

## CLIENT SITUATION

- West Virginia University (WVU) identified a goal to improve retention and graduation rates.
- WVU examined peer institutions and their own student analytics.
- They also desired a deeper understanding of student perspectives to help with planning and sought external expertise

## STAY: STUDENT INSIGHTS

- TorchStar deployed a STAY study for enrolled students who had accumulated 90+ credit hours; 1,000+ participated.
- Students self-identified as either returners who had been out for a semester or more, stayers who never seriously considered leaving, or contemplators who considered leaving but overcame their challenges.
- TorchStar deployed a pre-tested survey that examines multiple aspects of the college experience: recruitment, academic services and support, campus life and well-being, student finance and support, and overall assessment
- Customized questions were developed in consultation with WVU about high school preparation, student work on and off campus, and family/parent support.

## RESULTS

The STAR framework positions existing programs and services based on student perception of impact



- The STAY study provided student perspective of challenges, roadblocks, and programs that work.
- Level of participation and impact on success were used as key measures for positioning programs and services using the STAR framework to identify:
  - Programs with high participation levels and high impact on success are candidates for additional investment
  - Those with lower participation rates but high impact may be scaled up to serve more students if they are cost effective
  - Programs and services that students reported as having lower impact levels may need to be re-envisioned.
- The STAY allowed for more in-depth analysis of targeted populations such as Pell-eligible students.
- TorchStar presented results to the campus leaders to develop a focused roadmap for the future and establish a case for change.

## CLIENT TESTIMONY

*“We had been surveying students and getting good insights as to why West Virginia University students were leaving, but really hadn’t collected good data on understanding why students were staying at WVU.*

*TorchStar worked with us quickly and efficiently to help us understand our unique needs and challenges as well as get insights directly from our students. The STAY provided a valuable first step in helping us focus our efforts and develop a more effective approach to our campus-wide retention and graduation improvement plan going forward.*

*What I most value from TorchStar is their ability to customize their services to meet our needs. So many vendors make you work within their already developed service or product that might not meet all of your needs.*

Regan Bruni, Director of Student Success  
West Virginia University