 'em come back as grad student, but they, right. And there's a balance there, right? That you have to recruit as they graduate people. And Tammy really graduate a lot of students quickly, and you have to backfill that on the front end. But the thing that helped people understand the middle was we have a IRM model, right? A responsibility budget model, so that the colleges now understand that the critical role of headcount plays in their bottom line. Not to big crass, I mean the good reasons why students are transforming lives, but what keeps the doors open and obviously allows you hire faculty and have a university and do those things, is you have to have students and supporting students along their journey from the front door to the leaving door or graduating door is a role for everyone on the campus.

[\(22:26\)](#):

I think this is the two things really have helped that, one, lowering the silos, but then the other people understanding that the, these students are our students. They're not Tammy's students, they're not, you know, your students, they're our students. And that's really helped a lot. And you're right, everybody wants a dashboard. Sometimes that dashboard's not the thing you need <laugh>, but we have that conversation, right? And, and, and, you know, design. And that's why the business purpose is really, you know, what's the problem you're trying to solve? And, and every now, and I just tell people, dashboard's not what you need, you need this. But we do a lot of things too, like Tammy said, supporting the calling campaigns and such, because those are the things, Hey, it's funny, when I was in student success years and years and years ago, I was doing those kinds of activities without <laugh>, without all those pieces of information. So I've really helped inform the process when I said, you know, they need to know the holds they have and the things that are stopping them from registration and how much dollars they owe and Yeah. And if they have financial aid and those kinds of things. So, yeah.

Katy Oliveira-Lambert [\(23:17\)](#):

Yeah. It's not just numbers. It's not just dollars. It's humans and yeah. It's, and who are coming through in an experience and it's thinking about it at every step of the way and guiding them through the entire experience. It, it makes so much sense. And I think you said, you know, I don't mean be craft, we have to think about the bottom line, but that is part of it. Like how can we, we've been talking a lot at Civitas Learning and doing a lot of thinking about with our partners around like, how can we support student success that's sustainable mm-hmm. <affirmative>, and that supports financially healthy institutions and, and retention student success is a really important piece of that puzzle. So I think that makes a lot of sense.

Dr. Steve Wilkerson [\(23:55\)](#):

Just kind of weighing in off of that too. The other thing, I think we've gotten significantly better for storytelling, right? Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So the Impact studies have informed, we have a, a process academic insights where we push out, we have a cycle like once a month or feels like every two weeks, but we sent out a, just a real quick little snippet around data or student experience, number of degrees worded this past year, we might look at, right. Those kinds of things. But they're little nuggets of data.

And we've used some of the work with Impact and some of the studies we've done to help drive that out to the campus so they understand that wow, SI provides this much of a lift, right? And what's SI So it kind of helps bubble that through the organization too, because, and so I think the storytelling piece of this has been really critical for us moving forward as well.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([24:40](#)):

Especially faculty. Yeah. To

Dr. Steve Wilkerson ([24:42](#)):

Understand,

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([24:43](#)):

Yeah, these are new faculty to understand who are, you know, often are coming in and their focus is on, obviously on, on their courses and helping students, but also on their research. And so they're not always fully understand the impact of how the work that they do, whether it's in the classroom or their research and or their service, how that does impact students. And that faculty have really appreciated those nuggets of information and they're very digestive held back pocket data. And here this is a neat little nugget for the month to know. And that too has helped kind of build this understanding or culture of care that we're all, everyone is, is invested in student success no matter what your role is.

Dr. Steve Wilkerson ([25:28](#)):

The one project I'm thinking of that we're still piloting, right? But we're working through it and talking faculty is what made me think of is we're developing a, a course profile report and in there it's a, gonna be a resource for faculty. We were sending out a couple weeks before the semester starts. That gives just a snapshot view of what their class looks like as far as, you know, just first gen age, average age top majors in the course, just to help them shape what the course is like. But then also what we're partnering with student success in this piece is it'll have resources. So if you have a high percentage of first generation students in your class, here's resources to help you support them in your pedagogy. Working students or non-traditionally, if you have a high percentage of non-traditional students, maybe looking at the assignment pace and those things and when things are due could be helpful for them to meet the expectations of the course. But all will go as a package, right? It just shows up in the, the email of the faculty member, here's what my course looks like and here's the resources that are available to me as a faculty member to help support my students. And that's, I'm really excited about that. I think it's, it's, it's gonna be a game changer in a lot of ways, and it'll really help bring faculty on board supporting their students.

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

It's gonna be a game changer. And, and when we talk about that with other institutions, one of the, and with faculty too, that's every semester, because I think the analogy that I often use will be coaching, being a teacher is like being a coach, right? And as a basketball coach, this analogy, 'cause my husband was a former basketball coach, he would always say, they said, oh, well what, what offense do you run? Defense do you running? He is like, well, it depends on my team, right? So it's that same idea every semester, just because you've taught the same course for five years, every semester you probably should be teaching it a little bit differently because your team is different, right? Your students are different. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So if you have, the analogy I always say is, if you have a bunch of six foot plus guys who can dunk the ball, you're going to have an offense and a defense that works for them.



[\(27:23\)](#):

But if, then if you have a, a group of, you know, five foot nothing guards, but they can shoot, right? Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, it's gonna, you're gonna have a different offense. Same idea in your classroom. If you've got students that maybe this semester there's a lot of, uh, large students are taking this course for a second time or a subsequent time, you should approach it differently. If you have first gen students, a large percentage, you maybe should approach it a little bit differently, um, each semester. And so helping individuals also to understand that it's always evolving. You wanna stay relevant and you shouldn't just repeat and do, you know, rinse and repeat. That's not conducive to helping our students succeed. And so these types of data points really will help make it more of an individualized, as much as you can experience for all of our students.

Katy Oliveira-Lambert [\(28:13\)](#):

Yeah. And I think that's the, the beauty too of running Impact analysis, understanding your initiatives, how your initiatives are influencing students and how they're influencing different students. So for listeners who may not be familiar, Civitas Learning has the capability of doing initiative analysis. And so what the software can do is help assess how a particular initiative or policy or program is impacting students compared to their peers. And to assess the influence of the percentage lift on their persistence, how that program is influencing the persistence. And now there's available where we're releasing a report that shows some benchmarking we've done across the institution, different institutional partners and what kinds of initiatives and programs are influencing students and, and influencing persistence. And so you can go to [civitaslearning.com](http://civitaslearning.com) to download that report if you're interested in learning more, or will be a link in the show notes as well. So you can look at that. And just for you guys to know, we're just releasing it this week. Awesome. So by the time this goes out, it will be available for people to look at and it provides sort of a benchmarking there.

[\(29:26\)](#):

This podcast is brought to you by Civitas Learning. Civitas Learning empowers colleges and universities to achieve transformative levels of student success to reshape higher education for decades to come. Civitas Learning's Student Impact Platform brings institutional data together for a clearer picture of each student and situation, equipping institutions to take data informed action and lead with a new purpose to impact student success, ready to help students succeed every day. Visit [civitaslearning.com](http://civitaslearning.com) to get started.

[\(30:02\)](#):

I'd love to hear more about how you approach that kind of analysis. I know that for some institutions they are looking at programs sort of ad hoc as like something comes up with funding or there's a grant that they need a report out on. Or if someone's just wondering because they're doing some kind of internal analysis, is there a system? Are you looking at things at regular intervals? Is there a way that you approach assessing what's working and so that you don't rinse and repeat as you move forward with your work?

Dr. Steve Wilkerson [\(30:32\)](#):

Yeah, I mean, I, I think we're on a regular thing. We do run things back through, right? Because things do change, like tutoring and advising and those different things. We're expanding out beyond just the, the units within Tammy's shop. And so there are the ad hoc things, but not so much for grants. It's mostly like, let's systematically look at here's our major programs we're doing, what populations are best being

served by those help communicate and drive students in to use those services. But then the flip side of that too is sometimes asking the question, if it's not providing lift for these populations, why might that be the case? So kind of opens the door there a little bit, is an IR person. Why I appreciate this tool is because we've done propensity match scoring analysis before, right? We have that in our skillset, in our statistical abilities within our office.

[\(31:21\)](#):

But it takes time. And so what I like about the tool is that it really takes care of a lot of that. And where I think where it helps with faculty is I remember having conversations around SI and right, the, the, SO students elect right, select themselves in to take advantage of that particular program. And we, you know, for years in SI world we, okay, well if they showed up one time, they're a participant. That's how we kind of mitigated the saying, you know, those were people was trying it out, right? But, and you look, there's always higher benefits the more they attended the dosage effects. But then it's accounting for that self-selection bias that you get a lot from folks who know academics where you like to question and things, which is fine, but this is how you can control for that. And it's, you know, it's a robust analysis that can do really quickly and you can run a lot through, right?

[\(32:10\)](#):

So I, and I think it also helps with the storytelling and it also helps with people buying into the work that we're doing. Right? That, wow, okay, this is a why are we spend money on SI well here's why. It helps these students succeed and we're controlling for people who would have the same likelihood to attend but elected not to. And that's the population we're comparing to, which is a more robust than what most people do. Like the non participants, participants, this is a little mm-hmm. Steep level and more robust and I think tells a better story. So mm-hmm. <affirmative>,

Dr. Tammy Wyatt [\(32:38\)](#):

But it's pretty regular. Yeah, it's, it's regular. It's once a month. We have at least one of our program in, in the beginning it was, we started out with student success because we're a quite large portfolio anyway. So we started out there and we started with some of our larger units within student success. So advising housing to see the impacts, right? To know if we needed to make some adjustments. And then slowly, I think every program within our division has gone through at least once. And then a couple have been repeated, but then now we're starting to expand out, like I'd mentioned with some of the other initiatives and programs within our academic colleges that are connected. But Steve's shop, they own, we call, they're the owner of Impact. And so some faculty or other units on campus may will submit a data request and they may or may not choose to use Impact to, to do that if it, if it makes sense.

[\(33:35\)](#):

But we are on a regular cadence because we wanna make sure that our work is continuing. And we started working with Impact right around, uh, the time the pandemic was coming through. And so some of our data was a little pre pandemic and then pandemic. And now as emerging from that, it's time to look again to say, hmm, things may have changed. For example, in tutoring we have in-person tutoring, we have our in-person tutoring center that does virtual tutoring, but we also have a 24/7 on demand tutoring service. So which of those works better? And as we look through it, we'll see that over time we're gonna see differences because I think the pandemic influenced a lot of that. But we use that to say, okay, now here's where we are in 2023. Are we still seeing the same things we're seeing? Are students behaviors changing? Are we starting to see that students are using these form different

modalities in different ways? And so I think that too is another way to think about not only the program itself and the impact that it has, but are there different modalities and do we see differences there? Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, that's part of that piece that we will always need tutoring always, but the modality in which we continue or we invest the most in may be different based on what the data tells us.

Katy Oliveira-Lambert (34:57):

Yeah. Or which students you work to connect to those particular modalities or, or kinds of services. If you see that there's a significant difference and the kind of students that that particular initiative or intervention is supporting. Right. I'm sure you're seeing some of that. Or are you seeing where there's like differentiation even between different student populations and needs?

Dr. Tammy Wyatt (35:19):

Yes. In fact, for our, what's interesting with our tutoring, our males we're using tutoring more than our females. And, and for us historically, our females are more likely to utilize our support services more than males. But for tutoring we were seeing our males and for our online tutoring as well, we were seeing males. And, and we, we look at it in various ways. We, we disaggregated and all on tops of different ways. We also saw part-time students using the 24 hour on demand service more, which makes sense. Yeah. When you think about it. 'cause they're not on campus as much. And so some things were not surprising, it was just validating and other things were very surprising. And it just, it causes you to ask more questions. It causes you to ask more why. Well wonder why that is. Let's look at that.

Katy Oliveira-Lambert (36:06):

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Well I love what Steve was saying too before, is it's not just about a number or it's not just like a plugging in the puzzle pieces. It's a story and understanding why. Understanding the reasons, being able to make the case, being able to build coalition to better serve the students and better get everyone on the same page to understand what the students need. Because you can ask those kind of questions like, I wonder why that happened or that's what we're seeing. Can you think of anything off hand that's been really surprising that's opened an opportunity that you didn't see before? I know that's kind of putting you on the spot. So if you can't think of anything, I totally understand.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt (36:46):

One that was surprising was I think our males of color for tutoring that I mentioned are because the utilization of the service and then the impact. The impact was so significantly higher in academic advising. We're also seeing that our first year students we're seeing extremely higher persistence rates among our first year students. Which then reaffirmed that we needed to continue and promote and have our first year students meet with their academic advisors in that first year beyond, beyond just simply coming in for orientation that we really wanted to drive that appointment. So that was kind of a reaffirming or validating. I think another area where it was helpful for me was with our academic success coaching, the group had often wanted to focus their efforts on working with students that were our honor students or some of our students who are more high achieving students.

(37:46):

'cause they were the ones who would come in and drive, you know, here we are, come on in, we're here for you. Was kind of the approach. And I was like, I think we wanna be working with some other students too that might need the service a little bit. You know, every, we wanna be available to everyone, but they might see a stronger impact from the service. And so let's focus on these this next semester. And when we started looking at the data and to see that, okay, one of our students who was an honors, you know,

our group of honors students, we saw, okay, you might see a slight impact. But when we looked at our students who came in who were our third and fourth quartile students who really needed that extra support and we would see it was a triple impact, then it was, it was the data, not Tammy saying change your behaviors and how we support the data was driving it.

[\(38:39\)](#):

And so it was nice, we knew it would happen, right? But it was, it was a good strategy for helping to think about if you're wanting to drive some change or some, again the how you do your work and to talk about, you know, we can make an even bigger impact if we focus here and then let's use this data to market this. And then, let's think about what are strategies for how, yes, we're always gonna be here for anyone who walks in the door. Yeah. But let's think about strategies for how do we drive in those students who normally wouldn't walk in the door because look at the impact you can have when we do that. And I think that just little bit of a tweaking and shifting, but the data had to be there for that to even be a conversation where people would be open to thinking differently.

Katy Oliveira-Lambert [\(39:25\)](#):

That's really common that we're busy, right? Our offices are full, inboxes are full with students who are raising their hand advocating and we're, we're helping them. And sometimes the students that are really in need of the most help aren't accessing the help. And then when they get that help though, it makes a huge, huge difference. So it's not to say that we don't wanna provide those services or be available for all students. It's saying though that the students who could really benefit from the service aren't always the ones who are taking all the appointment slots. And so making sure that they get access to those services and kind of, and how we market them, how we connect them, how we divvy up the time when we have finite amount of time and resources to, to offer our students. Yeah, that makes so much sense. And I hear it, I hear it more often than not from a lot of schools who are starting to differentiate their approach based on this information. And, and the, what they're learning about is the likelihood of persistence for the students and, and their backgrounds and what kinds of services are, or working better for them and, and making sure that they get to prioritize those students who are gonna benefit the most. Yeah.

Dr. Tammy Wyatt [\(40:30\)](#):

And we have evolved such that, that was a couple years ago, right? Yeah. And so now we have evolved to where we have our academic success coaches, student success coaches now who are part of those calling campaigns that we do. And at the end of right, as midterm grades are coming on, that group now is the group who makes the calls. When we look at midterm grades and see students who are struggling, they're outreaching, they're calling, they're saying, we're here for you. And they're actually having many sessions on the phone and then they're driving them in. We would never have been at that point had we not started the conversation a few years earlier around, let's think this through and let's look at the data. And now that's where those coaches will say, that's probably some of the most rewarding experiences that we have. And the students are saying, you are not calling to ask me to register.

[\(41:20\)](#):

You're not calling asking me for money. You're not telling me I'll avail. You're just calling to somebody that you see that I might be struggling and how can you help? And it's like, yeah, and I can give you some tips. Let's talk. And they're, I mean it's so, it's, I mean, I'm getting told now talk about it. So the coach is like, wow, this is so rewarding. And the students feel that the university cares and we do care. And it's

just the, but it's how we can show that. Yeah. And we have to have the data, Steve's data helps us, our data.

Dr. Steve Wilkerson ([41:47](#)):

And the thing is, student success units and people in that, in that space are there, they have a passion for students, right? They wanna help people. And I think sometimes we, we do, we're in the, they're in there doing the work and sometimes stepping back and looking like, wow, you know, and hearing you made a difference. I mean that, you're right. I mean those, we've all had those conversations with the student that said, you know, or we can look back in our own career, educational career as a student and point to an event, a person or something that happened that changed our trajectory. High flying students, I had SI leaders who made their first B and they're losing their mind. Like they're never gonna go to be a doctor anymore. Right. Having those conversations. But then you have the students who are much like me, who's, you know, not the best prepared people and study, right? Those kinds of things, not looking for help necessarily, right? That when you help those people and you look back and you change that life. And it was like, that's what, that's why people do this work, right? Mm-hmm. <affirmative> and stuff. Having them, having that in front of their hands and, and validating that their efforts are making a difference, I think is, is really powerful as well. Because sometimes you dunno, right? Like, did I make a difference today? Sometimes you dunno, you just keep, you know, going along.

Katy Oliveira-Lambert ([42:59](#)):

Yeah. Sometimes you don't. Well, we have been talking and covered so much ground, I wanna make sure that I leave space for anything else that you really wanna share that we didn't get a chance to talk about that you think is really integral to the collaboration and partnership between student success and institutional research and driving student outcomes. Student success

Dr. Steve Wilkerson ([43:19](#)):

Call Tammy. What? <laugh>

([43:22](#)):

No, I, you know, I think conversations, right? de-siloing is the key to a lot of this. Mm-hmm. And being student centric, because there's a lot of folks that say, you know, we're student centered, right? Yeah. And it's easy to say, but not always easy to do. And so I think that de siloing and having those conversations and everybody say, you know, picking a hammer and building and then also rowing the boat. Same way I got mix metaphor, but that, that's the thing, that's what it is, right? Is focusing on that experience. And what it does is it train for an institution like us, we have a lot of first gen students, right? And the change that we make for these students is generational. It's not just that one life. It's the, the generation that follows them. And, and our area and our city and our state, we're positioned to do that. We're at the forefront of that. We're the institution that's gonna, and and our partners here in San Antonio are gonna be the institutions that do that. And so finding ways to do work smarter and, and serve more students in more effective ways, I think is, is the key. So I dunno if that really added much. I don't

Dr. Tammy Wyatt ([44:26](#)):

Think so. I would say, again, for us, most institutions are, are doing the what? Most are doing lots of whats, we're doing this, we're doing that, we're doing this. But to really stop and think from a systems, systems thinking of how have we really thought about how, and do we have silos? Do we have small pockets of things that are going well that can we get more synergies from bringing people together,

talking on a regular basis and understanding that core center of students first, institution second your particular program and needs follow after that. And so I often have those conversations with, with our team about students first it's the institution second. And sometimes that might mean that it's different work for us, but that's okay because it's moving it's students first. It's moving the institution forward. And I think that having a collective group of leaders who have that same thinking is critical.

[\(45:34\)](#):

And having senior leadership reinforcing that message and bringing people together regularly. And it's not a competition. It's collective efforts, collective impact. That's how you're going to, as an institution, do great things as a group and, and collectively. And I think that there's a special sauce here. And while it's a UTSA special sauce, you can create a similarly good and special sauce at other institutions. But it's critical. It's, it's absolutely necessary. And it, it really, it is not about buying the next initiative or adding in more, you know, staff, which we all need to do. But it really is about the, how you work together, um, where you are going to see large gains, significant gains. And, you know, this work takes a long time mm-hmm. <affirmative> to see some of the benefits, you know, when you're talking about graduation rates, right? Yeah.

[\(46:35\)](#):

You have to put in the effort and then the trust, and we'll see where this is going and you can monitor, but it's a lot of work. It's slow moving in many ways. So sometimes people get lost in that. So making sure that you also through, whether it's through what we've done with impact and, and showing these small wins along the way and showing this is the right direction that we're moving in and celebrate those wins regularly. That that's very important to keep the momentum going. We should always be evolving and continuous improvement, but you have to have the right group of folks together. And they don't all have to report to the same people, but we all ultimately report to the president and Yeah. And right. And so, and knowing that, you know, so your organizational structure can look however it looks. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, but you need to meet regularly and you all, you all need to be in that same, we'll use that rowing and that same boat all rowing in the same direction, all facing that same North star, which is students and good things will happen. And so we have been extremely lucky to have really great leadership to help get us all in the room together and working together. We, you know, we just naturally we're doing that. And then our, our, you know, our circle of trust just kind of grew, right. <laugh>. Yeah, for sure. And those are things that, that don't cost. It doesn't cost anything. It's time,

Katy Oliveira-Lambert [\(47:56\)](#):

It's time, time. And getting, getting in a room together to look at the same information and to get a shared understanding, I think is, like you said, it goes a really long way. Well, thank you both so much for your time and for sharing your experience. I really appreciate you coming on the show. Thank

Dr. Tammy Wyatt [\(48:13\)](#):

You. Thank you.

Katy Oliveira-Lambert [\(48:17\)](#):

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